



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Seventh periodic report submitted by the Republic of Moldova under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2024*^{**}

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** The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



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Abbreviations

CC	Criminal Code
CCET	Centre for Continuous Electoral Training
CC	The Constitutional Court
CEC	The Central Electoral Council
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFM	Centre of Forensic Medicine
CoE	Council of Europe
DV	Domestic Violence
EC	Equality Council
GD	Government Decision
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSM	Global System for Mobile communication
IGP	Inspectorate General of Police
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MER	Ministry of Education and Research
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MH	Ministry of Health
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MJ	Ministry of Justice
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCHR	The National Council for Human Rights
NDS	National Development Strategy
NHIC	The National Health Insurance Company
NHRAP	The National Human Rights Action Plan
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NTUCM	Trade Union Confederation of Moldova
ODA	Organisation for Entrepreneurship Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

PAS	Psycho – Pedagogical Assistance Services
PNADO III	National Action Plan on Human Rights for 2018 – 2022
RACs	Refugee Accommodation Centres
SCM	Superior Council of Magistracy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGLA	State Guaranteed Legal Aid
STEP	Statistics through Eastern Partnership
THB	Trafficking in human beings
UN	United nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WEP	Women's Empowerment Principles
WHO	World Health Organization
WUAI	Water User Associations for Irrigation

I. Introduction

1. In the name of continued progress and commitment to gender equality, the Republic of Moldova submits the Seventh Periodic Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This report reflects not only the sustained efforts and remarkable progress made in promoting women's rights and gender equality in our country, but also acknowledges the persistent challenges in achieving a fully equitable society. It also presents the commitments undertaken, which are detailed in the Annex 1.

2. In the spirit of CEDAW, this report highlights concrete actions taken by Moldova to eradicate discrimination and build an environment where women and girls can thrive without restrictions. From significant legislative reforms and innovative policies to awareness initiatives and empowerment programs, we document each important step taken to ensure that gender equality is not just a goal but an increasingly tangible reality.

3. The report also highlights how dialogue and collaboration between government, civil society, international partners and committed citizens contributes to advancing gender equality and combating discrimination. By presenting developments, relevant statistics and successful practices, it provides a complete picture of the progress made.

4. Over the past few years, Moldova has made significant progress in the field of gender equality, as reflected in *The Gender Gap Report* by the World Economic Forum. However, according to the Global Gender GAP Index Report 1, the country shows positive but uneven progress.¹

5. Aware that the road to full gender equality is an ongoing process, this report not only marks past and present achievements, but also outlines the direction for future actions. It is an open invitation to dialogue, innovation and collective action, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among all sectors of society to fulfil the promises of the Convention. Since ratifying the CEDAW Convention, Moldova has submitted its initial report to the Committee (2000), combined periodic reports – 2 and 3 in 2006, 4 and 5 in 2013, an interim report on preventing and combating domestic violence (DV) in 2015, and the 6th periodic report in 2018. The statistics in the report cover the period 2019-2022 and partly 2023.

6. Particular attention was paid to the comments/recommendations made by the CEDAW Specialised Committee following the evaluation of the 6th periodic report of Moldova (CEDAW/C/MDA/CO/6 of 02.03.2020). These recommendations were considered in developing new anti-violence policy documents and those aimed at ensuring gender equality.

7. This report has been prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), based on the CEDAW Committee's Instruction CEDAW/C/74/3/Rev.1 and HRI/GEN/2/Rev.4, with the participation of gender coordinators (focal points) from ministries and other central government authorities. The report underwent public consultation with representatives from the specialised committee responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the CEDAW Convention, relevant ministries, other authorities and public institutions, international organizations, and non-commercial organizations, including presentation, public discussion. The draft Report was published on the MLPS's website – www.social.gov.md. We note that this report serves not only as a record of our progress, but also as a statement of our shared resilience, commitment and hope for a future in which all people, regardless of

¹ From 52nd (in 2013) to 25th (in 2014). In 2018 it dropped to 35th place and in 2020 it moved up to 19th place. In 2022 it ranked the 16th.

gender, enjoy equality and full rights. Forward together, towards a fairer and more equal Moldova.

II. Part one – The main general document

General overview of the Republic of Moldova

A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the Republic of Moldova

8. From 2019 to 2023, the evolution of demographic processes has been characterized by a decrease in the number and deterioration of the population's age structure, driven by unfavourable aspects of fertility, increased external migration, the intensification of the ageing process, and general population mortality.

9. During 2020-2023 a negative trend in the population number has been observed. Thus, the preliminary number of the population with habitual residence in Moldova on 1 January 2023 was 2,500,000 persons, down by 52,300 persons (or 2.0 per cent compared to the beginning of the previous year), which confirms a clear trend of shrinking population (Table 1, Annex 2)².

10. The population density is decreasing, with a value of 89.9 inhabitants per 1 km² in 2018 and persistently decreasing to 82.8 inhabitants per 1 km² in 2023.

11. The distribution of the population by residential environments shows a predominance of the urban population. Women outnumber men in both urban and rural areas (Table 2, Annex 2)³.

12. The natural movement of the population also records negative values. In 2022, the lowest number of deaths, decreasing by 9,307 people (20.5 per cent) compared to the 2021. In the same year, there were 18,157 marriages and 9,565 divorces, with 52.7 per cent of married couples divorcing.

13. Life expectancy at birth for men has been decreasing steadily (from 68.1 in 2013 to 65.1 in 2021), although there was an increase of 2 years in 2022. The same situation is observed in women (75.55 in 2013 and 73.0 in 2021), but with an increase of 2.8 years in 2022 (Table 3, Annex 2)⁴. Women live longer than men by 8 years. This gap is due to higher levels of premature mortality of men.

14. The total fertility rate in 2022 has decreased compared to the previous year and stands at 1.7 live births per woman (Table 3, Annex 2). Although the total fertility rate in Moldova is relatively high, it still does not reach the replacement level of 2.1 live births per woman of reproductive age.

15. In 2023, the average monthly consumption expenditure of the population was 4,248.4 MDL per person, or 12.63 per cent more than in the previous year. Consumption expenses are influenced by the size of households. In single-person households, the average monthly expenditure per person is 1.7 times higher than in those with 5 or more people. Large households spend the most on food consumption

² https://statistica.gov.md/files/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2023/Moldova_cifre_rom_2023.pdf.

³ https://statistica.gov.md/files/files/publicatii_electronice/Statistica_teritoriala/Statistica_teritoriala_2022.pdf.

⁴ https://statistica.gov.md/files/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2023/Moldova_cifre_rom_2023.pdf.

(45.8 per cent of total expenditure). Average monthly expenditures nationwide were only exceeded by households consisting of up to 3 people.

16. The main destinations of household expenditure are food consumption (39.7 per cent, the increase in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic), payments for housing, water, electricity and gas (17.6 per cent), purchase of clothing and footwear (7.8 per cent). The remaining expenditure was directed towards paying for transport services (7 per cent), furniture, home equipment and maintenance (5.3 per cent), health (4.4 per cent), telecommunications (4.3 per cent), etc. Depending on the area, the consumption expenditure of urban households is 5,391.8 MDL and is 2,003 MDL higher than that of rural households (Table 4, Annex 2)⁵.

17. In 2019 the absolute poverty rate averaged 2,095.1 MDL per person per month,⁶ with the absolute poverty rate being 25.2 per cent. The rural population is at a much higher risk of poverty than the urban population. The poverty rate in 2019 in rural areas was 34.5 per cent compared to 11.2 per cent in urban areas. The poverty rate in households headed by women (26.6 per cent) is higher than that in those headed by men (24.6 per cent) and also exceeds the overall poverty rate (25.2 per cent). Poverty indices were higher in single-person households and in those with five or more people, the latter significantly exceeding the overall average (Table 5, Annex 2)⁷. In 2022, the overall absolute poverty rate of the population was 31.1 per cent.

18. Against the backdrop of economic inequalities, both in terms of income and expenditures, between the rural and urban populations, in recent years, according to the GINI coefficient,⁸ the degree of income inequality in the Republic of Moldova has been showing a slow decreasing trend, from 27.0 per cent in 2015 to 25.7 per cent in 2021 and 2022.⁹

19. The burden on the health and well-being of the population in Moldova remains non-communicable diseases,¹⁰ which account for more than 80 per cent of all premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases.

20. The results of the 2022 study *Population Access to Health Services*¹¹ indicate that the positive perception of health status decreases with age: women are more critical of their health perception compared to men: 51 per cent of men rate their health as good or very good, compared to 40.7 per cent of women. About 53 per cent of urban residents aged 16+ rate their health as good/very good, compared to 33 per cent of rural residents.

21. The prevalence of chronic diseases remains quite high. One in three people suffer from at least one chronic disease (Fig. 1, Annex 2). The prevalence rate of chronic diseases in women is higher than in men (353 cases compared to 264 cases per 1,000 inhabitants) (Fig. 2, Annex 2).

22. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the structure of the leading causes of death (Fig. 3, Annex 1), with diseases of the circulatory system remaining predominant

⁵ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/veniturile-si-cheltuielile-populatiei-in-anul-2022-9442_60379.html.

⁶ The poverty threshold was calculated based on the 2018 threshold, indexed to the average annual CPI for 2019 (104.84 per cent) (in line with the World Bank recommendations, *Handbook on poverty and inequality*, Jonathan Haughton and Shahidur R. Khandker).

⁷ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/nivelul-saraciei-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2019-9442_49902.html.

⁸ The main indicator of income inequality.

⁹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2016&locations=MD&start=2013>.

¹⁰ Cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, digestive diseases and diabetes.

¹¹ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/raportul-accesul-populatiei-la-serviciile-de-sanatate-editia-2022-plasat-12_59396.html.

(52.9 per cent), followed by COVID-19 (14.8 per cent), tumours (12.6 per cent), and diseases of the digestive system (6.3 per cent).

23. Population mortality by main cause of death,¹² shows that men suffer the highest burden from noncommunicable diseases, and their ranking by magnitude of burden is in the following order: cardiovascular diseases,¹³ hepatic cirrhosis, as well as diabetes mellitus and three types of malignant neoplasms (lung, colon, and liver cancer), followed by mental disorders and unintentional injuries. In women, the ranking of the burden magnitude is largely similar except for the group of cancers, where the burden from breast cancer predominates, followed by colon and rectal cancer.

