



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

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

**Sixth periodic report submitted by Georgia under article 18
of the Convention, due in 2018****

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



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Abbreviations

ABL	Administrative Boundary Line
ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Agency
CoE	Council of Europe
CPC	Crime Prevention Centre
CEC	Central Election Commission of Georgia
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
DV/VAW NAP	National Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GBA	Georgian Bar Association
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBSS	Gender-Biased Sex Selection
GEC	Gender Equality Council
GED	Gender Equality Department
GEL	Georgian national currency – Georgian Lari
GEOSTAT	National Statistics Office of Georgia
CGE	Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GITA	Georgia Innovation and Technology Agency
GoG	Government of Georgia
HR	Human Rights
HR NAP	Human Rights Action Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPV	Intimate-Partner Violence

Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
LAS	Legal Aid Service
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MoEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
MESD	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLHSA	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
NAPR	National Agency of Public Registry
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFCG	National Federation of Children and School Sports of Georgia
OSMRCE	Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality
PDO	Public Defender's Office
PSDA	Public Service Development Agency
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOPs	Special Operating Procedures
SSA	Social Service Agency
SSS	State Security Service
State Fund	State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking
TNAP	National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
TPDC	Teachers' Professional Development Centre
UHP	Universal Healthcare Programme
UN	United Nations
UNAG	United Nations Association Georgia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNSRVAW	UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against Women
WFA	Women Farmers' Association
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WPS NAP	National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325

I. Introduction

1. This is the Sixth Periodic Report of Georgia on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the Convention) submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) under Article 18 of the Convention.
2. The report was prepared in accordance with the UN Harmonized Guidelines and Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia.¹ The purpose of this report is to provide to the Committee the information on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures adopted by Georgia to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect.
3. The first part of the Report contains information on the issues related to the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Committee. The report further covers Georgia's implementation of the articles in parts I–IV of the Convention that are not addressed under the section II of the present report, representing an update of Georgia's previous periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5). The Report also describes the grave human rights situation in the occupied territories of Georgia.
4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (MFA) and the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues (CGE) have led and coordinated preparation process of the report, with the participation of the relevant line ministries and agencies from the executive branch of the Government, as well as the legislature and judiciary. More specifically, the following agencies were involved in the process of elaboration of the report: the Human Rights Secretariat at the Administration of the Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defence, State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, Supreme Court, High School of Justice, High Council of Justice, Legal Aid Service, Central Election Commission, Tbilisi City Hall and National Forensics Bureau. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) provided technical and expert support.
5. Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia (as amended in 2016), the draft report has been submitted to the Parliament for review and endorsement. Furthermore, a consultation process with the Public Defender's Office (PDO), international and local civil society organizations (CSOs) took place. The comments from the parliamentary review, as well as the consultation process are reflected herein.

¹ CEDAW/C/GEO/CO/4-5 18 July, 2014.

II. Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Committee

Paragraph 7 – Parliament

6. In December 2018, new Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia have been endorsed strengthening the oversight functions of the legislature over the executive branch of the government.

7. The Gender Equality Council (GEC) was established as an advisory body based on a Parliamentary Decree in 2004. In 2010, with the adoption of the Gender Equality Law, the Gender Equality Council became a standing body. In June 2017, the institutional framework for the GEC has been changed establishing it as a permanent consultation body to the Parliament of Georgia.

8. According to Article 12 of the Gender Equality Law, the Parliament of Georgia defines basic trends of the state policy on gender issues, ensures development and implementation of the legislative framework on gender equality, reviews and approves the gender equality strategy and monitors performance of the bodies accountable to the Parliament of Georgia in the field of gender equality. It further approves the state's reports to treaty bodies.

9. In 2019, the GEC, in line with its strategy² and action plan for 2018–2020³, has launched thematic inquiries in line with Article 155 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia into the accessibility of vocational education for women and women's participation in state economic programs. The new parliamentary oversight tool – the thematic inquiry – provides for active participation of civil society in the process. As a result of the inquiries, recommendations will be developed to enhance women's participation in vocational education and state economic programs. The new Rules and Procedure of the Parliament authorize the legislature to select issues for thematic inquiry upon its discretion.

10. In 2017, a Gender Impact Assessment methodology was piloted in the Parliament to assess the impact of certain policies and pieces of legislation on women and men and how this policy can contribute to gender equality. Within the scope of the 2017 pilot, staffers of the legislature have drafted a Gender Impact Assessment report on draft amendments to the Labour Code related to narcotics. The report has been submitted to the Parliamentary committee on drug policy for consideration.

Paragraphs 8 and 9 – Visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations

11. Over the recent years, the Government of Georgia (GoG), in cooperation with international partners, has conducted a large number of public awareness-raising interventions on women's rights, gender equality, violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence (DV) issues for a wide range of target groups across Georgia (for more information, see Annex 1).

12. In 2018, the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CGE) has elaborated a National Communications Strategy and Action Plan on violence against women and domestic violence aimed at

² http://www.parliament.ge/en/ajax/downloadFile/87001/2018_01_18_GEC_Communication_Strategy_ENG.

³ http://www.parliament.ge/en/ajax/downloadFile/90889/GEC_Action_Plan_English_-_Webpage_-.

promoting zero tolerance, as well as existing services for GBV survivors. It further included detailed action plans for the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence campaign for 2018 and for 2019. The latter was focusing on sexual harassment with the involvement of 22 state entities reaching to over 3,000 direct and more indirect beneficiaries.

13. Annually, the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CGE) prepares a comprehensive activity report on progress made by the executive branch on VAW/DV and presents to the Parliament. Report is widely disseminated among national and international partners.

14. The GEC has also adopted a communications strategy for 2018–2020, defining the communications vision and mission of the Council, as well as its goals, principles and tasks, identifying its target audience, and major issues of concern to be addressed by the awareness-raising campaigns.

15. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) website displays information about the legal mechanisms available against domestic violence. It also publishes the information about the MIA hotline 112 and counselling hotline 116-006 for victims of domestic violence and citizens.

16. Among campaigns conducted by the State, noteworthy is the awareness raising campaign “Act on” carried out by the Justice Ministry during February–November 2017. The main aim of the campaign was the provision of information to the population and their engagement in the fight against violence. Within the scope of the campaign, a website [<http://imoqmede.ge/>] was launched to facilitate the engagement of population in the campaign against violence and to enable the victims or witnesses of violence to report on the problem, in the form of anonymous letters to the Ministry of Justice. Within the scope of the social campaign, free trainings were conducted covering 78 groups with the total of 886 participants. The MIA started the project “Supporting the MIA in Combatting Domestic Violence” and the social campaign “Power to Trust.” Along with other important events conducted within the scope of the project, meetings were periodically organized with representatives of various government entities and local self-governments in the different regions to improve coordination. To raise awareness of and prevent violence against women and domestic violence, the Prosecutor’s Office conducted various activities within the framework of its projects “Local Council” and “Public Prosecution” in all regions of Georgia in 2016–2017. The LEPL State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking conducted an “Open Your Eyes” campaign in order to inform the population on a nationwide consultation hotline against violence (116-066). A website [www.sheachere.ge] was launched within the framework of the project. Using web camera and eye movement identification technology, the website stops or continues the scene depicting domestic violence.

17. On August 17, 2015, the GoG has approved the State Strategy on Civic Equality and Integration, as well as an Action Plan for 2015–2020. The new strategy document is based on the principles of equality and a “more diversity, more integration” approach and aims at establishing an equal environment, full-scale participation of ethnic minorities in all spheres of social life and protection of their culture and identity. It further includes a commitment to eliminating GBV and protecting women’s rights, supporting and encouraging their active participation in social life. Various informational/awareness campaigns have been carried out in the areas densely populated with ethnic minorities in order to raise public awareness on gender equality issues.

18. To mainstream gender into the formal education system, gender equality principles have been integrated into the subject “Me and Society” (III–IV grades) at the primary school level.

19. For the basic level education (VII–IX grades), a civic education curriculum has been developed focusing on teaching human rights, citizens’ responsibilities, and the principles of democracy. One of the most important principles taught is equality, which implies that every citizen is equally valuable, and everyone shall have equal opportunities and rights. Discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, sex (gender), and ethnic origin shall be eliminated. The curriculum further covers early marriage. This topic is represented in the context of civil awareness, personal development and human rights. In particular, early marriage is discussed as a violation of human rights and a factor preventing personal development. General principles of the UNSCR N1325 (“Women, Peace and Security”) are also included in the curriculum.

20. In 2018, the LEPL Teachers Professional Development Centre (TPDC) launched a programme entitled “Supporting Democratic Culture and Human Rights Education” aimed at supporting a democracy culture and human rights learning at general education institutions. In the scope of the programme, it is planned to elaborate special training modules for teachers; to organize studies, meetings and conferences; to elaborate supportive materials (guidelines/handbooks/films and etc.) for teachers and other individuals engaged in the educational process.

21. As a result of these efforts, a significant shift in public attitudes towards VAW/DV and considerable increase in the reporting⁴ to the law enforcement agencies over the past years as evidenced by several studies and administrative data.

22. According to the findings of the National Study on Violence against Women (2017),⁵ 18 per cent of women who have ever experienced intimate partner violence have appealed for support to the police⁶ – as opposed to only 1.5 per cent in 2009.⁷ The study has further found that some 33 per cent of female respondents still tend to agree that intimate partner violence is a private matter and others should not intervene – however, in 2009, 78 per cent female respondents agreed to this statement.⁸ In addition, the number of women who think husbands are justified in beating their wives in certain cases decreased from 34,1 per cent in 2009⁹ to 22 per cent in 2017.¹⁰

23. Specific interventions have also been targeted at men. As a result, the share of men who think, that a woman’s main responsibility is taking care of her family decreased from 93 per cent in 2014¹¹ to 78 per cent in 2017¹² and the number of men who think that it’s a woman’s responsibility to avoid getting pregnant fell from 69 per cent in 2014¹³ to 37 per cent in 2017.¹⁴

24. Overall, up to 80 per cent of the population of Georgia is aware that there are laws protecting victims of domestic violence, services for survivors of violence and anti-domestic violence campaigns.¹⁵ All of this suggests that the concentrated efforts

⁴ Number of restrictive orders issued by year: 2015: 2,726; 2016: 3,089; 2017: 4,370 (Source: MoIA). Number of protective orders issued by year: 2015 – 173; 2016 – 178; 2017 – 180 (Source: Supreme Court of Georgia).

⁵ Conducted by GEOSTAT supported by UN Women and the EU.

⁶ UN Women/GEOSTAT/ EU, National Study on Violence against Women: Summary Report, 2017, 12–15.

⁷ UNFPA/ACT National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia, 2009.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ UN Women/GEOSTAT/ EU, National Study on Violence against Women: Summary Report, 2017, 12–15.

¹¹ UNFPA National Study on Men and Gender Relations in Georgia (2014).

¹² UN Women/GEOSTAT/EU, National Study on Violence against Women: Summary Report.

¹³ UNFPA National Study on Men and Gender Relations in Georgia (2014).

¹⁴ UN Women/GEOSTAT/ EU, National Study on Violence against Women: Summary Report.

¹⁵ Ibid.

to raise awareness of GEWE and promote zero tolerance to VAW/DV in the country over the past few years are having a positive impact.

25. Any person, or group of persons can lodge either an individual or collective application with the Public Defender (PDO) requesting a finding on discrimination, including through PDO's official website, or in any form. There is a 6-month term for the PDO to consider a discrimination case, a term that can be extended for another three months in some cases.¹⁶

26. Over the last few years, reporting on gender-based discrimination has increased. More specifically, in 2018, the PDO has, ex officio or in response to an application, examined 159 cases of alleged discrimination, out of which 16 per cent concerned gender-based discrimination. According to the PDO, the increase is mostly attributable to the growth in the number of sexual harassment complaints.¹⁷

27. In accordance with the Association Agenda between Georgia and the EU, a 5-year strategy and 2-year action plan for the judiciary has been elaborated. Major areas covered by the action plan include ensuring transparency, impartiality, equal treatment, increased gender-responsiveness and ensuring conformity of proceedings with international standards in this respect.