24. Education is a national priority in Moldova, being one of the basic factors in promoting human rights and human capital development. In the total population aged between 25 and 64 years, the educational level of women averages 55.5 per cent, while that of men is 60.4 per cent. Women tend to be more inclined towards the following general fields of study: education, social and behavioural sciences, public services, philology, and arts, while men opt for engineering and information and communication technologies.

25. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the education process was organised in 1,329 educational institutions and the number of pupils and students at the beginning of the academic year was 437,200 people, down by 5,100 people compared to the previous academic year and 20,000 fewer compared to the 2016-2017 academic year.¹⁴ This decline is due to emigration of Moldovan citizens abroad. Of the total number of pupils in primary and general secondary education, 51 per cent are boys, most of them in grades 5-9. In higher education institutions the share of women was 59.4 per cent of the total number of students.

26. At the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year, there were 1,740 pupils and students per 10,000 inhabitants, compared to 1,725 in 2021-2022. Compared to the academic year 2016-2017, the number of primary and general secondary schools has decreased by 73 units, making 1,218 units in 2022-2023, while the number of pupils increased slightly by 800 (334,500 people in 2022-2023 compared to 333,700 people in 2016-2017). In 2022, 31,500 students graduated from gymnasium, of which 26,300 or 83.6 per cent continued their studies in secondary and post-secondary education in the same year (42.6 per cent continued in the secondary education and 41.0 per cent – in technical vocational education); 11,600 students graduated from secondary education, of which 8,000 (69.2 per cent) continued their studies in higher education in the same year.

27. In the academic year 2023-2024, there are 21 higher education institutions operating with 56,500 students. In 2016-2022, the number of higher educational institutions decreased by nine units, and the number of students in these institutions decreased by about 18,000. Many students in Moldova are pursuing their studies abroad. At the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, the majority of all higher education students are from public institutions (83.4 per cent). In 2023, 8,700 graduates of higher education obtained their bachelor's degrees and 5,200 obtained their master's degrees or equivalent.

28. The employment rate for the population aged 20-64 reached 55.7 per cent (in 2022 it was 52.1 per cent). Men are more active in the labour market in Moldova. The employment rate of men reached 58.8 per cent, compared to 53 per cent for women, with a gender employment gap of 5.8 per cent. In the urban areas the employment rate reached 59.3 per cent and in the rural areas it reached 52.9 per cent. Employment

¹² Expressed in disability-adjusted life years and premature mortality years (DALYs).

¹³ Ischemic and hypertensive heart disease together with stroke.

¹⁴ https://statistica.gov.md/files/files/publicatii_electronice/Educatia/Educatia_editia_2023.pdf.

of population aged 15 and over grew 2.9 per cent from 862,300 in 2022 to 886,900 in 2023. Employment grew higher for women (+5.5 per cent) than men (+0.3 per cent). Women's employment rose from 418,600 in 2022 to 441,700 in 2023, with women's employment in the urban areas rising the highest – at 8.8 per cent from 193,600 in 2022 to 210,700 in 2023. Men's employment grew by 1,400 from 443,700 in 2022 to 445,100 in 2023. The employment rate of women¹⁵ depends on many factors, including the presence in their family of children under age of 16. A higher proportion of employed women were found in the services sector (58.4 per cent women and 41.6 per cent men in 2022). Women are more likely than men to prefer salaried and formal jobs. The wage gap in 2022 was 15.5 per cent.

29. In 2023, the services and agricultural sectors had the highest shares in the employed population, with 60.5 per cent and 19.5 per cent respectively, while industry and construction accounted for 13.2 per cent and 6.7 per cent of all employed persons aged 15+ (Table 6, Annex 2).

30. Young workers (15-24 years old) are mostly employed in commerce, hotels and restaurants (27.1 per cent), industry (15.2 per cent) and agriculture (18.1 per cent). Women (15+) are twice as likely as men to work in public administration, education, health and social work (34.2 per cent) compared to men (12 per cent), while men are more likely than women to work in agriculture (25.4 per cent and 15.9 per cent, respectively). The proportion of men and women in the industry in 2022 was almost equal (15 per cent compared to 14.6 per cent).

31. Young workers (15-24 years old) are primarily engaged in occupations requiring medium skills (68.2 per cent of all jobs held by young people) and high-skilled occupations (15.6 per cent), largely in line with the increased level of education for this population group. Skill polarisation is more pronounced among women, as employment is concentrated in high-skilled occupations (35.1 per cent of the total female workforce) and low-skilled occupations (11.4 per cent), while over 66 per cent of men are in medium-skilled occupations according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2021 data.

32. The share of people in informal work was 21.5 per cent Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator 8.3.1) of the total employed. In the non-agricultural sector, informal employment accounted for 10.3 per cent. The highest proportion of informal employment in non-agricultural activities was recorded in construction (62.2 per cent of all persons employed in construction). Of those informally employed, wage earners constituted 26.1 per cent. Of all wage earners, 7.5 per cent had an informal job and, at the same time, received additional informally. The share of informal employment in 2022 among women was 16.5 per cent and among men – 27.1 per cent (Fig. 4, Annex 2).

33. Between 2019-2020 women employed in the informal sector lost more jobs (-7.5 per cent) as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, while men lost half as many jobs (-3.4 per cent).

34. The level of education has a direct impact on employment opportunities. The employment rate for both men and women shows the highest values among those aged 20-64 with higher education (76.5 per cent for men and 66 per cent for women in 2022).

35. In 2022, the labour force participation rate for individuals aged 25-54 was 59.4 per cent. This indicator reached higher values among the male population – 61.7 per cent, compared to the female population – 57.2 per cent.

¹⁵ In 2022, the employment rate for women (25-49 years) with at least 1 child under 16 years was 50.4 per cent, while for women without children the employment rate reached 64.8 per cent.

36. According to the NBS, between 2019 and 2022, the average GDP growth rate accounted for 1.1 per cent in 2022 the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) amounted to 274,5 billion MDL, at current market prices, decreasing (in real terms) by 4.6 per cent compared to 2021, when it amounted to 242 billion. (Table 7, Annex 2).

37. Wholesale and retail trade; maintenance and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles made a significant contribution to the GDP formation by resource category, accounting for 16.6 per cent. The largest share in terms of uses was held by final consumption expenditure of households, accounting for 83.9 per cent. It should be noted that, in the GDP structure by main resource categories over the period 2019-2022, the share of services has been maintained at a high average of 55.6 per cent, compared to goods, which register an average of 30.8 per cent.

38. Inflation at the end of 2022 amounted to 30.2 per cent, including food – 31.8 per cent, non-food goods – 19.9 per cent and 44 per cent for services provided to the population. In 2022, significant increases in energy prices contributed to a 7 per cent increase in average consumer prices. Annual consumer price indices are included in Table 8, Annex 2.

39. The complicated economic situation in the region and the consequences of the energy crisis have kept budget spending on the rise, putting pressure on the budget. From January to September 2023, there was an increase in all budgetary expenditures. Social protection expenses had the largest share of total budgetary expenditures at 41.1 per cent. The data on the increases in budgetary expenditures are included in Fig. 5, Annex 2.¹⁶ The trend of increasing public debt (both domestic and external) continued throughout 2023. As of September 30, 2023, the balance of public debt recorded a 15 per cent increase compared to the same date in 2022. Domestic debt, which accounted for 40.5 per cent of the total public debt at the end of September 2023, amounted to 39.8 billion MDL, up 20.8 per cent from September 2022. External public debt (59.5 per cent share of the total) amounted to 58,5 billion MDL, up 11.4 per cent. In foreign currency, the external public debt amounted to \$3 billion and recorded a 20 per cent increase compared to the end of September 2022. The increase in external financing sources has conditioned the rise in external public debt.¹⁷

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the state

40. As of 1 December 2023, there were 60 political parties registered in the Republic of Moldova. Seventeen political parties were registered between 2018 and 2023. Some of the previous parties have been reformed, others have become politically inactive. Among the leaders of the registered/active parties, there are only 4 women.¹⁸

41. The parliamentary elections on 11 July 2021, were the eleventh electoral competition since the proclamation of Moldova's independence, with 23 contestants participating. Voting turnout was 48.41 per cent (nationwide 44.56 per cent), and the parliamentary seats' distribution¹⁹ was as follows: Party Action and Solidarity – 63, Electoral Bloc of Communists and Socialists – 32 and the Shor Party – 6.

¹⁶ https://mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Raport-lunar-2023_complet.pdf.

¹⁷ As of January 31, 2024, the state debt balance was 103,806.4 million MDL at nominal value, with 196.7 million MDL more than at the end of 2023: <https://mf.gov.md/sites/default/files/Raport%20Q3%202023.pdf>.

¹⁸ The Political Party "Party of Law and Justice", the New Historical Option Political Party, the Conservative Party, and the Political Party Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

¹⁹ Over time, significant changes have occurred in the composition of some parliamentary factions due to the „migration” of members of parliament.

42. There are currently 41 women in the Moldovan Parliament. In the first Parliament (1990-1994) women constituted 3.7 per cent, in 2021 – 39.6 per cent, and in 2023 more than 40 per cent. Another progress was made in the inclusion of women on candidate lists – 837 women or 46.73 per cent of all candidates designated by the 23 electoral contestants registered by the Central Electoral Council (CEC).

43. In the presidential election on 1 November 2020, the first woman president of the country was elected. In the 2023 general local elections, 896 mayors were elected, of which 215 were women (23.99 per cent). Of the 9,931 level I local councillors, 41.54 per cent are women, and of the 1,086 level II councillors, 33.7 per cent are women.

44. From August 2021 to February 2023, the Moldovan Government was led by a woman Prime Minister. Currently, of the 17 members of the Government, 4 are women, and within the ministries, there are 17 State Secretaries and 11 Deputy and Assistant Secretaries out of a total of 62 leaders.

45. Justice in Moldova is carried out in the name of the law through the courts. Justice is administered by the Supreme Court of Justice, courts of appeal and courts of first instance. The Constitutional Court (CC) is outside the legislative, executive and judiciary powers.

46. The share of women judges is increasing. In 2013, women judges accounted for 40.9 per cent, rising to 48.3 per cent in 2018, and in 2022 women judges outnumbered men, with the balance tipping to 51.2 per cent.²⁰ Within the CC, out of 6 constitutional judges, 3 are women. In the Prosecutor General's Office, women make up 40.7 per cent of the contingent. Out of 592 prosecutors working in 2022, 201 are women (34 per cent) and 391 are men (66 per cent). Regarding the number of leading prosecutors, as of 31 December 2022, there were 94 units, which represents 15.9 per cent of the active prosecutors (592)²¹. Women are under-represented in the police force, with a gender gap of 49.4 percentage points compared to men, with their share in 2022 being 25.3 per cent.²²

47. The legal framework does not establish restrictions on union membership, including on the criterion of gender. At the national level there is only one national-interbranch trade union centre – the National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova (NTUCM). Women constitute 64 per cent of the total union membership. In the governing bodies of the NTUCM, the share of women in the General Council is 47.2 per cent (out of 106 people) and in the Confederal Committee – 34.6 per cent (out of 26 people).

48. According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), in 2022, the crime rate was 103 crimes per 10,000 inhabitants, compared to 119 crimes in 2018. Most crimes were recorded in urban areas (60.8 per cent). Of all recorded crimes, 2.6 per cent were crimes committed by or involving minors.²³ The number of crimes committed by girls has decreased (in 2022 – 62) compared to 2018 (86) and 40 fewer than in 2019. As a result of DV crimes, 698 people suffered in 2022, 70.3 per cent of the victims were women. Both female and male victims of DV were predominantly aged 35-64. The proportion of boys aged 0-17 years who suffered from DV was double that of girls of the same age – 16.4 per cent compared to 6.3 per cent.

²⁰ <https://genderpulse.md/>.

²¹ <https://www.procuratura.md/sites/default/files/2023-03/RAPORT%20DE%20ACTIVITATE%202022.pdf>.

²² www.genderpulse.md.

²³ Per 100,000 children aged 0-17, 126 crimes committed by minors were reported, compared to 118 crimes in 2018.

49. In 2022, there were 114 intentional homicide victims. In most cases, the victims of intentional homicide were men.²⁴ On average, 23 people are convicted each day, of which about 22 are men. Among those definitively sentenced to imprisonment in 2022, the majority were aged 30-39 years.²⁵

50. Since the implementation of Law no. 198/2007 on State Guaranteed Legal Aid (July 2008) the highest number of cases of granting State Guaranteed Legal Aid (SGLA) was recorded in 2017 with 65,322 cases and the second highest indicator was recorded in 2022 with 64,132 cases. In 2022 the number of beneficiaries²⁶ was 5 per cent higher than in 2021. Out of this total, 4,001 cases emergency legal aid was provided to detained individuals (about 8 per cent), in 6,794 cases the beneficiaries were women (about 13.5 per cent of the total volume), and in 1,324 cases they had the status of a crime victim/injured party (about 2.6 per cent of the total volume), among which 1,085 were victims of domestic violence and 8 were victims of trafficking in human beings (THB)²⁷.

The general framework of human rights protection and support

A. Alignment to international human rights standards

51. Moldova has ratified most of the main conventions on human rights, accepting extensively the deriving obligations and submitting periodically national implementation reports. This laid the foundation of a new legal and socio-political system has been laid, creating mechanisms and levers for implementing a national system for promoting and respecting human rights based on international legal instruments. The implementation of international legal instruments remains imperative.

52. Moldova has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in force since 1 May 2022. On 1 May 2022, Moldova was included in the evaluation process and the first Government Report on the implementation of the Convention was submitted to the GREVIO Committee on 3 October 2022.

53. In 2018, the Government approved the first policy document in this area – the 2018-2023 National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and the 2018-2020 Action Plan (Government Decision (GD) no. 281/2018). In 2023, the Government approved three national action plans dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, with clear objectives and concrete measures to promote gender equality across all sectors of society: the National Program on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2023-2027 (the National Anti-Violence Program), Program for Promoting and Ensuring Equality between Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova (Gender Equality Program) and the Program for the Support of Female Entrepreneurship (2023-2025). The implementation of these programs will

²⁴ On average, 4.4 victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 inhabitants. An average of 6.7 male victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 men, compared to 2.3 female victims of intentional homicide per 100 thousand women.

²⁵ Almost every third male detainee (33.5 per cent) and every third female detainee (30.9 per cent) were aged 30-39 years.

²⁶ 50,360 cases of qualified legal aid.

²⁷ https://cnajgs.md/uploads/asset/file/ro/1799/Raportul_anual_de_activitate_CNAJGS_2022_final_2.pdf.

encompass 5 years from 2023-2027 and is co-financed by the government and the state-development partners.

54. The ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work in December 2023 is also an important step towards eliminating violence and harassment in the workplace.

55. The process of ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was launched earlier and was paused in order to estimate the implementation costs of the convention, as Moldova is part of three international instruments in the field of migration and 40 international instruments in the field of labour.

56. The ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance is currently premature in light of the principle of territorial integrity, which reveals potential impediments in ensuring compliance with the Convention's provisions in the territory on the left bank of the Dniester controlled by self-proclaimed structures operating outside the legal framework of the Republic of Moldova.

B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level

57. Moldova legislation provides for equal rights for women and men in all areas of public and private life. The national system on human rights is based on Moldova Constitution²⁸ (1994), the national legislation and international instruments that the Republic of Moldova is a party to.

58. Human rights and freedoms are interpreted and applied in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the covenants and other treaties to which Moldova is a party. The Constitution stipulates that in the case of discrepancies between the covenants and treaties on fundamental human rights to which Moldova is a party and its domestic legislation, the international agreements shall prevail.

59. The Ombudsman's legal status, mandate, duration and powers are regulated by Law no. 52/2014 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman). In February 2023, the regulatory framework was adjusted to the latest international trends and standards to ensure the effective operation of the Ombudsman institution. This included improvements in the procedures for selection, appointment, and dismissal, as well as an expansion of the competencies of the mandate.

²⁸ Title II of the Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Freedoms and Duties stipulates detailed political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. At the same time, the fundamental law provides a number of restrictions in the exercise of certain rights or freedoms, which shall be proportionate to the situation that created them and may not affect the existence of that right or freedom (Article 54(2)). The Constitution enshrines the supremacy of international human rights norms over national law.

60. Fundamental human rights and freedoms are regulated by a series of normative provisions.²⁹ The promotion and assurance of respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms are priorities of the state, confirmed in government policies and the framework program of the National Action Plan on Human Rights for 2018-2022 (PNADO III). This plan contained actions aimed at facilitating access to justice, ensuring freedom of expression, promoting equality, protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, residents of localities on the left bank of the Dniester, and members of national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority groups. It also focused on harmonizing the legal framework with international standards, protecting against discrimination, combating domestic violence, facilitating access to medical services and quality education, and continuously increasing employment levels by providing job opportunities. According to the Evaluation Report on the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) 2018-2022,³⁰ the plan was implemented at a moderate level, with major successes recorded in the areas of preventing and combating THB, Gender equality and domestic violence, and children's rights.

61. NHRAP for 2024-2027 was approved by the Government in the first quarter of 2024 and will complement sectoral policies and focus on: 1. ensuring human rights,³¹ 2. strengthening institutional mechanisms for the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of commitments under human rights law; 3. developing the National Human Rights Strategy.

C. Framework of human rights promotion at the national level

62. Structures and institutions for the protection of human rights have been established at national level (Annex 3), including:

- Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Inter-Ethnic Relations (Parliament Decision No. 86/2021);
- The Ombudsman ensures that human rights and freedoms are respected by public authorities, organisations and enterprises, as well as by individuals in positions of responsibility at all levels. The Ombudsman for the Protection of Child's Rights exercises powers to ensure respect for the rights and freedoms of

²⁹ The Civil Code no. 1107/2002, the Criminal Code no. 985/2002, the Civil Procedure Code no. 225/2003, the Criminal Procedure Code no. 122/2003, the Education Code no. 152/2014, Law no. 514/1995 on the Organization of Judiciary, Law no. 158/2008 on public service and the status of public officials, Law no. 1349/1997 concerning parliamentary advocates, Law no. 382/2001 on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and the legal status of their organizations, Law no. 5/2006 on ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, Law no. 45/2007 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence, Law no. 105/2008 on the protection of witnesses and other participants in criminal proceedings, Law no. 241/2005 on the prevention and combating of human trafficking, Law no. 1585/1998 on compulsory health insurance, Law no. 23/2007 on the prevention of HIV/AIDS infection, Law on Health Care no. 411/1995, Law no. 105/2018 on promoting employment and unemployment insurance, Law no. 133/2008 on social assistance, Law no. 256/2023 amending certain normative acts (Reform of the social assistance system "Restart"), Law no. 270/2008 on asylum in Moldova, Law no. 274/2011 on the integration of foreigners in Moldova, Law no. 125/2007 on religious denominations and their components, Law no. 338/1994 on the Rights of the Child, Law no. 60/2012 on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, etc.

³⁰ Assessment report: National Human Rights Action Plan 2018-2022 (2023):

https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_de_evaluare_pnado_2018-2022.pdf.

³¹ Prioritized in a participatory manner through broad consensus between public authorities and civil society seeking to protect human rights.

the child and the implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;³²

- The National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) (GD no. 65/2019), which has specialized commissions that act as institutional mechanisms for the coordination and monitoring of international human rights treaties to which Moldova is a party. Currently, there are 4 specialised commissions:
 - *The Commission coordinated by the State Chancellery* responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)³³ and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
 - *The specialized commission coordinated by the MIA* is responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation level of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as the recommendations issued by international institutions in reporting procedures;
 - *The specialized commission coordinated by the MER* responsible for coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
 - *The specialised committee coordinated by the MLSP* responsible for coordinating and monitoring the level of implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the CEDAW Convention, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Social Charter, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- National Council for Child Rights Protection.

Information on non-discrimination, equality and efficient remedies

63. The right of individuals to social assistance and protection is ensured in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova (Article 47). All citizens of the country are equal before the law and public authorities, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, or social origin (Article 16).