28. In cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations, various learning modules and training programmes have been developed for the judiciary including on gender equality and VAW/DV that are now institutionalized in the curriculum of the High School of Justice. The training module on VAW/DV developed in 2017 with the support of the CoE and UN Women was been updated in the 2019 and additional Training of Trainer (ToT) and pilot training were carried out. In total, during the reporting period, 9 trainings have been conducted on Gender Equality in which 105 judges participated; as for the VAW/DV, 5 trainings have been conducted on the same topic where 71 judges participated. The Human Rights Centre under the Supreme Court has published and updated a compilation of the "ECHR Decisions on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" to further inform judicial decision-making with international standards. As a result, the number of cases, in which reference was made to the relevant international standards increased by 16 per cent.¹⁸ In 2019, the Analytical Department of the Supreme Court conducted Research on the following topic: "Judicial Practice on 34 (stalking) of the Istanbul Convention", the purpose of the study was to illustrate the development of common law practice in line with the new legislative regulations and the Istanbul Convention. According to the findings of the study, application of international standards in judicial practice has increased up to 30 per cent.¹⁹

29. The Supreme court has further analysed the case-law of the common courts on VAW/DV cases for 2017 to identify trends in terms of the application of international standards, including CEDAW, by judges in their decision-making and develop relevant recommendations. According to the report, a positive trend is observed in judicial practice in relation to GBV cases. The statistical data indicate that the number of plea bargains on domestic violence cases decreased (from 42 per cent to 28 per cent).²⁰ In 2019, the Analytical Department of the Supreme Court conducted the research on the following topic: Discrimination-related Cases in National Judicial

¹⁶ *Special Report on the Fight Against Discrimination, its Prevention and the Situation of Equality*, 2018; pg. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Supreme Court of Georgia, *Application of International Standards in Domestic Violence Cases*, 2017.

¹⁹ <http://www.supremecourt.ge/files/upload-file/pdf/adevneba.pdf>.

²⁰ Supreme Court of Georgia, *Application of International Standards in Domestic Violence Cases*, 2017.

Practice (Application of International standards at the national level). The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation in national judicial practice. According to the study findings, most of the cases examined by the courts involved alleged discrimination on the bases of political and gender ground (in 2017–2018 courts examined 3 labour disputes concerning the alleged discrimination on the basis of sex, the court identified the discrimination only in one case) as well as membership of Georgian Trade Unions Confederation. The study revealed that discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation or pregnancy was proved by the courts in neither case. In addition to this, in judicial practice there are a few numbers of lawsuits examined concerning sexual harassment.²¹

30. Concentrated effort has been targeted at capacity building of law enforcement and other professionals engaged in the prevention and response to VAW/DV. In 2018, three specialization courses were conducted on domestic violence and domestic crime, which included 83 participants (prosecutors and investigators of the prosecution service).²² In March 2019, a joint three-month training course, supported by the Council of Europe (CoE) has been offered to staff of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and MIA on VAW/DV and the Istanbul Convention.

31. A distance learning course through the CoE's HELP e-programme for prosecutors aims to assist law enforcement in getting acquainted with the European human rights standards and enhancing the quality of response to VAW/DV cases, with the ultimate goal of providing victims with access to justice. The training course further covered the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security.

32. A special training programme on VAW/DV has been developed by the Georgian Bar Association (GBA) for the mandatory continuous legal education programme for Georgian lawyers (supported by UN Women) and institutionalized with the GBA Training Centre.

33. A training module on VAW/DV is included in the training programme of district and patrol police and is institutionalized with the MIA Academy and is mandatory for all students of the academy. On-the-job training is also provided to district, patrol and criminal police on VAW/DV issues.

34. In 2016–2018, the LEPL State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking has developed a training module on the prevention and response to VAW/DV and social work for victims for the LEPL Social Service Agency (SSA) social workers (supported by USAID). Over 244 social workers trained based on the training module.

35. In 2017, an online course on sexual harassment at the workplace has been developed with the support from UN Women. The course is available at the PDO's official website. As a result of Civil Service Bureau's advocacy, number civil servants have completed the course.

²¹ <http://www.supremecourt.ge/files/upload-file/pdf/diskriminaciastan-dakavshirebuli-saqmeebi-erovnul-sasamartlo-praqtikashi.pdf>.

²² <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/04/in-georgia-101-specialized-prosecutors-and-investigators-focus-on-domestic-violence>.

Paragraphs 10 and 11 – Legal framework for non-discrimination and equality

36. In December 2018, the changes to the Constitution of Georgia came into force, completing the country's transition from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary system of governance. Most importantly, the new Georgian Constitution now contains an equality clause.²³ The new constitutional provision trades the earlier *de jure* equality wording for substantive equality that shifts the emphasis towards combating structural inequalities and mandating the State to establish and implement special laws, policies and programmes, including temporary special measures, to ensure that women enjoy equality of opportunities as well as that of results.

37. Landmark and historic step was the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in 2017 and the harmonization of the Georgian legislation with its requirements championed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As a result, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking, sexual harassment and forced sterilization have been criminalized.

38. In May 2014, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, prohibiting discrimination based on sex, as well as on sexual orientation and gender identity, among other grounds. The definition of direct and indirect discrimination of the Law on Gender Equality is compliant with that above-mentioned law on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and introduces the concept of multiple discriminations. It further explicitly bans any support to or encouragement of discriminatory actions. The law grants the power of oversight of the state's efforts aimed at the elimination of discrimination to the PDO.

39. Apart from the oversight function, the law further mandates the PDO to conducting *ex officio* and complaint-based inquiries into cases of alleged discrimination. The PDO is authorized to mediate settlement between the parties in discrimination disputes. In addition, an alleged victim of discrimination can also address the courts at any time, without resorting to the PDO. Whether handled by the PDO or adjudicated by the courts, in the cases of discrimination, a person shall submit the facts and relevant evidence to the Public Defender of Georgia that give reason to suspect discrimination, as a result of which the alleged discriminating person shall bear burden of proving that discrimination did not occur.

40. After the legislative amendments, for improving the implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation in practice, the PDO is entitled to request and receive necessary documents and materials related to alleged discrimination by private entities and individuals they are obliged to provide required information to this request. Further, The PDO is authorized to apply the court, as a complainant, if private entity and individual does not enforce or adopt Public Defender's recommendation and there is sufficient evidence of discrimination (prior to these changes the above-mentioned authorizations extended only over to the public sector).²⁴

41. In February 2019, the Anti-Discrimination Law was amended, and the definition of sexual harassment was added to the forms of discrimination – a bill initiated by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MoLHSA);

42. In May 2019, championed by the GEC, a second package of amendments on the topic of sexual harassment passed, introducing a ban on sexual harassment in public

²³ Ibid, paragraph 3.

²⁴ Organic Law of Georgia on the Public Defender of Georgia. Article 14¹, paragraph 2, subparagraph (h¹); Article 18, para (b).

spaces to the Code of Administrative Offences of Georgia, with the MIA, through police, being the primary enforcing authority. Relevant amendments have also been made to the Labour Code and Law on Civil Service to prohibit workplace sexual harassment. The mandate of the PDO has been further expanded to handle sexual harassment complaints.²⁵

43. The Gender Equality Department (GED) of the PDO was established in 2013 and The Equality Department was created in 2014 which are tasked with the oversight of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms with regard to gender equality, support gender mainstreaming in the PDO's general operations and public awareness-raising to promote gender equality in Georgia. Its mandate includes monitoring protection of the right to gender equality, as well as examining individual complaints and applications concerning related rights violations and issuing recommendations and conclusions.²⁶

44. To ensure its efficient performance, especially considering its growing mandate, the budget of the PDO has been increased by 268 per cent since 2014. In particular, the approved budget of the Public Defender's Office comprised GEL 2.380 million in 2014; GEL 4 million in 2015; GEL 4.5 million in 2016; GEL 4.8 million in 2017; GEL 5.5 million in 2018 and GEL 6.4 million in 2019.

Paragraphs 12 and 13 – Applicability of the Convention

45. Twelve years after Russia's large-scale military aggression against Georgia, the humanitarian and human rights situation in the occupied Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region and in the territories adjacent to the occupation lines remains severe. Russia and its occupation regimes in Sokhumi and Tskhinvali continue to violate basic human rights of the conflict-affected population on the ground, including the right to life, freedom of movement, the right to property and education in one's native language.

46. Installation of barbwire fences and different artificial barriers, kidnappings and arbitrary detentions, torture, ill-treatment, brutal violations of human rights and intensified discrimination against ethnic Georgians residing in the occupied territories remain a grave challenge.

47. The conflicts particularly affect women and girls and expose them to increased risk of violence. This problem is aggravated by a lack of proper protection mechanisms, crisis centres, and psychological rehabilitation services. Access to healthcare, prohibition of abortion at all stages, poor pre- and post-natal care are among numerous challenges related women-health.

48. Furthermore, Illegal detention of women has become common practice. The number of illegally detained women increased from 1 in 2009 to 12 in 2019.²⁷

49. The case of Ms. Tamar Mearakishvili, a woman civil society activist in Akhagori district, remains a very vivid demonstration of blatant human rights violations in the Russian-occupied Tskhinvali region of Georgia. During the reporting period, Ms. Mearakishvili has remained the subject of grave ethnic discrimination, oppression, persecution and restrictions of her basic rights and freedoms by the Russian occupation regime in Tskhinvali. For more than three years, she has been deprived of the possibility of freedom of movement and crossing the occupation line

²⁵ <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/17053>.

²⁶ PDO website. See at: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/eng/struqtura>.

²⁷ Number of illegally detained women by years: 2020 (January-October)-5, 2019-12, 2018 –18, 2017–20, 2016–11, 2015–17, 2014–18, 2013–15, 2012–19, 2011–17, 2010–9, 2009–1.

to visit her family members and get basic services, including medical treatment on the Georgian Government controlled territory. Her conditions have been further aggravated since the full closure of the occupation line in Tskhinvali region in September 2019. The Russian occupation regime has been using every effort to force Ms. Mearakishvili to leave her home and become the IDP.

50. Violation and/or limitation of women's rights in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia and in the territories adjacent to the occupation line have always been on the agenda of the Government of Georgia.

51. In the scope of both working groups of Geneva International Discussions (GID), the representatives of Georgia consistently highlighted hard conditions of the women impacted by the ongoing illegal occupation of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions by the Russian Federation, stressing the negative outcomes of fortification of occupation line, barbwires and other artificial barriers, closure of so-called crossing points, restriction of freedom of movement, prohibition of education on native language, deprivation of IDPs and refugees of the right to safe and dignified return to their homes and other violations of fundamental rights.

52. During the 46th Round of the GID, the information session was held on the topic "Women, Peace and Security". With the aim to ensure sustainable and inclusive peace, active involvement of women, as well as the need for addressing the problems of conflict-affected women in peace negotiations was highlighted. The Georgian participants stressed the desire of the Government of Georgia to further strengthen women's meaningful involvement in peace negotiations to ensure gender-inclusive process of implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.

53. Women's human rights violations and conditions in Georgia's occupied territories were considered during IPRM meetings in Gali and Ergneti. In 2016, Gali IPRM meetings resumed after 4 years of interruption. In summer 2018, Russia and its occupation regime in Sokhumi disrupted the IPRM meetings and undermined the negotiations by challenging the agenda and ground rules of these essential formats refusing to discuss the murder of Giga Otkhozoria by the so-called border guards. Moreover, in August 2019 Ergneti IPRM was also disrupted by Russia and its occupation regime in Tskhinvali and was only resumed in July 2020 after a year-long suspension. During 2016–2020, 21 IPRM meetings took place in Gali and 36 IPRM meetings in Ergneti.

54. Within the scope of all bilateral and multilateral international formats,²⁸ Georgia has been consistently raising humanitarian, human rights and human security issues related to illegal actions of Russia in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia and in the territories adjacent to the occupation line, as well as difficult conditions of women impacted by Russia's illegal occupation of the two Georgian regions.

55. The Government actively cooperated with the EUMM and supported prevention of conflict escalation, to deal with provocative actions of Russia and respond to needs of local population, including women impacted by the conflict. Georgia has consistently highlighted importance of unimpeded access of the EUMM to the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and full implementation of its mandate throughout Georgia. Consequently, this topic has been reflected in numerous international documents and statements.

56. In order to promote engagement of the conflict-affected women and addressing their needs in the peace process, in the scope of 2016–2020 national action plans, the MFA, Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and State

²⁸ Including at the UN, EU, OSCE, CoE, Georgia-US Strategic Dialogue, Georgia-UK Wardrop Strategic Dialogue, French-Georgian Dimitri Amilakhvari Dialogue.

Security Service in cooperation with the UN Women, conducted 19 informational meetings with conflict-affected women and IDPs, representatives of non-governmental organizations and think tanks. During these meetings the dynamics of the GID and IPRM, as well as the problems of conflict-affected women and IDPs have been comprehensively discussed. Concrete ideas have been considered on protection of women and children affected by the unresolved conflict between Russia and Georgia.

57. The database on public diplomacy initiatives has been created at the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. During four-year period 253 projects have been approved, including 24 projects on women related topics and initiatives submitted by women's NGOs. Compared to 2015 data (10 per cent), support provided to public diplomacy initiatives represented by women's organizations has increased to 21 per cent.

58. In addition to undertaking the high-level commitments, Georgia started to move forward with the localization of its third WPS NAP (2018–2020), a recommendation also reflected in the monitoring reports by the PDO and WIC in 2017. The goal of the effort was to strengthen the capacities of the regional and local administrations in 10 selected municipalities of Georgia (Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Khashuri, Sachkhere, Stepantsminda, Tsalenjikha, Tskaltubo and Zugdidi) to implement the NAP at the local level, as well as enhance the dialogue and participation of IDP and conflict-affected women in these processes.

59. As a result, in 8 of the 10 municipalities, amendments were issued to the local action plans on gender equality in relation to the rights of IDP and conflict-affected women and girls. In Zugdidi municipality, a separate action plan on UN SCR 1325 was approved; in Dusheti municipality, the recommendations for improving the local action plan were accepted; and in Sachkhere, Tsalenjikha and Zugdidi municipalities, budgets for certain activities related to the WPS agenda were allocated.

60. For the youth, including girls, impacted by the conflict and residing on both sides of occupation line, education opportunities are very important. Against the background of the closure of so-called crossing points, restriction of freedom of movement in the area for the students' services became a significant obstacle for access to education. In this context, the most severe conditions are observed in Gali district, where discrimination on ethnic grounds continues, education in native Georgian language is prohibited. Russian occupation regime has applied the similar discriminative policy to Tskhinvali region.

61. Government of Georgia directs all of its efforts to respond to needs and improve the conditions for population in occupied territories. On 11 January 2017, amendments were made to the Order N1067, dated December 1st, 2009 of the Minister of Education and Science "On Approval of Rules of Recognition of Education Received in Occupied Territories". According to the amendments, individuals residing in the occupied territory can apply for recognition of higher education online.

62. Special "1+4" program enables residents to enrol and acquire education at high educational institutions of Georgia based on simplified procedures. This includes passing only one examination instead of four in native Abkhazian/Ossetian language. During the academic year 2016–2017, the state has financed education of 91 students from the occupied Abkhazia region (Gali district and Kodori valley).

63. In 2017, the State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, in cooperation with other state authorities, elaborated a new peace initiative "A Step to a Better Future". One of the directions of the initiative is to develop educational opportunities for the population of the occupied regions. This includes providing residents with

education opportunities on the basis of the state education system, strengthening and simplifying educational procedures, providing access to all levels of education, providing access to quality and international level education. Government has introduced a peace initiative on April 4, 2018, and related legislative amendments were approved by the Parliament.

64. Since 2013, the State Minister's Office continues financing education for students living in villages adjacent to the occupation line. Financial support is provided in the scope of Temporary Governmental Commission for responding to the needs of the population. From villages next to dividing line, tuition fee was covered for 846 students, who were enrolled in Bachelor's and Master's programs of the academic year 2016–2017. During the first semester of the academic year 2017–2018, funding was provided for 1168 students from villages near the dividing line (989 bachelor and 179 master program students).

65. Free healthcare service is one of the most successful directions of the State Strategy "Engagement through Cooperation". Individuals living in the occupied territories are able to use different types of state programs and the most important is the state program on "Referral Service". Starting from 2017, referral service program has become available for the residents of the Gali district.

66. Compared to data of 2012, number of individuals from Tskhinvali region, willing to undergo medical treatment on Georgian controlled territory has increased. At the same time, number of patients from Abkhazia region engaged in referral program has increased six-fold. In April 2015, Hepatitis C elimination program was initiated. Residents of the occupied territories – including women and girls, were able to participate in the program.

67. With the support of "Coordination Mechanism" established in the scope of Action Plan of the State Engagement Strategy, with the support from UNDP, population living in Abkhazia region has been regularly provided with different medications and vaccines.

68. In 2017, the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Agriculture implemented all programs and projects for villages near the dividing line, including: programs implemented by LEPL "Produce in Georgia", agricultural projects of the Ministry of Agriculture, "Plant in the Future", agricultural insurance, agricultural industry support program, processing and storage facility projects, preferential agro-credit. These programs and projects are especially important for the women's economic empowerment at the local level.

Paragraphs 14 and 15 – National machinery for the advancement of women

69. Georgia has strengthened its national institutional framework to monitor, coordinate and advance efforts targeted at GEWE. Georgia's national machinery for gender equality consists of three key bodies: (a) the Gender Equality Council (GEC) within the legislative branch, (b) the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues (CGE) within the executive branch of the Government; and (c) the Gender Equality Department of the Public Defender's Office, within the country's national human rights institution.

70. The GEC remains uniquely positioned to play an important role in shaping the country's gender policy and monitoring the government's performance in meeting international and national commitments around GEWE.

71. The GEC cooperates with gender equality councils at the Supreme Councils of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Adjara, and Gender Equality Councils at the local level.

72. The GEC is *inter alia* tasked with supporting the legislature in legislating and policymaking around gender equality issues, analysing and developing legislative proposals to eliminate gender inequalities, overseeing the government's performance in terms of promoting gender equality, hearing reports of the gender equality institutional mechanisms, overseeing implementation of the legislation and policies in the area of gender equality.

73. The GEC submits annual report on gender equality status to the Parliament of Georgia. In addition, the GEC monitors Georgia's international obligations on gender equality issues and is authorized to represent the legislature in international relations on gender equality issues.

74. In 2017, in order to support evidence-based policymaking, upon initiative of the GEC (supported by UNDP and PROLoG/USAID), a comprehensive basic study on "Gender Equality in Georgia-Barriers and Recommendations"²⁹ was carried out. The comprehensive study brings together all legal and social interventions at the national level creating evidence for informed policy-making and issues thematic recommendations to executive, judiciary and legislative branches.

75. In June, 2017 with the establishment of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CGE) co-chaired by the Advisor to the Prime-Minister of Georgia on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues and the Deputy Minister of Justice, the institutional framework for gender equality has been strengthened further.

76. The mandate of the Commission on Gender Equality covers a wide range of gender equality related issues. Positioned under the office of the Prime-Minister of Georgia, the Commission ensures co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to advance gender equality and performs functions under the Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention.³⁰

77. The deputy ministerial-level composition of the Commission on Gender Equality includes representatives from the relevant line ministries, Legal Aid Service, the Public Broadcaster, the State Fund for Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking as its members and the PDO, the GEC of the Parliament, and the Supreme Court as observers. To ensure participation of civil society, the Commission on Gender Equality is operating thematic taskforces.

78. In 2018, the GoG has approved the Governmental Action Plan on Human Rights. One of the chapters of the Action Plan is dedicated to GEWE.³¹ Furthermore, "the Action Plan for 2018–2020 on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating

²⁹ https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/library/democratic_governance/gender-equality-in-georgia.html.

³⁰ Istanbul Convention, Article 10 – Co-ordinating body; "Parties shall designate or establish one or more official bodies responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by this Convention. These bodies shall co-ordinate the collection of data as referred to in Article 11, analyse and disseminate its results.

³¹ <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/4153833?publication=0>.

Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims”³² and the WPS NAP 2018–2020 were approved.³³

79. In order to establish a position of a gender equality advisor as a permanent institutional mechanism within the municipalities, relevant legislative amendments have been made to the “Law on Gender Equality” and “Local Self-Governance Code” in 2016. Gender equality councils have been created at the local self-government level and advisors on gender equality issues have been appointed in certain municipalities.

80. Since 2015, the position of a gender equality advisor has been created at the Tbilisi City Hall. In 2016, a Gender Equality Council was established based on the new composition of the Tbilisi City Assembly. In 2017, the Gender Strategy Action Plan was approved by the City Assembly aimed at supporting equal participation of women and men in local self-governance. The strategy is based on gender equality principles of all levels of municipal and social life, defines relevant measures for prevention and elimination of gender-based discrimination.

81. Gender focal points have been identified within all governmental institutions, line ministries, and at the sub-national level, in each of the district mayor’s offices, as major partners responsible for gender mainstreaming within the state institutions. As of 2019, gender equality councils are operating in all 64 local self-governing bodies to support the advancement of gender equality at the sub-national level.

82. Gender Equality teams are strongly represented at major line ministries. For instance, a Gender Equality Monitoring Team at the MoD coordinates gender mainstreaming, institutionalization and fulfilment of national and international obligations undertaken in the area. The functions of the Monitoring Team include providing consultations on gender-related issues and coordination of gender advisors. It is also engaged in the implementation of preventive measures of domestic violence by the representatives of Georgian Armed Forces and elaboration/implementation of educational modules.

83. Gender advisors are designated in the MoD and Armed Forces. Some of the key functions of the gender advisors are to support implementation of the Gender Strategy of the MoD, dissemination of information related to gender equality principles and values, provide consultations, support learning and research activities on gender equality, as well as assist in the relevant response to cases of gender-based discrimination, GBV and sexual harassment.

84. Relevant amendments were made to the disciplinary statute of military servicemen and special provision on sexual harassment was introduced. In order to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women, special activities are carried out to increase women’s participation in the educational institutions of the defence sector.

Paragraphs 16 and 17 – Temporary special measures

85. As a result of the constitutional reform completed in December 2018, explicit wording on the State’s obligation to ensure substantive equality between women and men has been included in the Constitution.³⁴

³² <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2018/national%20action%20plan%20on%20combating%20violence%20against%20women.pdf?la=en&vs=3237>.

³³ <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2018/the%202018-2020%20national%20action%20plan%20of%20georgia%20eng.pdf?la=en&vs=853>.

³⁴ The Constitution of Georgia, Article 11 (3).

86. Since 2015, several attempts have been made to implement temporary special measures to increase women's political participation in form of diverse mandatory quotas for the Parliament and on party lists. In June 2017, involved 37,000 citizens' signatures and efforts of several women's rights groups in support of 50 per cent mandatory gender quotas for parties' proportional lists for Parliamentary and local elections.

87. In 2011, the Parliament adopted voluntary quota for women's participation in political party lists. The voluntary quota constitutes an additional 10 per cent in budgetary funding for a party that included at least 3 representatives of different sex in every 10 candidates on the election party list.

88. In 2020, as a result of the amendments to the Election Code, for the first-time in history, gender quotas were adopted both – at the national (Parliament) and local (local self-governments) levels. Quotas guarantee at least quarter of women (currently, 14 per cent) in the Parliament starting in 2020 with the further increase in the future and at least quarter of women (currently, 14 per cent) at local councils.

Paragraphs 18 and 19 – Stereotypes and harmful practices

89. A pivotal element in the Government's efforts to ensure gender equality is to break down and eliminate gender stereotypes and unconscious bias and practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either sexes.

90. Since the last periodic report, the Government has prioritized a wide range of issues including, but not limited to addressing domestic violence, trafficking, sexual assault, sexual harassment and harmful practices, such as early marriages and female genital mutilation/cutting FGM/C).

91. A Task Force on Harmful Practices co-chaired by the CGE and UNFPA has been established. Apart from preventing early marriages it covers combating FGM/C. Numerous knowledge building activities have been conducted within the task force, including work with religious and spiritual leaders.

92. As of May 2017, the new Article 1332 of Criminal Code prohibits female genital mutilation on any grounds, including both forceful acts as well as consensual. The Article provides for criminal responsibility of the person performing the cutting as well as any person coercing a woman/girl to undergo FGM/C, including family members.

93. Stereotypes that condone gender inequality still persist in Georgia. However, positive shifts in the societal perceptions of and attitudes towards gender equality and VAW/DV are obvious. The percentage of women who believe that domestic violence is a private matter and that no one should interfere has decreased from 78 per cent in 2009³⁵ to 33 per cent in 2017.³⁶ Gender attitudes are less conservative. Men and women in the younger generation show more non-discriminatory attitudes. There has been a decrease in the rate of women who stayed with violent husbands because they believed the violence to be normal. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of women who have experienced intimate partner violence who have reported it to the police (from 1,5 per cent in 2009³⁷ to 18 per cent in 2018³⁸). All of this suggests that the concerted efforts to raise awareness and promote women's

³⁵ ACT National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia, 2009 (UNFPA).

³⁶ GEOSTAT National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia, 2018 (UN Women/EU).

³⁷ ACT National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia, 2009 (UNFPA).

³⁸ GEOSTAT National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia, 2018 (UN Women/EU).

empowerment and rights in the country over the past years are having a positive impact.

94. The legal framework for media in terms of gender issues is defined by the Georgian Law on Broadcasting and the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters adopted by the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC).