64. Law no. 121/2012 on Ensuring Equality guarantees preventing and combating discrimination and ensures equality for all persons under the jurisdiction of Moldova in political, economic, social, cultural, and other spheres of life, without distinction of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, social status, citizenship, language, religion

³² <http://ombudsman.md/>.

³³ Since 2017, the Republic of Moldova has become part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. In July 2022, at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Republic of Moldova presented its National Report on the human rights situation. Developments in this area include the launch of the process of drafting and promoting a new NHRAP, strengthening the institutions of the Ombudsman and the Children's Ombudsman, justice sector reform, and measures adopted to guarantee the rights of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova.

or beliefs, age, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, health status, HIV status, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, birth, or any other criterion.

65. Law no. 5/2006 on Ensuring Equality of Opportunity between Women and Men prohibits discrimination based on sex and ensures equal access for them in all spheres of activity.

66. As national mechanisms established to ensure equal opportunities (description in the Annex 4) noteworthy are:

- The Platform of Women Members of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova;
- The Equality Council;
- The Gender Coordination Groups;
- The National Coordinating Council for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence is set to be established under the National Agency for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Anti-Violence Agency)³⁴ and will replace the functions of the previous structure – the Interministerial Coordinating Council for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women.³⁵

67. Since 2022, the MER, in partnership with the Child Rights Information and Documentation Centre, has initiated ***The Children's Human Rights Defenders Forum***, held from 1-10 December³⁶ and the Program of Extracurricular Activities in Primary and Secondary Education, approved annually by the minister's order.

III. Part Two

Report on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in the Republic of Moldova

A. Article 1 and 2

68. Article 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova states the principle of equality of citizens before the law and public authorities regardless of race, nationality, sex, religion and other criteria.³⁷ Moldova legislation provides for equal rights for women and men in all areas of public and private life.

69. The principle of gender equality is promoted through framework legislation,³⁸ which has undergone certain modifications during the reference period. Law no. 121/2012 has been updated to include new definitions (ongoing discrimination,

³⁴ Established on 2 January 2024 as a government structure with duties to ensure comprehensive and effective efforts to combat violence against women and DV.

³⁵ The Council was created in 2012 according to the provisions of Law no. 45/2007 on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence in order to ensure collaboration between ministries, other central administrative authorities and NGOs with competences in preventing and combating domestic violence.

³⁶ The first edition of the Forum (2022) was attended by 486 students, including 11 boys and 376 girls from 23 districts/municipalities. In the second edition (2023), 1,165 students participated, of which 888 girls and 277 boys: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_forum_2022.pdf.

³⁷ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136130&lang=ro.

³⁸ Law no. 5/2006 on Ensuring Equality of Opportunity between Women and Men and Law no. 121/2012 on Ensuring Equality.

prolonged discrimination)³⁹; broaden the range of protected criteria (gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, health status, HIV status); more clearly define the competencies of the Equality Council (EC); enhance complaint examination procedures, data collection in the fields of equality, non-discrimination and diversity; strengthened the processes of monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting of results; strengthened the institutional framework by increasing the EC staff units from 20 to 33. Law no. 5/2006 on Ensuring Equality of Opportunity between Women and Men has been amended to redefine the concept of sexual harassment.⁴⁰

70. Regarding the criminalisation of hate speech based on gender criteria, new norms have been introduced⁴¹ in the Penal Code (PC) by revising Article 346, making it mandatory to punish acts of incitement to hatred or violence, manifested by public incitement, dissemination of information, or other forms of public communication, including via mass media, in written form, drawing or image, or by means of a computer system, against a category of people based on prejudicial reasons, including gender. At the same time, the text “social, national, racial or religious hatred” in the PC has been replaced with the term “prejudice” and the notion of “reason for prejudice” was defined in the Article 134/21.⁴²

71. Furthermore, the Contravention Code has been supplemented by Article 70/1 which penalises intentional actions, public incitement, disseminating information, or other forms of public communication aimed at inciting discrimination on the grounds of prejudice. New articles 70/2 on harassment and 70/3 on victimization have also been introduced.

72. With reference to the CEDAW Committee Recommendation on the definition of discrimination, it is noted that intersectional discrimination is included in the forms of severe discrimination outlined in Article 4 of Law no. 121/2012.

73. Between 2018 and 2022, many of the court buildings have been renovated⁴³ and most buildings are now accessible to people with disabilities.

74. In alignment with the final assessment of the NHRAP for 2018-2022 in the area of *Gender Equality and Domestic Violence*, the degree of achievement for the outcome indicators was rated as partially achieved.

75. Through the platform of the specialized commissions (including the Commission on CEDAW) of the NCHR⁴⁴ coordinated by the MLSP the implementation of the state policy in the field of human rights, as well as of the international treaties in the field of human rights to which the Republic of Moldova is party, is monitored. Members of these commissions include representatives from the government and civil society.

76. A crucial role in strengthening the professional capacities of public officials, mayors, law enforcement representatives, lawyers, prosecutors, and judges in the field of gender equality and non-discrimination; preventing and combating violence

³⁹ Law no. 2/2023 on the amendment of certain legislative acts (revision of the legal framework on non-discrimination and ensuring equality): https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135489&lang=ro.

⁴⁰ Law no. 74/2023 amending certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136606&lang=ro.

⁴¹ Law no. 111/2022 amending certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=131558&lang=ro.

⁴² Preconceived notion of the perpetrator based on race, colour, ethnicity, national or social origin, nationality, sex, gender, language, religion or religious belief, political opinion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, age, marital status.

⁴³ Currently out of the total number of courts operating in 44 buildings, most of them have been made accessible for persons with disabilities.

⁴⁴ Government Decision no. 150/2023.

against women is played by the Institute of Public Administration “Stefan cel Mare” Academy of the MAI, and the National Institute of Justice.⁴⁵

77. Over the last five years, there has been a steady increase in the number of cases where state-guaranteed legal aid was provided (Annex 5). Free legal aid has been guaranteed for a new category – victims of THB (Law no. 1/2020) and people with disabilities (Law no. 298/2022). In 2020, the concept of emergency legal aid was also expanded.⁴⁶

78. By GD no. 953/2022, the national framework for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was approved, establishing indicators for monitoring the effectiveness of policy implementation on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5). For the list of indicators, according to relevance, disaggregation of indicators has been ensured based on gender, age and/or livelihood criteria relevant to all SDGs.

79. The regulatory framework of labour and gender equality has been amended⁴⁷ by obliging employers to implement measures to prevent and combat discrimination on any grounds, sexual harassment and victimisation in the workplace. According to the new provisions, employers are obliged within 7 days to inform the trade union body in writing about the results of the examination of cases of discrimination and sexual harassment and the measures taken to eliminate the violations detected in these cases. From 2025, labour inspectors will verify, the measures the employer took to prevent and combat cases of discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

80. The social inclusion of vulnerable population groups is ensured by state structures through legislative measures⁴⁸ and multidimensional actions carried out in partnership with civil society.

81. Between 2020-2023 the EC registered complaints of discrimination against women in areas such as political and public life, education, and employment and health⁴⁹ (Annex 7).

82. Between 2020-2022, out of the total number of individuals who reported a discrimination case to the EC, 434 were men and 343 were women. Decisions issued by the EC on discrimination cases during 2020-2023 can be found on EC’s official website www.egalitate.md under Decisions/Notices section.

B. Article 3

83. Moldova’s policies in the field of eliminating discrimination against women and girls are set out in the Gender Equality Promotion and Assurance Program for 2023-2027 (Gender Equality Program); the National Anti-Violence Program; the “European Moldova 2030” National Development Strategy; the “Prosperous, Safe, European Moldova” Government Activity Program; the Program for the Support of the Roma

⁴⁵ The training curriculum include modules referring to the CEDAW, the Optional Protocol and the Recommendations of the specialized UN Committee.

⁴⁶ Ensuring 24-hour emergency legal aid to victims of DV and sexual offences at the complaint filing stage.

⁴⁷ Law no. 74/2023 amending certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136606&lang=ro.

⁴⁸ Law no. 60/2012 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities, Law no. 547/2003 on Social Assistance, Law no. 256/2023 amending certain normative acts (Reform of the social assistance system “Restart”), Law no. 105/2018 on promotion of labour force and unemployment benefits.

⁴⁹ The casework of the EC pertains to: actions based on stereotypes and prejudices related to the age and gender of employees in employment relationships; discrimination in the workplace on the basis of maternity; limiting women’s access to masculinized professions; sexist advertising material; hate speech and gender discrimination by influential persons.

Ethnic population in the Republic of Moldova for 2022-2025; the Women's Entrepreneurship Program; the National Implementation Program of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security for 2023-2027; the Development Strategy for Public Finance Management and the National Action Plan for EU and Moldova accession for 2024-2027. A brief description of the purpose and objectives of these policies is included in Annex 7.

84. In 2023 the MLSP developed and consulted with the relevant authorities on the Roadmap for 2024 to achieve gender-responsive budgeting at national level. Operational procedures⁵⁰ are applied when drafting public policy documents (strategies and programs) and planning documents (action plans, national development plans, etc.), which provide for the rigours of integrating the leave no one behind principle, the gender dimension and the principle of non-discrimination in public policies. In line with the area of intervention and as data availability allows, the documents incorporate women's rights as a force for promoting the sustainability of policies.

85. NBS, together with the Statistics through Eastern Partnership (STEP) project, has published "*Progress in Gender Equality: What do the statistics tell us?*" (2022 edition). The publication presents gender data that is comparable among the countries of the Eastern Partnership, providing a descriptive analysis at the regional and national levels, and also an opportunity to identify the challenges faced by partner countries in producing and presenting national gender data.

86. MLSP is the central public authority empowered with the duty to develop, monitor, evaluate and promote policies on gender equality. Within the MLSP operates a specialized department, an integral part of the national mechanism for promoting gender equality in Moldova. This was strengthened in 2023 by establishing an additional leadership role of a deputy chief of the Department of Gender Equality Policies. The maintenance expenditure of this subdivision during 2020-2023 was: 2020 – 1,037,600 MDL; 2021 – 1,005,600 MDL; 2022 – 1,406,400 MDL; 2023 – 1,510,200 MDL.

87. Within 14 ministries, Gender Coordination Groups (comprising 166 gender units) have been established, aimed at ensuring a comprehensive approach to gender equality in policies and programs across all areas and at all levels of decision-making and implementation. Article 19 of Law no. 5/2006 stipulates that gender units also operate at the local level.