95. The “Code of Conduct for Broadcasters” adopted by the GNCC obliges broadcasters to abide by broadcasting principles and” accommodate interests of various social groups regardless of their political affiliation, cultural, ethnic, religious and regional backgrounds, language, age or gender.”³⁹

96. The code lists factors that broadcasters shall consider and consider when deciding on portraying violence, these factors include: “violence in daily life: domestic violence incidents where elderly, people with disability, women and children are the victims; verbal and physical aggression; sexual or any other violence should not be condoned”.⁴⁰

97. The Law of Georgia on Advertisement determines that advertisement shall not encourage citizens towards “violence, aggression and chaos, or any other dangerous actions, that can damage the health or security.”⁴¹

98. In December 2009, around 139 journalists signed and approved common principles of professional conduct and by signing this statement they became the members of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, a self-regulatory body. The Charter provides that journalists shall understand the importance of journalistic work and “shall take all efforts to avoid discrimination of any person by race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religious, political and other opinion, national or social origin or any other feature”.⁴²

Paragraphs 20 and 21 – Violence against women

99. In line with increased trust toward the law enforcement entities and decreased stigma towards reporting VAW/DV, reporting of violence has significantly increased within the last five years. Intimate partner violence (IPV), as well as early and forced marriage, are among the most prevalent forms of violence against women in Georgia. According to the National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia, 6 per cent of women (ages 15 and older) have experienced some form of intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime and almost 3 per cent have experienced at least one form of violence from a non-partner.⁴³ 14 per cent of women aged 20–24 report being married before the age of 18.⁴⁴

100. National legal framework was significantly strengthened as a result of the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in 2017. At the same time, Georgia adoption a milestone legal framework aimed at harmonization of the domestic legislation with the requirements under the Istanbul Convention. The

³⁹ Code of Conduct for Broadcasters, Article 3; paragraph 1.b.

⁴⁰ Ibid. paragraph 7.

⁴¹ Law on Advertisement, Chapter 2; Article 4; paragraph 11.

⁴² Journalist Ethic Charter, Article 7.

⁴³ GEOSTAT / UN Women / EU, National Study on Violence against Women: Summary Report, 2017.

⁴⁴ GEOSTAT / UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), 2018.

MoJ has developed a package of relevant amendments to up to 25 pieces of legislation passed by the legislature in the same year.⁴⁵

101. As a result of the legislative reform, the scope of domestic violence (DV) related legislation, previously gender-neutral, has now been expanded to also apply to other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) against women, thus taking into consideration its gender dimensions.

102. To increase disclosure of the instances of VAW/DV, the new legislation extended the group of individuals authorized to report domestic violence cases. Exceptional circumstances have been determined for professionals with statutory confidentiality obligations (doctors, teachers, lawyers) for the disclosure of information in the event of risk of repeated violence.

103. In addition to the above-mentioned, new approaches have been considered in relation to victim protection and rehabilitation. Right to legal consultation, 30-day leave, and shelter will be provided to victims of violence. In case of foreign female victim of violence, deportation shall be prohibited till full completion of legal proceedings. In such cases, temporary residence permit may be issued for her.

104. In response to an unprecedented number of femicides in 2014, then the President of Georgia, declared the year 2015 as the “Year of the Women” to underscore the country’s condemnation of violence against women and girls and the importance of taking tangible steps to eliminate it.

105. In her 2016 Georgia Report ([A/HRC/32/42/Add.3](#)), the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (UNSRVAW), reiterated the call she made for all States to establish a “femicide watch” or “gender-related killing of women watch”, which would collect and publish annually data on the number of femicides and establish or entrust an existing body to analyse each case of femicide, in order to identify any failure of protection, with a view of improving measures to prevent femicides. In April 2017, the Public Defender announced that PDO would assume the role of the Femicide Watch in Georgia, being the second Ombudsman in the world, the first being Argentina, to undertake the responsibility for monitoring femicide cases.

106. As part of the monitoring process, the PDO annually analyses every femicide case, including investigation, prosecution, trial and conviction processes, to measure prevalence of femicide, prior history of violence, efficiency of response and protection measures, if any, proportionality of sanctions and other issues. The PDO further develops recommendations addressed to the relevant governmental agencies, legislature and judiciary on how to better prevent and respond to this problem. The analysis and recommendations are captured in the PDO’s annual special femicide reports.

107. In November 2018, the Parliament of Georgia adopted amendments to the Criminal Code of Georgia initiated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA) as a result of extensive consultations with development partners and the PDO. Pursuant to the Law, gender motive has been introduced as one of the aggravating circumstances to the crimes of intentional murder, incitement to suicide, intentional infliction of grave bodily injury, and intentional infliction of less grave bodily injury, thus following the recommendation of the PDO’s femicide watch on special legislative regulation of femicide, establishing it as a crime of aggravated murder. Further, Commission of crime, including, on the basis sex, sexual orientation, gender identity is an aggravating factor for liability for all respective crimes. In other words, when imposing a fixed term imprisonment for a crime committed with mentioned

⁴⁵ See at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/13414>.

aggravating factors, the term of a sentence to be served shall exceed at least by one year to the minimum term of sentence provided for the committed crime.

108. As a result of these efforts, the number of femicides has dropped between 2014–2019 from 35 in 2014 to 17 in 2019.⁴⁶ According to the Prosecutor’s Office, in total, 135 killings of women were reported between 2014–2018 (3 of the victims were led to suicide). During 2014–2019, 80 attempted murders were committed (5 of the victims were led to attempted suicide).⁴⁷

109. Overall, Georgia has seen significant progress in responding to VAWG, especially DV, including by law enforcement and increased disclosure of incidents by victims/survivors in the past few years, as evidenced by the relevant administrative data.

110. More specifically, the number of indictments in domestic violence cases increased from 550 in 2014 to 3,955 (resulting in 1,714 convictions) in 2018, in 2019 – 4579 prosecutions were launched, while the number of issued restraining orders increased from 902 in 2014 to 8,621 in 2019 (10 months only).⁴⁸ Some 18 per cent of women, who have ever experienced intimate partner violence, have appealed for support to the police⁴⁹ – as opposed to only 1.5 per cent in 2009.⁵⁰

111. Even though a major positive shift in societal attitudes and perceptions of VAWG/DV in general is evident (as discussed under paragraphs 18 and 19 – Stereotypes and harmful practices), sexual violence remains a taboo, and harmful attitudes towards this problem persist. According to the above study, 50 per cent of men still believe that one cannot call it rape if the victim doesn’t physically fight back.⁵¹ On this particular indicator, progress has been slow, in that it has only decreased by three percentage points since 2014 as evidenced by the UNFPA Study on Men and Gender Relations (2014).⁵²

112. To further strengthen efficiency of the response to VAW/DV, the MIA established the Human Rights Protection Department within its structure in 2018 to oversee investigations into and administrative proceedings on domestic violence, violence against women (including sexual violence), crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination; hate crimes; trafficking and crimes committed by and/or towards minors. The Department is tasked with identifying gaps in the response, analyse data, issue binding recommendations to police and contribute to policymaking.

113. In order to improve the quality of investigations into domestic crime investigations and increase the sensitivity of investigators, numerous trainings were conducted in 2018–2019. Over 600 police officers were retrained within the framework of these trainings. In addition, in 2019, 125 law enforcement officers received training on legal mechanisms for VAW/DV.

114. To ensure uniform response to VAW/DV cases and following recommendations of the PDO and UNSRVAV ([A/HRC/32/42/Add.3](#)), a risk assessment tool (supported

⁴⁶ In 2014 – 35 femicides, in 2015 – 18 femicides, in 2016 – 32 femicides, in 2017 – 26 femicides, in 2018 – 21 femicides, in 2019 – 17 femicides.

⁴⁷ In 2014 – 12 attempted murder, in 2015 – 12 attempted murder, in 2016 – 9 attempted murder, in 2017 – 15 attempted murder, in 2018 – 16 attempted murder, in 2019 – 16 attempted murder.

⁴⁸ Source: www.police.ge.

⁴⁹ UN Women / GEOSTAT/ EU, National Study on Violence against Women: Summary Report, 2017, 12–15.

⁵⁰ UNFPA/ACT National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Georgia, 2009.

⁵¹ EU/UN Women/GEOSTAT National Study on Violence against Women in Georgia, 2017; See at: <http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/03/the-national-study-on-violence-against-women-in-georgia>.

⁵² UNFPA/Promundo National Study on Men and Gender Relations in Georgia (2014).

by UN Women) has been introduced in July 2018, as a milestone policy shift in police response against domestic violence. The change requires police officers to fill out a risk assessment checklist to evaluate risks for lethality and re-abuse by perpetrators in order to identify the most appropriate measures for the protection of the victim. The risk assessment tool further enables police officers to document the history of violence suffered and evaluate risks for lethality and re-offence using a standardized methodology. The reform ensures improved safety planning for victims, with the ultimate aim of saving more lives.

115. A GPS electronic monitoring system (ankle bracelets) for perpetrators (supported by UN Women) was introduced in Georgia and entered into force since 1 September 2020. The use of electronic bracelets is a complementary to the risk assessment tool. This is an additional step forward in the prevention and elimination of reoffending.

116. Another innovation introduced by the MIA is a new feature of the mobile application for 112 – the Emergency and Operative Response Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The 112’s mobile app is a free of charge, innovative and high-tech service, and its biggest advantage is in determining a user’s location using GPS. The app includes the SOS and chat feature, so that if a user cannot talk, or if making a call would be too dangerous, then she can either use the SOS or the chat options. These features are especially important in cases of domestic violence. As soon the SOS button is tapped, the user’s GPS coordinates are sent immediately to an operator in order to determine her location and a patrol police is dispatched to the exact address. The “Useful Tips” menu of the 112 app now has a new section on domestic violence (supported by UN Women). The app also provides exhaustive information about state services available for the victims of violence: shelters, crisis centres and a hotline (116 006). Information is available in Georgian, English and Russian languages.

117. The classification of incoming calls at the emergency centre 112 is based on the information provided by the caller. The 112 operator determines the type of incident in the software, which is important to prioritize the case and determine resources needed to respond. Not always is it possible to determine the gender of a caller and that is why the incoming calls are not disaggregated by sex. The number of calls to 112 claiming incident type “conflict/domestic violence” has increased from 19,078 calls in 2016 to 20,496 calls in 2018.⁵³

118. The MIA introduced a monitoring mechanism of restraining orders to ensure that the perpetrators are in observance of the conditions determined under the restraining orders by keeping vigorous communication and conducting visits to the residence of victim and offender according to the level of risk identified as per the risk assessment tool. In addition, the MIA developed guidelines on the investigation of GBV/DV cases and disseminated to the relevant departments of MIA.

119. The Prosecutor’s office has introduced a zero-tolerance policy to the cases of femicide and VAW/DV. While there is no written law or protocol precluding the use of plea agreements and diversion in these cases, prosecutors have been instructed not to offer plea agreements. There has been no single case of a plea agreement entered into for last 2 years in the cases of femicide.⁵⁴ Between 2014–2019, investigation of all femicide cases were completed, all offenders have been brought to justice.⁵⁵

120. In 2018, as per the Prosecutor General’s order, specialized prosecutors and investigators on domestic violence-based crimes have been introduced. Only

⁵³ Information provided by the MIA 71900521257 letter; February 28, 2019.

⁵⁴ Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations (2018), volume1; pg. 79.

⁵⁵ VI Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; pg. 25; para 135.

specialized prosecutors are entitled to handle such cases. By 2019, across the country, there were 193 specialized prosecutors and prosecution service investigators in total.

121. As a result of the preventive measures taken and the improvement of the quality of prosecutorial oversight, the rate of reporting domestic violence by victims/survivors and the rate of launching criminal prosecutions have increased significantly – from 550 since 2014, amounting to criminal charges against 4579 individuals in 2019.

122. In addition, the number of prosecutorial pretrial detention motions has increased from 14 per cent in 2014 to 92 per cent in 2019 indicating a qualitative policy shift of the prosecution towards these crimes. The Prosecutor's Office pays special attention to each case and any past incidents of violence for the purposes of detecting different forms of violence as well as determining systemic violence. Detection of psychological violence has improved, however, notwithstanding significant progress, when compared to previous years, the issue of identification of gender-based discrimination motive in VAW/DV cases remains as challenge, with only 3 such cases in 2016 and 120 cases in 2019.

123. The Prosecutor's office is operating a witness and victim coordinator's office since 2011. A concept on the engagement of coordinators in cases of domestic violence has been elaborated with the support of the United States Embassy and 26 individuals have been trained on the topics related to domestic violence, trafficking and child exploitation. The number of beneficiaries of the victim and witness coordinator office has been increasing over the years. In 2019, 8348 individuals used the service of witness and victim's coordinators.

124. In 2016, the GoG expanded the scope of the VAW/DV NAP significantly broadening the obligations undertaken by Georgia, as well as ensuring increased protection of VAW/DV victims/survivors. Previous NAPs have focused solely on domestic violence. The VAW/DV NAPs for 2016–2017 and 2018–2020 cover violence against women more broadly and foresee activities aimed at the awareness raising, strengthening and expansion of services, establishment of a data collection system, further alignment of the legislation and policies with relevant international standards, cooperation with local municipalities and participation of survivors in policymaking.

125. In line with the Istanbul Convention, a training course on "Violent Attitudes and Behaviour Change" for perpetrators has been developed (supported by UN Women) in 2015 and since 2016 is operated by the MoJ within probation services. The programme has been refined/improved and since 2019 has been operated in two penitentiary establishments. The programme is based on the Spanish Intervention Programme for the Rehabilitation of GBV Perpetrators (PRIA and PRIA MA). Aimed at the reduction/elimination of different types of violent behaviours, modification of sexist and discriminatory conduct and prevention of recidivism, the programme further serves the purpose of helping perpetrators with a history of violent behaviour understand the gender dimensions of violence, acquire new skills for the conflict resolution, developing behavioural norms based on equality and respect in partnerships.

126. One of the main functions of the State funded Legal Aid Service (LAS) is the prevention of domestic violence and protection of the rights of VAW/DV victims. The LAS provides free legal aid to survivors, including legal consultations, drafting of legal document and court representation in protective order proceedings, despite the

socioeconomic status of the victim.⁵⁶ In addition, victims are entitled to free legal aid in civil and administrative cases related to domestic violence.⁵⁷

127. In September 2016, the first state-run crisis centre in Georgia was opened in Tbilisi (supported by UN Women) providing “out-patient” services (short-term accommodation, meals, hygiene supplies and clothing, psychosocial, socioeconomic, legal services and referral to shelters and translation/interpretation as needed) to VAW/DV survivors. Crisis centres in Gori, Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Marneuli were opened (supported by UN Women) and are now operational and funded fully from the state budget. Currently, the State Fund is operating five crisis centres across the country.

128. In 2012 a nation-wide 24/7 VAW/DV hotline was launched by the State Fund. As of 2016, the hotline 116-006 can respond to multiple incoming calls simultaneously and since 2019 is available in Georgian and 7 foreign languages: English, Russian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Arabic and Persian Languages.

129. In addition, the State Fund runs 5 shelters for VAW/DV survivors throughout Georgia that are fully funded by the state. As a result, the state funding for VAW/DV specialized services increased by 87 per cent between 2014 and 2017.⁵⁸

130. To encourage decentralization of specialized services VAW/DV survivors and increase access, crisis centres in Telavi and Zugdidi have been set up jointly by a local NGO Women’s Consultation Centre “Sakhli” in collaboration with respective local municipalities. Funding for Telavi and Zugdidi crisis centres will be taken over by the local municipalities as of 2021.

131. In November 2017, minimum standards for the operation of crisis centres have been promulgated to ensure uniform quality of services in the country.⁵⁹ The minimum standards are mandatory for all service providers, both state-run, as well as operated by NGOs.

132. To ensure compliance of the VAW/DV specialized services with relevant standards and best practices, the Gender Equality Department of the PDO is carrying out regular monitoring of state-run shelters and crisis centres. The PDO issues relevant recommendations for the State Fund on further improvement of the services and elimination of any gaps identified.

133. The State Fund and MoLHSA (supported by UNFPA) have developed SOPs for healthcare system response to VAW/DV, in line with the WHO guidelines, on the identification of victims/survivors, treatment and referral. These guidelines are intended for primary and secondary healthcare services to more efficiently identify and provide relevant support to female victims of violence.

134. The activities of LEPL National Forensics Bureau are regulated by the law and the regulations approved by the Government. In cases of domestic violence, Bureau examination is scheduled by law enforcement bodies, judicial authorities and private individuals.

⁵⁶ According to the changes introduced in 2018.

⁵⁷ Law on Legal Aid Service; Article 5, paragraph 2⁴ and 2⁵.

⁵⁸ 538,493GEL in 2014 and 1,008,677 in 2017 (Source: LEPL State Fund for the Protection and Assistance to the Victims of Human Trafficking).

⁵⁹ Decree of the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs elaborated Ministerial Order N01--64N on “Minimum Standard Requirements for Crisis Centre Establishment and Functioning”.

Paragraphs 22 and 23 – Trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution

135. The national counter-trafficking policy has been implemented focusing on four key areas: a) crime prevention, b) victim protection, c) proactive investigation and d) effective criminal prosecution and enhanced collaboration. The policy has been shaped and coordinated by the Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (ICCT). The National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (TNAP) for 2017–2018 and the subsequent TNAP for 2019–2020 extensively cover issues related to the prevention of trafficking of minors and provision of child-friendly services to survivors.

136. According to the US State Department Reports on trafficking in human beings, Georgia has consistently maintained a leading position in the Tier 1 in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. According to the Walk Free Foundation 2019 report, Georgia ranked 18th among 183 countries.

137. One of the priorities of the GoG is the proactive identification of the facts of human trafficking, particularly, trafficking in women and girls, and prosecution of responsible individuals. In this regard, since 2013, 4 special mobile groups have been operating within the MIA tasked with the proactive examination of high risk-places (bars, clubs, saunas and etc.) across the country in order to detect human trafficking cases. Since 2019 the number of special mobile groups has been raised from 4 to 6.

138. The government operates two specialized shelters for trafficking victims in Tbilisi and Batumi and 6 crisis centres for presumed victims and provides medical and psychological assistance, legal aid, childcare and reintegration services, and a one-time financial compensation of 1,000GEL. Victims can initially stay at the shelter for three months, which could be extended upon the victim's request. The shelters offer separate sections for men, women, and children. Both Georgian and foreign nationals are eligible to receive these services. The Prosecutor General's Office's Victim-Witness Coordinators provide counselling services to victims throughout the investigation process and the court proceedings.

139. In February 2014, based on the Memorandum of Cooperation concluded between the MIA, Prosecutor's Office and IOM Mission to Georgia, on Increasing Professionalism of Law Enforcement Agencies in the Sphere of Combating Trafficking, a Task Force was established and staffed with investigators and prosecutors trained and equipped with special knowledge and competences in trafficking related matters.

140. The Prosecutor's Office is implementing a zero-tolerance policy against human trafficking, possible victims of trafficking are proactively identified, investigation is initiated on all possible facts and effective prosecutorial oversight is ensured.

141. During 2014–2019, prosecution for human trafficking was initiated against 49 individuals, 29 women and 29 girls were granted the status of statutory victims and 10 women and 1 girl were granted the status of victim of human trafficking. 24 defendants were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 7–15 years; one trafficker has been sentenced to life in prison.

142. Georgian legislation differentiates status of "victim of trafficking" and "status of statutory victim of trafficking". The status of victim of trafficking is granted to the person by a Permanent Group of the Inter-Agency Council on Combatting Trafficking in Persons within 48 hours based on the questionnaires of mobile group of the State Fund for Protection of and Assistance to Statutory Victims of Trafficking in Persons (hereinafter – State Fund), while the status of statutory victim of trafficking is granted by law enforcement authorities in accordance with Criminal Procedure Code of

Georgia. The victim/statutory victim enjoys the same services (free legal aid, psychological and medical assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration measures, one-off compensation shelter and crisis centre) of State Fund after a person is granted with the status of victim/statutory victim. Regardless to the difference in the procedure of granting the status, there is no difference between their rights during the process of investigation and/or prosecution.

143. In 2014, to ensure proactive investigation and effective criminal proceedings against human trafficking, the ICCT approved Guidelines for Law Enforcement on the Investigation of Human Trafficking, Criminal Proceedings, and Treatment of Victims, further amended in 2017 in response to emerging challenges, providing detailed guidance on the investigation of trafficking cases.

144. In addition, the MIA approved SOPs for investigators, operatives and mobile examination teams for the identification of human trafficking crimes, including detailed descriptions of the signs of sexual and labour exploitation.

145. In December 2017, the ICCT has also approved Guidelines for the Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking for Personnel Working on the Georgian Border to help personnel detect possible victims of human trafficking at the borders and ensure effective referral.

146. To protect children in street situations from any kind of violence, including human trafficking on 22 June, 2016 relevant legislative amendments were adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in up to 10 legal acts aiming at (1) providing children in street situations with free of charge identification documents and (2) strengthening the role of social workers to remove the child from the family or separate minor from the perpetrator. The relevant bylaws were also amended aiming at creating legal basis to provide the children in street situations with free of charge ID cards and ensure their involvement in various state programs (education, healthcare, etc.). Furthermore, on September 12, 2016, the Government of Georgia approved a new Child Protection Referral Mechanism which has extended the list of responsible entities to refer the child violence cases to relevant agencies. In particular, all governmental institutions and their structural units, public law legal entities subordinate to government agencies, kindergartens, general educational institutions, sports and arts schools, medical service providers of all kinds, including community physicians, as well as local municipalities have a duty to refer the possible cases of child violence to both the Social Service Agency and the police.

147. In 2018, pimping was criminalized, and relevant amendments were made to the Criminal Code to ensure proper qualification of trafficking cases and preventing children from being forced into prostitution.

148. In accordance with new wording of the article 140 of the Criminal Code, sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16 shall be subject to more severe sanctions. The punishment foreseen under the article is deprivation of liberty for a term of 7 to 9 years and 8 to 10 years in aggravating circumstances.

149. During 2014–2018, criminal proceedings under the article 140 of the Criminal Code were initiated against 478 individuals, 500 women and girls were recognized as victims.

150. Since 2015, under Article 1501 of the Criminal Code, forced marriage is punishable in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.

151. In order to improve response, to trafficking in human beings, the MIA established the Human Rights Protection Department in 2018 and expanded its mandate in 2019. The department is now responsible for monitoring the quality of

investigation of domestic crime and violence against women, hate crimes, crimes committed by/against minors and human trafficking.

152. Georgia pays special attention to cooperation with civil society in order to ensure their active participation in the Anti-Trafficking policy. In this regard, the MoJ holds annual grant competitions for NGOs. During 2015–2017, the MoJ announced 3 grant competitions (with a total budget of 89,000 GEL).

153. In 2015, the MoJ allocated grants in the amount of 10,000 GEL for two local NGOs (the Youth Centre of Civil Initiatives “Momavali” and the Georgian Regional Media Association). With these funds, the NGOs have conducted informational campaigns on combating trafficking in Adjara and Imereti regions.

154. In 2016, the MoJ drew particular attention to children living and working on the street, one of the groups at highest risk of human trafficking. In order to provide children with protection and support, the MoJ allocated grants in the amount of 54,000 GEL for 2 NGOs “Initiative for Social Changes” and “World Vision Georgia”.

155. On the one hand, the grant projects were aimed at providing educational, cognitive, social, cultural and sports programs for children living and/or working on the street, that were identified by the SSA and were engaged in a second level preventive programme of the LEPL Crime Prevention Centre (CPC) of the MoJ. On the other hand, the grant projects were aimed at identifying new locations of homeless children during non-business hours and weekends.

156. The 2017 grant competition (with a budget of 25,000 GEL) also focused on children working and living on the street. The project aimed at raising public awareness on the risks related to children-in street situations, on legal mechanisms and services available for the protection of homeless children. The grant programme further included preparation/ dissemination of informational materials.

157. According to Article 15 of the law “On Combating Human Trafficking”, victims and statutory victims of human trafficking shall be released from criminal liability for committing any crime during the period of being victims and administrative liability for prostitution and illegal stay in Georgia.

Paragraphs 24 and 25 – Participation in political and public life

158. In Georgia, women’s participation in decision-making processes remains low. Under Georgian law, men and women have equal rights as voters and candidates.

159. In 2016, amendments were made to the law on Gender Equality to include a requirement for each municipality or city assembly to form a gender equality council charged with promoting gender equality and countering gender discrimination at the local level.

160. The Parliamentary Elections in October 2016 took a step forward for women’s political participation considering that previous Parliament had a fewer number of women. In 2012–2016, there were only 18 women MPs in Georgia, accounting for as low as 12 per cent of all 150 MPs. Following the elections in 2016, 24 women were able to gain seats, accounting for 16 per cent of the total number of MPs.

161. With the majority (52 percent) of the country’s population being female⁶⁰ and a higher number of university graduates being women,⁶¹ the underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes – including politics, speaks to inherent inequality caused by a wide range of gaps in economic and social lives, as well as

⁶⁰ GEOSTAT. Nd. Population and Demography. Read more at <https://bit.ly/2ogZqnQ>.

⁶¹ GEOSTAT. Nd. Gender and Statistics. Education. Read more at <https://bit.ly/2JiO2PD>.

low political awareness. The Constitution of Georgia upholds the value of equality and requires the government to ensure equality between men and women.⁶² However, de facto inequalities are still widespread.

162. The Central Election Commission (CEC) carries out relevant activities based on the principles of equality. The CEC acknowledges gender inequality in political participation as a serious challenge to Georgia's democracy and long-term development.

163. In 2011, The CEC established a Gender Equality Council responsible for creating and implementing a Gender Equality Policy of the Election Administration and supporting implementation of gender equality related recommendations elaborated by the GoG and international organizations. The administration drafted a Strategic Plan for 2015–2019 and annual action plans. One of the strategic objectives was to support the development of an environment with greater gender equality, through the implementation of a gender equality policy, encouraging women's participation in political and public life.