88. The government has drawn up the Civil Society Development Program for 2024-2027. As of January 2024, 16,453 organizations were registered in the State Register of NGOs in Moldova for the purpose of defending fundamental human rights:⁵¹ out of 1,729 NGOs promoting human rights, 191 specifically promote women's rights. Between 2020-2023, 20 organizations for women were registered.

89. A significant contribution to the promotion of gender equality at central and local level is made by the Platform for Gender Equality (Annex 4) composed of NGOs and development partners (UN Women, ILO, IOM, UNHCR, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNDP, OHCHR, WHO, etc.) which, together with the Government, carry out various international projects.

⁵⁰ The Methodological Guide on integrating the provisions of the National Development Strategy into planning documents, public policy documents, and normative acts at the national level, Chisinau, 2021, and the Guide for integrating the gender equality perspective in the process of developing public policies.

⁵¹ Education, health, adequate working conditions and fair pay, private property, a decent standard of living, participation in political life, freedom of religion, protection against abuse, etc.

C. Article 4

90. The Electoral Code⁵² establishes that the lists of candidates for parliamentary and local elections maintain a minimum representation quota of 40 per cent for both genders (double quota introduced in 2019). Candidates are placed on the lists according to a formula – a minimum of four candidates for every 10 seats.

91. In 2018-2019, the CEC together with UNDP and other entities involved, developed informational and motivational electoral materials in Braille and audio format for visually impaired people, in the context of parliamentary elections on 20 October 2019.⁵³ Information materials were printed in 5 ethnic minority languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Romani) for the 2023 local general elections.

92. The Law on the Government no. 136/2017 does not provide for a minimum quota of 40 per cent representation of women and men in the Government. The Prime Minister, in compiling the list of candidates for positions within the Government, must consider the legislation ensuring equal opportunities between men and women, aligned with criteria of professionalism and merit.

93. Based on the comments of the CEDAW Specialised Committee (2020) on the implementation of a minimum 20 per cent representation quota for women in the police force, an Action Plan on Gender Equality within the Police for 2022-2025 was approved, which includes a set of actions aimed at increasing the retention rate of employees. As a result of the implementation action of the Action Plan of the Police Development Strategy for 2016-2020 and implementation of the actions and measures included in the Gender Equality Plan for 2022-2025, the share of women employed in the Police increased from 20.6 per cent in 2022 to 23.2 per cent of the staff in the first half of 2023. Currently, there are 4,233 women (26.44 per cent) working in the MIA, and 321 women are employed in management positions, which represents 15.1 per cent of the total number of management positions in the institution.

94. The Program for Supporting the Roma Population for 2022-2025⁵⁴ includes the state's response to the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee (2020). In order to reduce the existing educational gap among Roma youth, especially among Roma girls, the Program for Awarding Merit Scholarships to Roma pupils and students in high school, vocational technical education, and higher education (GD no. 818/2023) was approved. Starting in January 2024, 50 Roma pupils and students, 23 of whom are girls, will receive merit scholarships worth 1,200 MDL.

95. Private companies are increasingly recognized not only as key drivers of economic growth but also as promoters of sustainable social development. Several private companies have committed to promoting gender equality and empowering women at the workplace and in the community. Among these, 19 companies in Moldova, including a commercial bank, have become signatories to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP). Annual national conferences are organized to disseminate international and local best practices in promoting the WEP, emphasizing the role of governments and international organizations in empowering women. Additionally, a study on the impact of WEP implementation for companies in Moldova has been conducted, serving as a foundation for subsequent initiatives.

⁵² Electoral Code no. 325/2022 - Article 68 (3).

⁵³ *The Voter's Guide, Easy to read, easy to understand* version (in Romanian, Russian and English) for people with intellectual disabilities (designed in 2017); *Democracy can be learned*, an interactive booklet developed by the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET); *Democracy Matters - Participate!*, an informative electoral guide.

⁵⁴ Government Decision no. 576/2022.

Adopting WEP in company development strategies represents the largest voluntary initiative in corporate responsibility.

96. The National Employment Program for 2022-2026 and its Action Plan (GD no.785/2022) contains the objective of increasing the labour force participation rate of women aged 25-34 from 44 per cent in 2021 to 48 per cent by 2026 (+4 per cent) and the employment rate of women aged 25-34 from 43.2 per cent in 2021 to 47.2 per cent (+4 per cent) by 2026.

97. The National Program for Promoting Entrepreneurship and Increasing Competitiveness for 2023-2027 (GD no. 653/2023) contains actions to support entrepreneurship, and increase access to financing to local businesses, small producers, merchants and various disadvantaged groups (women, young people, migrants, etc.), increase access to financing. In 2021, the share of small and medium enterprises owned by women was approximately 33 per cent, in 2022 – 30 per cent, with a target of 35 per cent set for 2025.

98. Through the implementation of the National Implementation Program of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the aim is to increase the share of women in decision-making and operational positions to at least 10 per cent and at least 5,000 persons admitted for humanitarian purposes, increase participation in commissions, committees and other decision-making structures in the security and defence sector to 10 per cent; at least two mentorship and leadership programs for women in the sector will be developed. In order to strengthen transparency and visibility in the security and defence sector, media presence will be increased by 15 per cent by 2027.

99. The education system has quotas for admission to higher education. A 15 per cent quota of the total number of budget-funded admission plan slots is maintained for certain disadvantaged groups of candidates, including girls. Priority is given to those without parental care, as well as children with severe or profound disabilities. In line with increasing the role of men as promoters of gender equality and in accordance with the Education 2030 Strategy's objective to staff the educational system with competent and motivated teachers, the state will implement strategies to motivate and support male pedagogy students, aiming to increase their employment and retention rates in the educational system by at least 5 per cent annually.

100. To meet United Nations (UN) requirements for the proportion of women in international peacekeeping missions as military observers and staff officers (minimum 19 per cent of total positions granted to Moldova), 20 per cent of these positions are exclusively offered to women serving in the National Army, while the remaining positions are open to both men and women who are contract soldiers in the National Army and meet all established UN criteria.⁵⁵

101. NBS⁵⁶, as an independent administrative authority, coordinates the national statistical system on the development and production of official statistics regarding gender statistics. NBS disseminates gender-related data, through several pages and products (Annex 5).

⁵⁵ According to the UN requirements for the number of women in UN international peacekeeping missions and operations at contingent level (min. 9 per cent). From 2024 onwards, the Moldovan contingents participating in peacekeeping missions in Kosovo (KFOR) and Lebanon (UNIFIL) must include women (4 women in KFOR and 3 in UNIFIL).

⁵⁶ Under Article 7 of Law No. 93/2017 on Official Statistics, the National Bureau of Statistics coordinates the national statistical system, as an institutionally and professionally independent administrative authority, in the development and production of official statistics in the field of gender statistics.

D. Article 5

102. Moldova ratified the Istanbul Convention in October 2021, which came into force in May 2022.

103. During the reference period, adjustments were made to the national regulatory framework concerning: the introduction of new terms (*violence against women, adult victim, child victim*); the inclusion of electronic monitoring of domestic aggressors during court's implementation of victim protection measures (including the possibility for the victim and their family members to be electronically monitored through a Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) surveillance system, with their written consent); strengthening the social assistance system by establishing a service responsible for preventing and combating domestic violence; enhancing victim protection through the assessment and management of the risk of repeating or committing acts of domestic violence by professionals in police, social work, and health services; expanding the concept of state-guaranteed emergency legal aid by providing 24/7 legal aid to victims of domestic violence and sexual offences at the complaint filing stage and ensuring the right to qualified legal assistance regardless of income level for certain categories.⁵⁷

104. The mechanism for ensuring victims' rights in the case of sexual and domestic violence offences has also been improved through legislative amendments and additions⁵⁸ to transpose the provisions of the Istanbul and Lanzarote Conventions such as Ensuring the right of victims to a fair trial (under friendly conditions, in the absence of the suspected person); preventing the removal of criminal liability as a result of the victim reconciling with the offender; ensuring a proactive investigation process, even if the alleged victim has withdrawn their statements or complaint; more effective social reintegration through access to medical, forensic, post-traumatic psychological assistance and counselling for physical and psychosocial recovery; and criminalising cyber-violence in the form of revenge pornography, bringing the definition of sexual harassment into line with applicable international human rights standards. The anti-violence program⁵⁹ also intervenes through four general objectives translated into 90 specific actions. Relevant information pertaining to the program's mission is included in (Annex 8).

105. During the reporting period, the methodological operational framework for practitioners (Annex 9) was strengthened.

106. Until 2016, the Press Law no. 243/1994 included provisions requiring periodic publications and press agencies to use correct and non-discriminatory language towards women and men, contributing to the reduction of sexist stereotypes and prohibiting the publication of sexist materials. The Advertising Law no. 62/2022 in Article 7 bans sexist advertising. The Audiovisual Media Services Code no. 174/2018 in Article 18 prohibits the use of sexist language and scenes of violence and degrading behaviour towards women and men in audiovisual media services. The Independent Journalism Centre has developed the Code of Ethics for Journalists in Moldova,

⁵⁷ Victims of crimes of torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, victims of THB, victims of DV, victims of sexual offences, child victims of crime, and people with severe/profound and multiple learning disability disabilities.

⁵⁸ Law No. 316/2022 on the Amendment of Certain Legislative Acts (Ensuring the Rights of Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence Crimes), amendments to the Contraventions Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Code of Criminal Procedure, Penal Code, Family Code https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134400&lang=ro.

⁵⁹ GD no. 332/2023 on the approval of the National Programme on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence for 2023-2027.

which includes commitments to avoid discrimination based on gender, age, disability, religion, social status, and sexual orientation.

107. In Moldova there is a network of specialized services (Annexes 10 and 11) providing services for victims of domestic violence (DV) and their children – from government budget 9 shelters, the Women and Girls' Helpline 0 8008 8008 and the Children's Helpline 116 111 and shelters and day centres run by non-commercial organizations. It also operates the National Emergency Call Service 112.