164. The CEC defines annual priorities for grant projects. In 2016–2017, support for women's participation in Parliamentary (2016) and local self-government (2017) elections was prioritized. Special measures were put in place to target ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, IDPs and women from rural highlands.

165. During the 2016–2017 elections, the CEC and the training centre⁶³ launched training programs for potential women candidates. In 2016, 53 potential women candidates representing different political parties and initiative groups participated in the training. One candidate was later elected through the proportional system. Some 69 potential women candidates participated in the training launched in 2017. Out of these women, 16 were elected, 3 of them were elected through the majoritarian system.

166. Disaggregating data by sex, the administration informs its efforts aimed at achieving a gender-balanced election environment. It further provides additional information to all individuals engaged in the election process. During local self-government elections in 2017, out of 3,440,123 registered voters, 53.76 per cent were women. Some 791,993 women participated in elections (first round), constituting 49.38 per cent of women voters.

167. In 2017, for the 970 proportional seats in the assemblies, parties have designated, and the election administration has registered 12,902 candidates. Out of these 4,755 were women (36.85 per cent). For the 1,088 majoritarian seats at the assemblies, parties have designated, and the election administration has registered 4,727 candidates. Out of these 780 candidates (16.50 per cent) were women, and 16 women were proposed by initiative groups. In total, 369 mayoral candidates were registered for 5 self-governing cities and 59 self-governing communities (municipalities) out of whom 40 registered candidates (10.84 per cent) were women.

168. In the two rounds of elections, in total 2,058 individuals were elected to the assemblies out of whom 277 are women (13.46 per cent). Compared to the results of the 2014 elections the number of elected women has increased by 1.7 per cent. Out of 277 women members of the assemblies, 190 women were elected based on

⁶² Constitution of Georgia. 2018. Article 13 – Right to Equality. Para 3. from <https://bit.ly/2MuyThU>.

⁶³ Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Center (Training Center), a Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) under the control of the CEC.

proportional system, while 87 – women were elected based on majoritarian system. One woman was elected as mayor of self-governing city/community.

169. Similar trends in terms of women’s political participation are observed in the Parliament. Out of 150 parliamentarians elected in 2016, 23 (15.33 per cent) were women (including 6 elected through the majoritarian system and 17 through the proportional system) representing a 3.33 per cent increase as compared to the 2012 elections.

170. In 2017, taking into consideration assembly election results, 15 qualified political parties received additional financial support for balancing candidate list on gender-basis. In the past, only 11 political parties had received such incentives.

171. On December 16, 2018 first female president of Georgia has been sworn into office.

172. As for the executive branch of the Government, currently, five women are serving as ministers in the government of 11 ministers, including the Prime-Minister.

173. In December 2017, the Parliament of Georgia elected a woman as Public Defender of Georgia for a term of 5 years.

Paragraphs 26 and 27 – Education

174. In Georgia, the expected years of schooling are 15.7 and mean years of schooling are 12.8 for girls as compared to 15.2 and 12.8 boys respectively.⁶⁴ The gross enrolment ratio at the primary school level is 103, 107 at secondary school level is and 58 at the tertiary education level, while the adult literacy rate (15 years and above) is 99.6 per cent.⁶⁵

175. The current Government expenditure on education is 3.8 per cent of the GDP.⁶⁶ In 2019, the GoG submitted a special legislative initiative to the Parliament, increasing public funding of education during the next 3 years and reaching 6 per cent of the GDP by 2022, accounting to about a quarter of the entire state budget.

176. The main goal of the ongoing education system reform is to make it more flexible, modern and oriented at quality educational outcomes. In order to achieve these goals, the educational system has to be accessible to everyone providing all citizens with equal opportunities to achieve high-quality sustainable results.

177. In terms of important developments and changes aimed at ensuring long-term positive outcomes, a special funding system has been developed to support inclusive education at all levels and implementation of social inclusion programs aimed at ensuring integration of students with special educational needs.

178. Since 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) is implementing a transitional educational programme “A Second Chance for Education” for children living and working on the streets. Between 2016–2017 the number of children engaged in this programme increased from 80 to 101. Almost 40 per cent of the programme beneficiaries are girls and 40 per cent of these girls are representatives of ethnic minorities.

179. In order to raise public awareness on children in contact with street and vulnerable groups of children, a training module entitled “Identification of Children’s

⁶⁴ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report (2018); see at:

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GEO#>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Educational Needs, Communication and Cooperation Strategies” has been elaborated. Based on the module, the TPDC of the MoESCS organizes trainings for teachers and special teachers of public schools.

180. In order to improve and strengthen the mechanism for the identification of the children under the risk of dropout, the LEPL Education Management Informational System (EMIS) of the MoESCS was provided with recommendations and support by local and international experts.

181. Participation of students with special needs in formal education is increasing. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of students with special needs increased from 5,268 to 6,841 (2,418 girls and 4,423 boys). In 2018, within the framework of the programme “Supporting Inclusive Learning”, informational databases have been developed to collect information on persons with disabilities, including girls with disabilities in education to improve the quality of their engagement in the formal education system.

Paragraphs 28 and 29 – Employment

182. The estimated gross national income per capita for women (2011 PPP \$) is 6,504 as compared to men 12,929. The share of employment of women in non-agriculture is 44.3 per cent of the total employment in non-agriculture sectors. The total unemployment rate is 0.84 (female to male ratio). The labour force participation rate for women (ages 15 and older) is 56 per cent.

183. Georgia’s total unemployment rate 12.87 per cent in 2018 was the lowest during the past decade,⁶⁷ and decreased by almost 2 percentage points as compared to 2014 data (14.6 per cent).⁶⁸ According to GEOSTAT, in 2018, the female to male employment ratio was 49 to 63 per cent and the unemployment rate was 11 to 14 per cent accordingly.⁶⁹

184. Also, women often tend to work in less profitable sectors of the economy and occupy lower-paying positions than men within the same sector. The majority of women is employed in jobs with a caring or service dimension. Women account for around 75 per cent of employees in the health care and social sectors, 60 per cent of people working in the hospitality sector, and 84 per cent of teachers. Fewer than 10 per cent of women work in construction, while 23 per cent are employed in transport and communications. Many women also work in the informal sector and in unpaid subsistence farm work.⁷⁰

185. The HR NAP (2014–2016; 2016–2017 and 2018–2020) contains a section on GEWE addressing women’s economic empowerment, to be achieved through business education and capacity development support, including in agriculture and agro-business, increasing women’s participation in agricultural cooperatives and ensuring their involvement in rural development.⁷¹ A specially designated working group under CGE is also working on WEE issues.

⁶⁷ Woman and Man in Georgia, 2017; http://www.GEOSTAT.ge/cms/site_images/_files/english/health/W&M%20ENG-2018.pdf.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ GEOSTAT, Woman and Man, 2019.

⁷⁰ Georgia – Country Gender Assessment; December 2018; pg. 15.

⁷¹ See, activities 13.1.4.1–13.1.4.5, Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights for 2016–2017.

186. To promote employment of women and men, the GoG is implementing active labour market policy through state program on training/retraining and qualification raising of job-seekers.

187. The program is aimed at raising competitiveness of job seekers in demanded professions through education and training and ultimately supporting their employment. Women are prioritized for the enrolment in the program. In 2019, a total of 2457 applicants participated in the program out of whom 1,679 participants were women. As a result of the program, 478 women were employed in 2019.

188. Annex XXX of the Association Agreement includes a list of EU directives, which the Georgian labour and employment legislation had to be aligned with. Relevant legislative amendments were elaborated and passed to the Labour Code of Georgia, the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, Law of Georgia on Public Service, and the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality on February 19, 2019.

189. The law of Georgia on Public Service was amended in 2017 obliging public entities to take measures to ensure equal treatment of persons employed and to include provisions prohibiting discrimination in internal rules and other documents and to ensure their enforcement.

190. The mandatory paid maternity leave is 183 days, increased from 126 since 2014. The Law on Public Service of Georgia further allows employees to take time off work for prenatal care, while the Labour Code prohibits termination of employment during maternity leave and considers terminating labour relations to be inadmissible during the period of maternity, newborn adoption leave of absence, and child care additional leave of absence after a female employee notifies the employer about her pregnancy.

191. In May 2019, championed by the GEC, the second package of amendments on the topic of sexual harassment passed, introducing a ban on sexual harassment in public spaces to the Code of Administrative Offences of Georgia, with the MIA, through police, being the primary enforcing authority. Relevant amendments have also been adopted to the Labour Code and Law on Civil Services to prohibit workplace sexual harassment. The mandate of the PDO has been further expanded to handle sexual harassment complaints.

Paragraphs 30 and 31 – Health

192. Free healthcare within the framework of the Universal Healthcare Programme (UHP) is one of the most successful areas of the State Strategy on “Engagement through Cooperation”. Individuals living in Georgia’s occupied territories are able to benefit from different types of state programmes (see more information under paragraphs 12 and 13 – Applicability of the Convention and paragraphs 34–35 – Disadvantaged Groups of Women).

193. The maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 live births) has decreased to 27.4 in 2018 from 32.3 in 2015, while infant mortality rate fell from 8.6 in 2015 to 8.1 (per 1,000 live births).⁷²

194. In order to decrease maternal and infant mortality, as well as morbidity rates and to increase access to reproductive health services, a National Strategy on Maternal and Infant Healthcare 2017–2030 has been developed defining the country’s policy

⁷² <https://www.ncdc.ge/Pages/User/Documents.aspx?ID=f10b3ffb-da47-4488-94df-2f03764cf365&language=en-US>.

for maternal and infant healthcare, family planning, sexual and reproductive health for the next fourteen years.

195. In 2015, a five-year stock of contraceptives was provided free of charge (supported by USAID) to primary healthcare facilities across the country, including combined oral contraceptives, progesterone pills and condoms. Women's consultation centres were provided with implanon and intrauterine devices (IUD). The contraceptive prevalence among married or in-union women of reproductive age (15–49 years) is 40.9 per cent.⁷³

196. A new abortion regulatory mechanism has been established at the MoLHSA. A pre-abortion consultation/interview has been introduced, as an interactive process that includes provision of the patient with assistance, additional information and professional opinion, by means of sympathy and interchange to ensure informed consent of the patient on the provision of surgical services or medication for the artificial termination of pregnancy.⁷⁴

197. The number of abortions decreased by 42 per cent between 2012–2018. To date, 97 per cent of abortions is done in the 20–44 age group.⁷⁵

198. A special policy has been introduced to eliminate the practice of foetal sex selection prohibiting termination of a pregnancy on the grounds of child sex selection, except in cases when it is required to avoid sex-linked hereditary disease.⁷⁶

199. In 2018, the sex ratio at birth (SRB) was 106 (male to 100 female).⁷⁷ The SRB for 4-year-olds averaged 108.5 boys for every 100 girls in 2015.⁷⁸ According to 2016 data, among the 56,569 registered births, there were 28,887 male births and 27,682 female births – a distribution corresponding to normal SRB of 105 male births per 100 female births.⁷⁹

200. A drug substitution therapy is operated by the MoLHSA⁸⁰ offering treatment to patients with a substance addiction. The number of women on substitution therapy has increased from 12 in 2012 to 69 in 2019.⁸¹

201. In 2014, an intensive, 12-Steps programme has been introduced within the penitential system aiming at the rehabilitation of inmates with a dependency on alcohol or other substances.⁸² During 2016–2019, 32 female convicts have completed the rehabilitation course.

⁷³ Geostat/Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018. <https://www.geostat.ge/media/28802/SFR---2018-Georgia-MICS---Eng.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Ministerial Decree N01-74/N, of the Minister of Healthcare “On Approval of the Rules of Artificial Termination of Pregnancy, October 7, 2017.

⁷⁵ GEOSTAT, Woman and Man, 2019.

⁷⁶ Ministerial Decree N01-74/N, on the Approval of the Rules for Artificial Termination of Pregnancy, section 14.

⁷⁷ GEOSTAT, Woman and Man, 2019.

⁷⁸ GEOSTAT, 2015.

⁷⁹ Ch. Guilмото & S. Tafuro, *Trends in Sex Ratio at Birth in Georgia*, p. 28.

⁸⁰ Decree No592 of the Government of 28 December 2017 on Approval of State Healthcare Programs.

⁸¹ Number of women in drug substitution treatment: 2012 – 12; 2013 – 17; 2014 – 31; 2015 – 33; 2016 – 31; 2017 – 48, 2018 – 57; 2019 – 69 Source: LEPL Social Service Agency.

⁸² Ministerial decree N161, of the Minister of Corrections and Probation, “Procedures for Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Program “Atlantis” for Convicts at Penitentiary Establishments”.

Paragraph 32 and 33 – Rural women

202. According to the census data of 2014, the rural population has decreased by 24 per cent since 2002. Part of the rural population migrates to urban centres – mainly to towns. However, most of the internal migrants move to the capital. According to the GEOSTAT, the migration rate is higher among men than it is among women.⁸³

203. The Strategy of Agricultural Development of Georgia 2015–2020 provides a vision for the development of the agricultural sector in Georgia and considers seven main directions of development. The development of information databases and gender disaggregated data collection is planned under the second direction – institutional development.⁸⁴ Similarly, the NAP accompanying the Strategy contains two references to gender: a recommendation to collect gender-disaggregated data for the development of a market information system, and a recommendation to involve women in the development of agricultural cooperatives.

204. Georgia's Rural Development Strategy 2017–2020 lists its three priorities. It references women in one priority area: social conditions and living standards. The accompanying NAP foresees 70 newly constructed or rehabilitated kindergartens. Provision of affordable kindergarten schools is vital to encourage more women to enter the formal market.

205. There are no legal barriers for women to be registered as landowners, restricted access to productive resources, such as agricultural land, is identified one of the causes of financial difficulties for rural women.⁸⁵ Compared to men, women's agricultural participation occurs on a smaller scale, often as contributing family members.⁸⁶

206. The rate of land ownership is higher for men: the 2014 agricultural census found that 70 per cent of total agricultural holdings were operated by men: of 642,209 holdings, women held only 198,446. In addition, women's parcels of land are smaller than that of men's.⁸⁷ The preference for passing land and property to sons rather than daughters is particularly high among ethnic minority families.⁸⁸

207. In fact, men are more than twice as likely to be registered as landowners as women.⁸⁹ The incidence of ownership of livestock among men are 41.6 per cent and 38.6 per cent for women. The gender gap is relatively moderate since livestock in the households is not owned personally but mostly belongs to the household.⁹⁰

208. In 2014, 694,276 women and 1,328,455 men were registered landowners. In 2019, the number of landowners increased to 1,089 604 and 1,700 889 for women and men respectively.

209. There are no legal barriers preventing women from obtaining access to credit, however, loans are de facto less accessible to women as many do not possess land or property to serve as collateral.⁹¹ In Georgia, women are more often co-owners of property than outright owners, and property is generally registered under men's

⁸³ GEOSTAT, *Woman and Man*, 2019.

⁸⁴ Strategy for Agriculture Development in Georgia 2015–2020.

⁸⁵ UN Women, *Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and Local Development Systems*, 2016.

⁸⁶ UN Women, *Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and Local Development Systems*, 2016.

⁸⁷ NDP, *Gender and Employment in the South Caucasus and Western CIS*, 2015.

⁸⁸ Georgia – Country Gender Assessment; December 2018; Asian Development Bank; pg. 15.

⁸⁹ Pilot Survey on Measuring Asset Ownership and Entrepreneurship from a Gender Perspective in Georgia, (2018) GEOSTAT/Asian Development Bank.

⁹⁰ GEOSTAT Pilot Survey on Measuring Asset Ownership and Entrepreneurship from a Gender Perspective GEORGIA.

⁹¹ Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations (2018), volume 2. Pg. 38.

names.⁹² Women more frequently obtain microfinance loans, which do not require substantial collateral. Significantly, microfinance institutions offer comparatively expensive credit.

210. The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MESD) in association with the MoEPA launched the state programme Produce in Georgia aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in Georgia, stimulating local production – especially in least economically developed regions, supporting new enterprise development, creating new jobs, and increasing export potential. In 2015–2016, the number of applicants within the framework of the micro and small entrepreneurship promotion programme Produce in Georgia was 43,885 (37.5 per cent were women). Under the programme, 8,880 applicants were trained (36 per cent women). The number of programme beneficiaries was 4,911 (40 per cent women).⁹³

211. The LEPL Georgia Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) under the MESD seeks to promote financing of innovative projects and start-ups. In 2016, 35 per cent of GITA’s project beneficiaries were women.⁹⁴

212. The MoEPA, and its LEPL Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA) has been working on strengthening the role of women in agricultural cooperatives. Set-up and development of agricultural cooperatives will foster economic growth, promote employment of rural population and prevent rural migration.

213. During 2015–2016, the ARDA has implemented special measures, including training for women and encouragement of women-led cooperatives. As of December 31st, 2017, in 1,352 registered agricultural cooperatives 3,299 shareholders are women out of a total of 13,482. In 295, agricultural cooperatives, chairpersons are women. A total of 77 women’s cooperatives have been registered.⁹⁵

214. The projects initiated by the MoEPA include Preferential Agro Credit Project – 7 per cent of the project beneficiaries were women; Promoting 2016 spring works for Small Farmers – 34 per cent of beneficiaries were women; Agro-Insurance – 3,129 women received agro-insurance to cover risk related expenditures; Plant the Future – 35 project beneficiaries, including 9 women.⁹⁶

215. In November 2015, the National Agency of Public Registry (NAPR) of the MoJ launched a project Gender and Property aimed at informing the public about the principles of gender equality and equal rights in the distribution of property. Women fall behind men in all regions of Georgia with regard to property registration, in some municipalities the share of women is especially low.⁹⁷

216. The LEPL Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) under the MoJ has opened community centres across Georgia to increase access of the rural population to more than 200 public sector and some private sector services. Apart from the

⁹² UN Women, *Accessibility of Microfinance Institution Services for Women: Existing Barriers and Opportunities*, 2013.

⁹³ VI Periodic Report of Georgia -Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

⁹⁴ Micro Grants Program: 17 (20 per cent) women among 84 beneficiaries; In January 2017 – 3 women out of 12 beneficiaries (25 per cent); “Start-up Georgia” program: 4 (20 per cent) female beneficiaries out of 20 high-tech idea startups; 140 (34 per cent) belong to women out of the 420 applications submitted to Industrial Laboratory; (45 per cent) women out of 205 participants of the project “Start Business with Fab Lab”.

⁹⁵ VIth Periodic Report of Georgia Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

⁹⁶ Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia 2016 Progress Report on National Action Plan of 2014–2016 for the Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia; pg. 17.

⁹⁷ <https://napr.gov.ge/p/1113>.

municipal administration offices, the community centres offer special spaces for civil engagement free internet access, computers and videoconference equipment and modern electronic library services. Currently, 76 community centres are operating across Georgia.

217. The MoEPA (supported by ENPARD, USAID, and UNDP) is implementing a number of projects aimed at protecting women's rights in rural areas. A series of training, seminars and conferences were organized (supported by Mercy Corps, People in Need, CARE, OXFAM GB, FAO and other international organizations SDC, UNDP, USAID) on organizational development, business project development, women's economic leadership, women and food safety, budget planning and grant application writing skills, financial planning, project management, budgeting, and business planning and related issues. More than 5000 women participated in the courses.

218. The MoEPA (supported by Mercy Corps) delivered a number of educational programmes in 21 municipalities on farmer cooperation principles, business planning and financial management, agricultural technologies and environment protection. In total, 179 training sessions have been conducted, and among 1,105 participants 25 per cent were women. A leadership and effective communication course were organized for municipality and informational-consultation service representatives. It focused on women's empowerment in decision-making processes. Some 39 per cent of farmer cooperatives are women. Among 74 funded cooperatives, women were the majority in 18 of them. Among 74 cooperatives, 12 are chaired by women.

219. ARDA conducted training sessions for women-led cooperatives in Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions (supported by OXFAM GB, BRIDGE) on organizational management, financing and accounting, processing of non-timber forest products and protection of safety measure during processing, development of marketing strategies, branding and certification, women's economic leadership and advocacy skills development, project writing and business management.

220. In addition, volunteer lifeguard teams of the local women and men in Adjara, Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti were established (supported by ECHO, OXFAM GB and BRIDGE) and training was provided on emergency response to manmade and natural disasters. The above teams were equipped with safety equipment.

221. In 2016–2017, two projects in support of agricultural development in Adjara were implemented (supported by UNDP) to promote women's engagement in different programs, including agricultural development programmes. Within the framework of the project, 212 women participated in the training on agriculture-specific accounting.

222. In 2017, training programmes on primary agricultural production and management were launched in Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Samtskhe-Javakheti Regions. Some 45 per cent out of 2,210 participants were women.

223. In 2016–2017, in scope of an economic development programme (supported by the Swedish Government), 695 workplaces were created (25 per cent for women). Some 1,700 individuals have improved their professional skills in agriculture (30 per cent women), while 1,412 self-employed participated in professional training on agriculture (30 per cent women) and 14,390 individuals increased their income through agricultural activities (25 per cent women).

224. An agriculture development programme has been launched, where women farmers and producers in the field of agricultural and tourism are participating (45 per cent of the total pool of beneficiaries). Some 44,260 women (37 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries) were introduced to modern technologies (supported by

USAID). In addition, training sessions for young entrepreneurs were organized for 115 participants, 50 were women.

225. During 2014–2017, in 25 communities of the Kakheti and Samegrelo regions, a total of 10,162,944 GEL was allocated from the local budget to fund 209 projects out of 460 projects submitted to local self-government by women’s initiative groups aimed at solving local problems (supported by UNDP). Furthermore, 59 micro grant projects were co-funded by UNDP and local self-governments.

226. During 2014–2017, 1,422 women were trained, and 1628 women owners of small and medium farm production, were provided with informational-consultation services at partner educational facilities.⁹⁸ It is a common practice that, upon completion of short-term training courses, women engage in state vocational education programmes offered by the same educational institutions. Upon completion of the courses, approximately 60 per cent of the beneficiaries have been employed between 2012–2017.

227. The Women Farmers’ Association was established in 2013 (supported by UNDP) currently uniting 150 farmers from almost all spheres of agriculture. The WFA is providing support to women engaged in farming in rural areas.

Paragraph 34 and 35 – Disadvantaged groups of women

228. Internal displacement of thousands of people as a result of armed conflicts in 1990’s and 2008 is a grave concern for Georgia. According to the official statistics, there were 259,247 IDPs (88,283 households) registered in the country by 2014. According to GEOSTAT, the number of IDPs by 2018 was up to 283,000 (53 per cent per cent are women).⁹⁹ Around 61 per cent live in IDP centres and the rest – with relatives or in private housing.¹⁰⁰

229. The LAS offers free legal advice to IDPs. They are entitled to in-person and telephone/online consultation services. The LAS further provides legal aid, including court representation, to IDPs in the cases foreseen under the law.

230. The State Fund is operating specialized services for the elderly. More specifically residential homes for elderly are located in Tbilisi (42 beneficiaries, 22 women) and in Kutaisi (93 beneficiaries, 58 women).

231. The homes for the elderly are specialized facilities operating 24/7 to provide accommodation and social services to individuals of retirement age with limited ability of self-care, in line with the acting legislation.

232. The state supports social services development, both residential and alternative services, as well as a wide range of community and family-type social services. In 2018, a Social Rehabilitation and Childcare State Programme was approved¹⁰¹ to provide a variety of services, including community services for elderly and persons with disabilities (accommodation, daily service and food three times a day, first aid,

⁹⁸ Public College “Aisi”, Public College “Pazisi” and Shota Meskhia State Learning University.

⁹⁹ GEOSTAT, *Woman and Man*, 2019.

¹⁰⁰ The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, <http://www.mra.gov.ge/eng/static/55>. Other reports show slightly different numbers: According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, there were 293000 IDPs by the end of 2018 (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/georgia>); and UN Women Study (UN Women Georgia. (2014.) *Study on Needs and Priorities of IDPs and Conflict-Affected Women and Girls*. Tbilisi: UN Women) estimates IDPs number at 258599. Ratios by sex and type of dwelling cited in text are based on UN Women study.

¹⁰¹ Decree N601 of the Government, 2017.

treatment-rehabilitation, in-patient and out-patient medical services, and other services).

233. Since 1 January 2016, the female correctional facility is equipped with infrastructure and services for long-term visits. With standard short-term visits, female convicts have a right to have 3 long-term visits and 2 additional visits per year as a form of encouragement. Long-term visit may last up to 23 hours. In addition, a long-term visit can be prolonged to up to 47 hours. Female convicts enjoy the right to family visits as well. Such visits take place in a room specially allocated for this purpose and last up to 3 hours. Female convicts may have 1 family visit in a month and additional 1 visit as an incentive.

234. In addition, with subject to the permission of the child's custodian and care facilities and consent of the penitentiary's administration, an inmate may be allowed to live together with her child of under three years of age at the specialized facility for women. Female prisoners, whose 3-year-old child has left the specialized facility, have a right, for 1 year, to leave the facility on holidays and day-offs in order to sustain relations with the child.

235. In 2018, the UN Independent Expert on Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz commended the GoG for recognizing the eradication of violence and discrimination as one of its main priorities, and firmly declaring sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds, referring to the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds of discrimination in the Anti-Discrimination Law.