108. For refugees from Ukraine, with the support of development partners, non-governmental organisations, and local authorities, Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) have been organised. The number of RACs has ranged from 136 at the peak of the crisis to 44 at present. Their capacity is 2,809 places, with about 70 per cent occupancy. In January 2024, the centres were accommodating 2,318 beneficiaries, including 967 children and 149 people with disabilities. The MLSP approved the new temporary placement centre Regulation, which provides regulations on protection against violence, discrimination, neglect, exploitation, harassment (including sexual), inhuman and/or degrading treatment and/or human trafficking. From 1 March 2023 to 15 January 2024, in the information system of the General Inspectorate for Migration for temporary protection were pre-registered 38,874 persons, of which 17,145 women and girls. In 2023, the MLSP conducted a mapping of services responding to gender-based violence, with support from UNFPA.

109. In October 2023, under the aegis of the Ministry of Health (MH), the Network of Support Units was launched within 11 medical institutions⁶⁰ emergency department for victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence with the support of UNFPA. As a result, women immediately receive 24/7 health care, as well as psychological support and referrals to other services in a single and safe space, preventing revictimization during interactions with forensic doctors or police officers. In June 2023, at the Centre of Forensic Medicine (CFM), with the support of UNFPA and in accordance with international standards, the forensic examination unit for victims of physical and sexual violence was renovated and equipped with advanced medical equipment. Also, more than 290 health professionals⁶¹ were trained during 2022-2023 with the UNFPA support.

110. In 2023, the MLPS passed regulations for piloting the Integrated Regional Service for Victims of Sexual Violence started in the city of Ungheni, funded by UN Women. In partnership with the U.S. Embassy, the Family Justice Centre was established in Chisinau under the auspices of MIA to assist victims of domestic and sexual violence.

111. In March 2022, the first regional (North) Barnahus-type centre for integrated support of child victims/witnesses of crimes began operation, dedicated to minimizing the risk of further victimization and psychological harm during the criminal evidence collection process. The child's carer can also benefit from crisis counselling and primary legal aid. In 2022, 78 children and 60 adults were assisted in

⁶⁰ The units were opened at the Institute of Mother and Child in Chisinau, the Emergency Medicine Institute in Chisinsu, and at the hospitals in Balti, Edinet, Cahul, Comrat, Causeni, Soroca, Floresti, Hancesti, and Orhei.

⁶¹ Staff from the CFM and its territorial subdivisions, staff from the youth-friendly health centers, community mental health centers, and emergency departments were trained with UNFPA support in 2023. A total of 290 professionals from the field of primary healthcare were trained on the Clinical Management of Rape Cases, nationally approved in 2021 (88 per cent of all medical institutions providing primary healthcare have at least one person trained in this area. UNFPA also supported a study visit to Romania for the exchange of knowledge and good practices in implementing a coordinated multi-sectoral response to cases of sexual violence.

the Northern Regional Centre. Most sexual offences were committed against children aged 11-14, with children aged 0-6 being most affected by DV.

112. Between 2020 and 2022 the CFM subdivisions examined 10,125 cases⁶² of DV victims.

113. As of 2023, data on DV and sexual violence in the healthcare sector are disaggregated by the sex, age, place of residence, people with special needs, and the victim-aggressor relationship.

114. To protect women and girls with disabilities from abuse and violence within psychiatric⁶³ medical institutions and temporary placement centres for persons with disabilities, Registers for recording complaints about alleged acts of torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment are implemented. Each centre has mailboxes for lodging complaints, accessible phones are installed, and contact numbers of law enforcement authorities and human rights organizations are displayed. The results of regular monitoring visits conducted by the Agency for the Management of Highly Specialised Social Services are documented in monitoring reports, which also include proposals for improving the activities of the institutions.

115. In penitentiary institutions actions⁶⁴ are planned each year that contribute to improving detention conditions and modernizing the penitentiary infrastructure to respect human dignity, adapted to various categories of detainees and the special needs of high-risk categories (women, mothers with children, children, people with disabilities, etc.).

116. Informational campaigns are a priority for Moldova, especially since they are an essential element of prevention. The activities are described Annex 12.

117. According to MLSP data, from 2020-2023, the social welfare system registered 12,962 cases⁶⁵ of DV. The majority of victims are women (92 per cent). People with disabilities constituted 4 per cent of cases. Women aged 35-49 (43 per cent) are affected the most, followed by women aged 18-34 (36 per cent). The phenomenon of violence currently affects most people in cohabiting, married relationships. It is reported that victims of domestic violence are mainly subjected to multiple forms of violence, followed by psychological and physical violence. Out of the total number of cases recorded in the given period, 11,066 victims of domestic violence received support from the social welfare system.

118. According to IGP data, from 2020 to 2023 there is an increase in the number of crimes against sexual integrity. Rape cases have increased, while violent sexual acts have decreased, and cases of DV have remained relatively constant (Fig. 1-4, Annex 13). In total, female victims predominate, constituting more than half of the DV cases. A total of 15,817⁶⁶ emergency restraining orders were issued against family aggressors. From 2020 to 2023, 2,994 protection orders were issued.⁶⁷

⁶² In 2020, there were 4,053 cases, in 2021 – 3,904 and in 2022 – 2,168 (including 216 children, of whom 5 were children with special needs and 73 adults with special needs).

⁶³ In visible and easily accessible places, announcements regarding the possibility of filing complaints and suggestions are posted, and mailboxes are installed where all suggestions and complaints received are collected weekly and subsequently analysed by the Bioethics Committee.

⁶⁴ In September 2023, the gynaecological office at the medical section of Penitentiary No. 13 in Chișinău was inaugurated, which was equipped with advanced medical equipment, including devices adapted to the needs of people with special needs with the support of UNFPA.

⁶⁵ In 2020 – 2,292 cases (2,450 victims), in 2021 – 3,157 cases (3,242 victims), and in 2022 – 2,634 cases (2722 victims), in 2023 – 4,879 cases.

⁶⁶ Yearly breakdown: in 2020 – 4,250; in 2021 – 4,939; in 2022 – 3,907; in 2023 – 2,721.

⁶⁷ With 1,532 in urban areas and 1,462 in rural areas.

119. Under Law no. 137/2016,⁶⁸ the mechanism for financial compensation provided by the state to crime victims is established.⁶⁹ The financial compensation is paid from the state budget, amounting to 70 per cent of the calculated loss, but not exceeding 10 average monthly salaries forecasted for the year the victim submitted the compensation claim to the Ministry of Justice (MJ). During 2020-2023, no claims for financial compensation were filed by victims of DV or gender-based crimes.⁷⁰

E. Article 6

120. Law no. 241/2005 on preventing and combating THB⁷¹ stipulates providing protection and assistance to victims and presumed victims of THB. Amendments made in 2020 to the Criminal Procedure Code (Law no. 1/2020)⁷² included a category for victims of THB and child trafficking, who are entitled to additional rights beyond those generally offered to victims of crime. Regardless of being recognized as a damaged party or a civil party, victims are guaranteed the following rights: to be consulted by an attorney throughout the criminal process as are other parties; to be assisted, under the law, by an attorney providing legal aid if unable to afford legal representation; to be accompanied by a trusted person, along with their attorney during all investigations, including closed sessions; and to receive a judicial decision about material compensation for damages caused by the crime.

121. Additionally, the age for special condition hearings of children who are victims/witnesses of sexual crimes, child trafficking, or DV, as well as in other cases where the interests of justice or the minor require it, has been extended from 14 to 18 years.⁷³ Victims of THB are eligible for state-guaranteed qualified legal assistance regardless of their income (Law no. 198/2007)⁷⁴. Legal aid is provided by public and private attorneys contracted by the National Legal Aid Council. Primary legal advice is given by paralegals. Victims also receive legal aid from NGOs.

122. To prevent THB, amendments were made in 2020 to Law no. 105/2018 regarding the promotion of employment and unemployment insurance,⁷⁵ introducing new provisions concerning the regulation of private recruitment agency activities, new licensing conditions serving as filters for the licensing of economic agents wishing to engage in workforce recruitment, and strengthened monitoring and control.

123. To facilitate the implementation of the provisions of Government Decision no. 270/2014 approving the Instructions for the cross-sector cooperation mechanism for the identification, assessment, referral, assistance, and monitoring of child victims and potential victims of violence, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking, the Practical Implementation Guide for the cross-sector cooperation mechanism was approved.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Law no. 137/2016 on the rehabilitation of victims of crime: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=139012&lang=ro#.

⁶⁹ DV victims fall within this category.

⁷⁰ State compensation only occurs if it has not been paid by the perpetrator.

⁷¹ Law no. 241/2005 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138949&lang=ro.

⁷² Law no. 1/2020 amending certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121121&lang=ro.

⁷³ Law no. 316/2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134400&lang=ro.

⁷⁴ Law no. 113/2020 amending certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122517&lang=ro.

⁷⁵ Law no. 137/2020 amending certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122538&lang=ro.

⁷⁶ Joint Order no. 17/1173/528/1652 of the MLS, MH, MIA, and MER was issued on 15 December 2021.

124. In order to strengthen the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for the protection and assistance of victims of crime was established, and its Development Program⁷⁷ for 2022-2026 was approved (Government Decision no. 182/2022). Methodologically, three guides have been approved to facilitate the proactive identification of THB cases.⁷⁸

125. The National Development Strategy (NDS) “European Moldova 2030”⁷⁹ aims to eliminate the phenomenon of THB in 2⁸⁰ of its 10 strategic objectives, with a specific target to reduce the number of THB victims per 100,000 population from 7.0 per cent in 2018 to 4.5 per cent by 2025, and to 3.5 per cent by 2030.

126. The privacy of the THB victim is ensured⁸¹ Law no. 241/2005 (article 21(3)). From 2020 to 2023, two strategic documents were developed and approved for preventing and combating THB: the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of THB for 2018-2023, along with the action plans for its implementation,⁸² and the Program for Preventing and Combating THB for 2024-2028.⁸³

127. THB prevention activities are carried out regularly.

128. Victims of TFU can access services within two specialized day and residential services (for women, mother-child households, and separately for men⁸⁴), funded by the state budget (Table 3, Annex 11).