236. Combating hate crimes remains a priority for the Prosecutor's Office. In 2017, aiming at the effective implementation of the recommendation elaborated for prosecutors on hate-motivated crimes, a special questionnaire was created, containing the instruction on conducting interview/interrogation of a probable victim, defendant and witness of hate crime. The mentioned questionnaire was sent to the POG employees, which improved the quality and efficiency of the measures taken for identifying hate motives in criminal cases.

237. During 2016–2017, homo/bi/transphobia motive were established in 73 criminal cases: on the grounds of sexual orientation – 16 cases, gender identity – 57 cases. In total 12 defendants were prosecuted with the indictments explicitly referring to sexual orientation and gender identity motive of the crime. In the above-mentioned cases 11 homosexual men and 19 transgender women were recognized as victims. During 2018–2019 sexual orientation and gender identity were examined in 132 cases, Prosecutions were launched against 59 individuals. 76 individuals were recognized as victims, among others 1 legal person.

238. In order to improve response *inter alia* to hate crimes, the MIA established the Human Rights Protection Department in 2018 and expanded its mandate in 2019, with the core function to investigations into crimes related to violence against women and domestic violence, crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination, hate crimes, trafficking and crimes committed by and/or towards minors. After the establishment of the Department, investigation of the crimes committed against LGBTI has improved, as evidenced by the increased number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions.

Paragraphs 36 and 37 – Marriage and family relations

239. Among women aged between 20–24 years, 14 per cent reports to be married by the age of 18. While the adolescent birth rate is 46.4 (births per 1,000 women ages

15–19).¹⁰² Combating child marriages and harmful practices is among state priorities. Through EMIS, the MoESCS is collecting data on children dropping out of school on the grounds of early marriage since 2016.

240. A number of state-wide awareness-raising campaigns have been held in Georgia to address the issue of child marriage. For example, in 2015–2016, the MoESCS implemented a Sub-programme on Parents’ Education and Engagement aimed at raising parents’ awareness regarding the risks related to early marriage. Meetings/public lectures were systematically held in regions, where facts of early marriage were often observed. Representatives of the MoESCS, psychologists, local police officers and social workers participated in the meetings.

241. Starting January 1, 2017 marriage in Georgia is permitted from the age of 18 and the spouses have equal personal and property rights and bear equal responsibilities in domestic relations. Latest amendments to the Civil Code of Georgia removed all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage at 18, and the Criminal Code was amended to criminalize forced marriage.

242. Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences foresees fines for parents neglecting their children, or failing to assume their “duties to raise, educate a minor and to provide him/her with dwelling, food and other conditions necessary for normal development”. In addition to the reporting requirements under the Criminal Code, Article 1726 establishes an administrative sanctions for a failure to detect and report instances of child abuse.

243. Article 30(g) of the Law on Education further empowers local self-government authorities to: “take measures determined by the legislation to ensure school attendance by pupils”. Article 5(10) of Ordinance № 437 authorizes educational institutions to refer cases of child abuse, including early and child marriage, to the competent authorities. Newly approved “Child Rights Code” sets further guarantees for improving child rights protection framework, including protection from violence.

Paragraph 38 – Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

244. Georgia has completed the National Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing+25¹⁰³ for the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

245. The comprehensive national-level review of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly included an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through a gender perspective. The review will inform further efforts of the GoG aimed at the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the provisions of the CEDAW.

¹⁰² United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report (2019); see at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GEO#>.

¹⁰³ <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/georgia.pdf?la=en&vs=2350>.

Paragraph 39 – Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

246. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a principal component of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The GoG has expressed its high-level political support to incorporating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national priorities and presented a voluntary national review of the SDGs in New York at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2016.

247. The GoG launched the nationalization process of the SDGs and prioritized Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Currently, Georgia adopted a mix of global and local targets (see Annex 2 – Global gender-specific SDG indicators available in Georgia) and indicators (see Annex 2 – Additional Country Specific Gender Indicators) for all 17 SDGs.

248. As a coordinating body for the SDG national processes, the GoG established a joint technical working group comprised of experts from different line ministries and GEOSTAT to facilitate the landing of the SDGs at the national level. As of May 2017, the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is facilitated through the Sustainable Development Goals Council.

249. The SDGs have been reflected in the national policies and integrated in a strategic umbrella document – the Annual Governmental Work Plan (AGWP), as well as other national, multi-sectorial strategies and action plans.

250. The GoG has ensured that the nationalized indicators are gender sensitive. Of the 54 gender-related indicators at the global level, 30 (56 per cent) have been adopted as is.

251. In 2017, to fill the national data gap on VAW/DV and to produce baseline data for SDG5, the GEOSTAT (supported by UN Women), conducted the first nation-wide research on violence against women in Georgia since 2009. The study explored the prevalence of intimate partner violence, domestic violence, non-partner physical and sexual violence, as well as perceptions and awareness of women and men around gender and violence. For the first time in Georgia, the study also generated data on the prevalence of sexual harassment and stalking at the national level.

252. In addition, GEOSTAT (supported by UN Women), launched an electronic Gender Data Portal at the end of 2018. This bilingual (English and Georgian) Portal can be accessed from GEOSTAT's official web page (geostat.ge). The Portal, along with the latest statistical publication "Women and Men in Georgia" reflects the observations and recommendations of gender data users collected by GEOSTAT through a series of consultation meetings. The Gender Data Portal presents key gender statistics in the fields of healthcare, education, population dynamics, employment and unemployment, income and expenditures, crime, influence and power, ICT, agriculture, social security and households. The page also contains statistical publications on gender as well as relevant legislation and other useful links. For the first time, in the latest publication of "Women and Men in Georgia" has made linkages between its gender data and the relevant gender indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Paragraph 40 – Dissemination

253. See paragraphs 8-9 – Visibility of the Convention.

Paragraph 41 – Ratification of other treaties

254. In 2017 Georgia, has become the 23rd country to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), the most comprehensive international treaty on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

255. The pre-ratification process of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance has been initiated. The issue is being reviewed by the relevant governmental agencies.

Paragraph 42 – Follow-up to the concluding observations

256. As a follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee to the fourth and fifth combined periodic reports of Georgia (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5), written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 21 and 25 thereof has been submitted to the Committee in July 2016.¹⁰⁴

Paragraphs 43 and 44 – Preparation of the next report

257. The MFA has coordinated the development of Georgia's sixth periodic report to CEDAW due in July 2018 in line with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents.¹⁰⁵ All relevant ministries and agencies, as well as the legislature have contributed to this report, while civil society organizations have also been consulted. This report is available in both Georgian and English.

III. Information relating to the articles in parts I, II, III and IV in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 13. Economic and Social Life – (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life

258. In 2016, the GoG approved the Culture Strategy 2025 in a transparent and participatory process. One of the missions of the strategy is the consideration of gender equality principles in cultural policy planning and development process, as well as application of cultural potentials in support of gender equality, by, *inter alia* supporting projects on gender equality by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS).

259. Between 2014–2016, the MoESCS and its 86 entities have implemented 137 projects with a total budget of 2,450,559GEL. Out of these, 76 projects were related to gender equality principles, while 26 supported participation of women in cultural life.

¹⁰⁴ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fGEO%2fCO%2f4-5%2fAdd.1&Lang=en.

¹⁰⁵ Compilation of Guidelines on the Form and Content of Reports to be Submitted by States Parties to the International Human Rights Treaties; HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6.

260. One of the highlights of the projects was women in literature. Georgian female writers have gained large popularity during local and international book festivals. Diversity of genres and themes, including social, religious and gender-related topics, stirred public interest.

261. Literature prizes awarded to female authors in different nominations is indicative of the success of women in literature. Supported by the MoESCS and the Georgian National Book Centre, Georgian and foreign publishing houses have translated and published a number of works by female authors works, many of whom were also present at the Frankfurt International Book Fair, where Georgia was the guest of honour in 2018.

262. In the framework of local and international literature festivals, lectures, special discussions and thematic reviews were held on the topics of gender equality. Georgian authors are actively participating in such events. In 2014, the Georgian National Filmography Centre (GNFC) and UN Women jointly produced a documentary on domestic violence in Georgia *Speak Out*.

263. Georgian female film directors have successfully captured the attention of the local and international audience by focusing their work on women's rights, women's role in the society, gender issues and etc. Articles on Georgian female film directors were published in international media.¹⁰⁶

264. Theatre plays an important role in raising public awareness and tackling social norms and stereotypes. In 2014–2017, a number of performances have been staged on the topics of gender inequality,¹⁰⁷ including by some of the major academic theatres in Georgia – such as the Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre and Rustaveli State Drama Theatre (supported by UN Women) having received positive feedback by critics, as making a difference in terms of fighting harmful gender norms.

265. In 2017 only 176 art projects – aimed at breaking gender stereotypes, have been implemented by several art centres, with the participation of different age groups, included seminars, public discussions and educational lectures, exhibitions and actions on gender equality. Projects aimed to raise awareness of professors, teachers and young generation regarding the topic. In addition, museums have organized variety of discussions, seminars and projects supporting women's employment and creative activity, implementation of female initiated projects.

266. The MoESCS has further targeted ethnic minority groups with a variety of projects, such as Mirza Patali Akhundovi state cultural museum project devoted to the Preservation of Azerbaijani Handmade Carpet Tradition, traditional Kisti and Georgian crafts targeting women.

267. Participation of IDPs and conflict-affected population in cultural life is a priority for the MoESCS. A number of measures have been implemented, including supporting teaching arts in areas densely populated with IDPs, different types of cultural events are organized in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo-Kartli, Pankisi valley and in the villages near the dividing line (Shida Kartli and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti), meetings with writers, artists and scientists, training courses and seminars, exhibitions, theatre performances, movie screenings, discussions and concerts.

¹⁰⁶ Pusan International film festival “Strength of Georgian Women Directors”; (2014) during Sydney film festival (2017) programme on 10 distinguished European female directors was opened by Rusudan Glurjidze film “Someone Else's Home”; film was also awarded at Beijing International film festival).

¹⁰⁷ Algeria, Frozen Pictures, Thunderstorm, Tarnished Dignity of Katharina Bloom, Miss Julie, Tram-Wish, Daughters, Lysistrata.

268. Traditional Georgian craft is another priority area for the MoESCS. This sphere is mostly stuffed by female employees. During 2014–2017, 18 exhibitions were organized in Georgia, as well as overseas.¹⁰⁸ Some 80 per cent of traditional craft masters, who participated in these events, were women.

269. Georgia is the first state in among the Eastern Partnership countries to become a member of the EU programme – “Creative Europe”. In scope of culture strategy, in order to develop creative industry and creative entrepreneurs across the country, “Guideline for Creative Industry Development in Georgia” was elaborated in 2016.

270. In May, 2016, Tbilisi hosted the first international conference on “Women and Arts for Economic Development”. The event was organized by Art International Women’s Association (AIWA). Along with popularization of Georgian arts, the event aimed at demonstration of art and highlighted women’s role in economy.

271. In order to develop creative industry, in January 2017, the government has established the LEPL “Creative Georgia”, which aims at capacity building of creative industry, institutional development of creative entrepreneurs; supporting export of creative goods and in general, internationalization of local creative industry.

272. In 2015, the MoESCS has introduced evaluation criteria for sports organizations (federations, associations, unions, committees and etc.), one of them being Gender Equality and Gender Balance. The performance of the sports organizations are assessed against these criteria.

273. In 2017, *HealthyGen*, a member association of the NFCG, has launched a programme on Gender Equality in School Sports and Physical Activities (supported by UNESCO) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS). The project is aimed at prioritizing promotion of healthy lifestyle, ensuring equal participation of girls and boys in physical activities sports in school and raising awareness and qualification of the physical education and sports teachers/coaches, improvement of physical education practice at school, support integration of gender equality principles.

274. In 2017, the MoESCS, in cooperation with the Tbilisi City Hall (supported by UN Women), has actively participated in events organized in the scope of “Women Engagement in Sports” campaign. Upon completion of the campaign posters and videos with participation of famous, active, veteran and young sportsmen has been prepared in order to promote gender equality in sports. In the scope of the project, TV and internet media campaigns have been carried out.

275. In June 2017, within the scope of the World Rugby under 20 Championship, women’s rugby team of Zugdidi municipality Darcheli village played a friendly match with the U20 team of the United Kingdom. The event was aimed at women sports popularization and development in Georgia.

276. In 2017, the MoESCS hosted one of the leading international sports organizations *Coaches across Continents* in Georgia. During a 5-day visit, experts have conducted training for more than 100 coaches of 20 different sports. The main goal of the project was to provide local coaches with information on significance of inclusiveness in sport, especially women’s participation in sports activities, as well as to promote their qualification.

277. Overall, the number of women engaged in sport increased from 19,432 to 26,761 between 2016–2017.

¹⁰⁸ Turkey, Ireland, USA, Italy, Germany, France and Spain.