129. Aid to victims of trafficking in human beings is also provided through five other publicly funded centres, located across the entire country. In the process of assistance and social inclusion for refugees from Ukraine, a specialized group⁸⁵ in this field was established (coordinated by the State Chancellery, co-chaired by UNHCR and IOM). The Action Plan for Preventing and Combating THB in response to the situation in Ukraine for the period 1 July 2022, to 1 July 2023, was approved.

⁷⁷ The purpose of the Program is to practically realize the rights of crime victims and implement Law no. 137/2016 regarding the rehabilitation of crime victims, as well as to expand the profile of the victims assisted. (GD no. 182/2022 - https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=131061&lang=ro).

⁷⁸ With the support of the IOM, in 2021, the Information Guide regarding THB was developed (for employees of the international passenger transport industry regarding the identification and referral of victims/presumed victims of THB). In October 2022, the MIA approved the Guide for the identification of victims and presumed victims of THB in the context of mixed migration flows. The National Institute of Justice, in partnership with the OSCE, developed in 2022 the Practical Guide for justice professionals regarding the rights of crime victims to rehabilitation and compensation.

⁷⁹ Law no. 315/2022 approving the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134582&lang=ro.

⁸⁰ Strategic objective 1. Increasing sustainable income and mitigating inequalities, and strategic objective 9. Promote a peaceful and safe society.

⁸¹ The prohibition of disclosure of information on protection measures for both witnesses and victims of THB Law no. 241/2005 (Article 21(3)).

⁸² Government Decision no. 461/2018 on the approval of the national strategy for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings for 2018-2023: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135158&lang=ro#.

⁸³ Government Decision no. 715/2023 approving the programme to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings for 2024-2028: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=139888&lang=ro.

⁸⁴ It was developed in 2021 with the support of the U.S. Embassy and the IOM.

⁸⁵ Activities conducted under the auspices of the group: training professionals from various fields involved in assisting displaced persons, developing and disseminating informational materials, conducting information campaigns, and adjusting trusted phone lines for victims and presumed victims of THB.

130. According to MIA data on THB cases, the number of identified victims remains consistently average (Fig. 2, Annex 13).

131. In alignment with the recommendation from CEDAW, amendments were made to Article 89 Practising Prostitution of the Contravention Code.⁸⁶ Penalties for service recipients have been increased, while penalties for practising prostitution have been reduced. During the reporting period, activities were conducted in partnership with UNAIDS aimed at reducing the phenomenon.⁸⁷

F. Article 7 and 8

132. The right to vote⁸⁸ from the age of 18, including on election day, is established, with the exception of individuals under judicial guardianship by court order.

133. According to the Electoral Code, in electoral programs, advertisements, materials, and campaign activities, it is forbidden to incite war aggression, national, racial, or religious hatred, to promote discrimination, territorial separatism, or public violence. During the campaign for the parliamentary elections in 2021 and the local election in 2023, the CEC invited electoral contestants and media institutions to sign a voluntary Code of Conduct⁸⁹.

134. In April 2023 an awareness-raising campaign⁹⁰ was organised to combat sexism, harassment and violence against women in local elections.

135. Candidate lists for parliamentary and local elections are compiled respecting a minimum quota of 40 per cent representing both sexes. Candidates are placed on the lists according to a formula of a minimum of four candidates for every ten seats. 2021 showed the highest share of women candidates for the Parliament – 46.7 per cent. The number of female candidates on lists has increased by approximately 12 per cent compared to the 2019⁹¹ elections and by 16 per cent compared to the 2014 elections.

136. Annex 14 provides data on women's participation in five elections.⁹²

⁸⁶ Law no. 102/2022 on the amendment of certain normative acts: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130944&lang=ro.

⁸⁷ Activities to increase awareness among the general population and governmental authorities about the rights of commercial sex workers include the “Beyond Appearances” information campaign, empowering commercial sex workers through mentoring programs, human rights training, and self-stigma reduction (about 200 female commercial sex workers benefited from this program); a Roadmap was developed setting immediate and medium-term interventions for ensuring the rights of commercial sex workers; a Theory of Change was elaborated containing the vision, impact results, and strategic pillars for ensuring the rights of commercial sex workers.

⁸⁸ Article 38 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and Article 14 of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova ensure the universal right to vote for its citizens. Citizens of Moldova can vote and be elected without discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, or social origin. Voting is direct. Each voter must cast their vote personally, as voting on behalf of someone else is prohibited: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136130&lang=ro#.

⁸⁹ In the 2023 elections, the Code was signed by 396 electoral contestants and 5 representatives of local media institutions. The Code includes a commitment not to incite discrimination, hatred/violence in public speeches, in the media, and in electoral materials.

⁹⁰ “I don't tolerate sexism. I report it” Campaign was made jointly with the Broadcasting Council and the CoE Office in Chisinau.

⁹¹ https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Raport_Alegeri-Parlamentare-anticipate-2021.pdf.

⁹² The parliamentary elections of 24 February 2019, the general local elections of 20 October 2019, the presidential elections of 1 November 2020, the early parliamentary elections of 11 July 2021, and the general local elections of 5 November 2023.

137. Political parties are entitled to receive annual funding from the state budget through the CEC,⁹³ which is distributed,⁹⁴ including for supporting women in elections. Twenty percentage of the annual allocations will be used to promote and encourage the participation of women in the political and electoral processes, and 10 per cent will be used to promote and encourage youth participation.

138. The public service is based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.⁹⁵ The filling of positions through competition⁹⁶ is conducted based on *the principle of equal access to public office* - ensuring access to public office for any person who meets the legal conditions, without discrimination based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, religion, political preference, etc.

139. The gender distribution of public officials between 2020 and 2022 consistently follows an approximate ratio of 1/2 women and 1/2 men. In senior management positions and in public authority leadership, women hold a significant share (Annex 14).

140. Judges are appointed from among candidates selected through a competition by the President of Moldova upon the recommendation of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM). Judges are appointed to serve until the age of 65)⁹⁷.

141. The maximum age up to which citizens can be enlisted and serve in the military through a contract is 45 years.⁹⁸ Women are registered for military service only after completing their contract service and are removed from military records upon reaching the reserve age limit or under other legally provided circumstances.

142. When formulating proposals for reassignment or employment of individuals in diplomatic missions, the Evaluation and Competition Commission⁹⁹ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) takes into account the need to ensure fair representation of women and men. Within the MFA, 13 women¹⁰⁰ hold leadership positions, constituting 34 per cent of the staff. Twenty percent of ambassadorial posts are held by women. Forty percent of diplomatic and consular staff abroad are women. The qualifications required for diplomatic and consular service are regulated by Law no. 761/2001 on diplomatic service.

⁹³ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138777&lang=ro#.

⁹⁴ 7.5 per cent of the funding is allocated to political parties in proportion to the number of women actually elected in parliamentary elections, and another 7.5 per cent is similarly distributed based on the number of women elected in local elections.

⁹⁵ The general norms regarding the public service are regulated by Law no. 158/2008 on the public service and the status of public officials: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138899&lang=ro#.

⁹⁶ GD no. 201/2009 The regulations concerning the filling of public office positions through competition: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138423&lang=ro#.

⁹⁷ Law no. 544/1995 on the status of judges: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138834&lang=ro#.

⁹⁸ According to Article 26(1) of Law no. 1245/2002 regarding the training of citizens for the defence of the homeland. For enlisted soldiers and sergeants, the age limit is 50 years; for junior and senior officers, it's 55 years; and for officers with the highest ranks, it's 60 years.

⁹⁹ The Evaluation Commission operates based on a Regulation approved by Ministerial Order No. 830-b-100/2014.

¹⁰⁰ State secretaries – 2, ambassadors with special missions – 2, heads of departments and directorates – 8).

G. Article 9

143. The citizens of the Republic of Moldova are equal before the law and public authorities,¹⁰¹ enjoying equally all socioeconomic and political rights, freedoms proclaimed and guaranteed by the Constitution and other laws, as well as international agreements to which Moldova is a party. Both men and women have equal rights to acquire, change, and maintain Moldovan citizenship.

144. The change in one spouse's citizenship or marriage to a foreign national or stateless person does not affect the citizenship of the other spouse or child, unless there is a written request from the parents in this regard. Moldovan citizenship is acquired by birth, recognition, adoption, reacquisition, and naturalisation. In all these modes, the mother's citizenship carries the same weight as the father's in acquiring the child's citizenship.

145. A child found on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is considered a citizen thereof, as long as the contrary is not proven, until reaching the age of 18. A child born to foreign nationals or stateless persons who acquire Moldovan citizenship shall also acquire citizenship on the same date as the parents. If only one parent acquires Moldovan citizenship, the parents will decide jointly on the child's citizenship. If the parents do not agree, the decision will be made by the court, taking into account the child's best interests. In cases where the child does not acquire Moldovan citizenship along with one of the parents, the child is entitled to subsequently acquire it, until the age of 18, based on the grounds on which the parent acquired citizenship. In these situations, consent authenticated by a notary is required from the child aged 14 years or older.

146. In June 2023, amendments were made to Law no. 1024/2000, according to which a child born to parents who are citizens of another state or one of whom is stateless or a beneficiary of international protection, and the other is a foreign citizen, is considered a citizen of Moldova if, at the time of application, at least one parent holds a residence right or benefits from international protection granted by the competent authorities of Moldova or is recognized as stateless by the competent authorities of Moldova, as well as if the child meets the legal conditions to be recognized as stateless (Annex 15).

147. State registration of the birth of newborn children is mandatory¹⁰² and free of charge. During the reference period, over 167,000 birth certificates were registered in Moldova.¹⁰³ Regarding birth facts produced and recorded on the left bank of Dniester River and the city of Bender, national legislation and instructions regarding the certification of facts apply. The registration of births of children from the left bank of Dniester River is on the agenda of the working group for civil status acts and the documentation of the population from Chisinau and Tiraspol in the process of negotiations for the Transnistrian conflict. A consensus on this topic is the approval of the common model of declaration¹⁰⁴ regarding the consent of the person to the processing of personal data.

¹⁰¹ Law no. 1024/2000, Article 6: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=137681&lang=ro#.

¹⁰² Law no. 100/2001 on civil status documents and Government Decision no. 286/2019.

¹⁰³ Including procedures for subsequent registration and transcription of the birth certificate.

¹⁰⁴ The common model of declaration allows authorities to facilitate the documentation procedures of the population in the left bank of Dniester and mitigate challenges in the process of confirming the veracity of data from birth and death records in the region, which would contribute to updating with accurate data in the State Register of the Population.

H. Article 10

148. The fundamental principles of education are stipulated in Article 7.¹⁰⁵

149. Thus, all citizens of Moldova have equal rights to access education¹⁰⁶ without discrimination. Promoting inclusive education and equal access to quality education for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (regardless of sex) is an important priority for Moldova, stipulated in the Education Code and implemented at all educational levels (Annex 16).

150. In Moldova, there are no barriers to accessing education for any population category based on the sex criterion.

151. Citizens of Moldova have equal rights to access education and initial and continuing vocational training through the national education system. In accordance with the NDS “European Moldova 2030”, the “Education 2030” Development Strategy¹⁰⁷ offers opportunities for individuals to develop from an early age, throughout their lives, skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies necessary to maximize their potential both in personal and professional life.

152. The Education Code guarantees that private educational institutions of all levels can be established. Accredited private educational institutions are an integral part of the national education system and operate in accordance with the national regulatory framework.

153. Girls predominate in post-secondary technical vocational education, while boys are more prevalent in secondary technical vocational education. Girls predominantly find themselves in professions within the service and care sectors, while boys are in technical fields. Girls opt more for higher education.

154. Higher education, compared to technical vocational education, records an even higher level of women’s participation.¹⁰⁸ At the master’s level, the proportion of female students represents about 2/3 of the total students enrolled at this level – 65.6 per cent, and at the bachelor’s level – 57.2 per cent.

155. Of the total number of students enrolled in the bachelor’s degree programs, more than half are women.

156. To prevent and eliminate the phenomenon of violence, the MER has approved a set of operational procedures.¹⁰⁹ Teachers and directors of educational institutions are obligated to notify guardianship authorities and other relevant authorities when a child is at risk. The majority of child abuse cases in schools are reported by the

¹⁰⁵ The principle of equity; the principle of freedom of thought and independence from ideologies, religious dogmas, and political doctrines; the principle of social inclusion; the principle of ensuring equality and non-discrimination; the principle of recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including the right to preserve, develop, and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identities, etc.

¹⁰⁶ The Education Code of Moldova establishes the legal framework of relations concerning the design, organization, operation, and development of the education system in Moldova. The fundamental principles of education are stipulated in Article 7: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138940&lang=ro#.

¹⁰⁷ Government Decision no. 114/2023 approving the National Development Strategy “Education 2030” and the Implementation Programme for 2023-2025: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136600&lang=ro.

¹⁰⁸ 59.4 per cent of the total number of students in the academic year 2020-2023 are women.

¹⁰⁹ Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment include Order no. 985 dated 7 October 2022, and the Implementation Guide for Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment. The methodology regarding the prevention and combating of bullying (Order no. 1024/2022). The concept of bullying is also contained in the Education Code along with the principle of non-violence.

teaching staff. Every year, on 30 January, Moldova marks the International Day of Non-Violence in Schools.

157. For addressing the psycho-emotional state in post-conflict situations, the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance operates, and regionally, the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Services (PAS) are available.

158. The Education 2030 Development Strategy and its implementation program include aspects of gender equality and measures to eliminate stereotypes in this field and address the development of parental skills and competencies as specific objectives.

159. With the curriculum reform, the curriculum for the compulsory subject Personal Development in grades first to twelfth was developed for the first time, which includes a module dedicated to *Personal Identity and Harmonious Relationships*.¹¹⁰ The quality of sex education programs¹¹¹ taught has improved. Attendance in free general education is mandatory until the age of 16 (first to ninth grade). Upon request of parents and based on a medical certificate, including for pregnant girls, an individual study program is offered in general secondary education.

160. For people with learning difficulties caused by disabilities and students in penitentiaries, high school education (10th through 12th grade) can be organized at home/distance learning.

161. Part-time high school education (10th through 12th grade) is organized for graduates of gymnasium and secondary technical vocational education, those employed in the labour market, or those who have reached the age of 20. For the 2022-2023 academic year, 3 evening schools operate in Chisinau. Classes can be opened in regional branches of high schools upon request.

162. For the 2020-2021 school year, the dropout rate was 0.076 per cent (0.022 per cent Roma children and 0.054 per cent who move abroad with their parents).

163. Refugee children from Ukraine are integrated into the national educational system (Table 5, Annex 16).

164. In the 2018-2019 academic year, at Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, an optional course for medical students *Domestic and Gender Based Violence* was launched.¹¹²

I. Article 11

165. Individuals have the right to freely choose their profession, place of work, and are entitled to unemployment insurance.

166. In employment and in the eligibility criteria for filling vacancies, any discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, beliefs, sex, age, disability, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, social origin, or any other criterion is prohibited.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ The topics covered include gender roles, stereotypes, family as a value, responsibilities, and assertive, non-conflictual, and non-violent communication.

¹¹¹ The content of health education programs includes mental health, violence prevention, sexual and reproductive health, etc., and matches 54 per cent of the international standards for sex education. This indicator has almost doubled (from 32 per cent) since 2017.

¹¹² The course includes aspects concerning social norms, stereotypes, sexist language, toxic and positive masculinity, and discrimination based on gender.

¹¹³ Law no. 105/2018 regarding the promotion of employment and unemployment insurance provides for these rights: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=139819&lang=ro#.

167. People with disabilities benefit from assisted employment services, contracted¹¹⁴ by the National Employment Agency from private social service providers.

168. The labour participation rate, both urban and rural, for men and women over 15 years of age in the total population of the same age category has been increasing for both men and women (Fig. 1, Annex 17). For the category of people with disabilities, the indicators also registered an increase, the total average rate rising from 14 per cent to 17 per cent¹¹⁵ in 2023 (Fig. 2, Annex 17). The unemployment rate for men and women over 15 years from 2020 to 2023 has been decreasing (Table 1, Annex 17).

169. In average, women earn 15.5 per cent less than men (2022). The largest discrepancies in earnings between women and men are in financial activities, information, and communications. In education and service activities, women's earnings exceed those of men. The average salary and the salary gap, which has been slightly increasing, are shown in the Figure 3, Annex 17.¹¹⁶

170. Women over 15 years old are less represented in the agricultural sector (Table 2, Annex 17).

171. The share of women over 15 in the employed population is lower (Fig. 4, Annex 17). They are more represented in the service sector (58.4 per cent), financial intermediation and insurance (65.8 per cent), health and social care (82.1 per cent), education (81.9 per cent), and less in information and communications (36.8 per cent), real estate transactions (35.6 per cent) and construction (7.8 per cent),

172. New fathers are entitled to paternity leave and paternity allowance (Annex 18). The average size of the paternity allowance has been increasing.¹¹⁷

173. The number of women over 15 who are self-employed and not employed is increasing, most prominently aged 35-44 years¹¹⁸ (Annex 19). The Annex 20 shows the situation of women over 15 who are employed in unpaid work in family businesses (yearly, the fields have diversified). According to NBS, this category included owners, members of cooperatives – women.

174. Starting in March 2022, the Digital Transformation Program for Small and Medium Enterprises (GD no. 129/2022) was implemented. For 2022, 51 investment projects were approved for funding, 22 (43 per cent) of which are managed by women, with the approved grants amounting to approximately 51 million MDL, generating an investment volume in the economy of nearly 92 million MDL.

175. Under the changes made,¹¹⁹ in line with the Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee (2020), the transparency sector of the salary system has been strengthened from a gender perspective. Thus, the notions addressing the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value were defined; an employer's duty to periodically, but no less than once a year, inform employees and/or their representatives about the gender pay gap across categories of employees and roles, broken down by sex, was

¹¹⁴ According to a procedure approved by the Government.

¹¹⁵ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/forta-de-munca-ocuparea-si-somajul-in-anul-2022-430_60383.html.

¹¹⁶ https://statistica.gov.md/ro/portretul-statistic-al-femeilor-si-barbatilor-in-republica-moldova-9617_61008.html.

¹¹⁷ <https://cnas.gov.md/lib.php?l=ro&idc=439&t=/Rapoarte/Rapoarte-privind-executarea-BASS/Rapoarte-anuale-privind-executarea-bugetului-asigurarilor-sociale-de-stat&>.

¹¹⁸ https://statbank.statistica.md/PxWeb/pxweb/ro/30%20Statistica%20sociala/30%20Statistica%20sociala_03%20FM_03%20MUN__MUN020/MUN120500.px/?rxid=b2ff27d7-0b96-43c9-934b-42e1a2a9a774.

¹¹⁹ Law no. 107/2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=131234&lang=ro.

embedded; a norm regarding the employee's right to request and obtain information about pay levels, broken down by gender, was introduced.

176. The National Program for Extending Childcare Services for children up to 3 years old took necessary steps to enable parents to balance family obligations with professional duties.¹²⁰ In August and December 2022, the legislation regulatory framework¹²¹ concerning alternative childcare options for children up to 3 years old was legislated.¹²²

177. In order to integrate and encourage women to return earlier to the labour market from parental leave, starting from September 2022, a new option was established for granting the right to a monthly child-raising allowance (payment of 90 per cent of income for 1 year or payment over 2 or 3 years).

178. The public social insurance system is founded on *a set of principles*¹²³, and social insurance funds are established based on the contributions of individuals and legal persons participating in the system.

179. In the retirement system,¹²⁴ among the types of pensions awarded is *the survivor's pension*. The surviving spouse is entitled to the survivor's pension if, at the time of the breadwinner's death or within 5 years thereafter, they have reached the retirement age or have been classified with severe or profound disability, had been married to the deceased for at least 15 years, and has not remarried. The survivor's pension is granted if the deceased was receiving an old-age pension or disability pension, or met the conditions for obtaining a disability pension.

180. As of 1 July 2019, the standard retirement age is set at 63 years for men, and from 1 July 2028, the standard retirement age for women will also be 63 years. These ages are to be reached through a gradual annual increase in the standard retirement ages. As of 1 July 2017, the full contribution period for men is 33 years and 6 months, and for women, it is 30 years and 6 months, which will increase by six months every

¹²⁰ Since 2021, several pieces of legislation were passed that aim at the reconciliation of professional and personal life. We introduced flexible work schedules in the Labor Code that allow parents to negotiate flexible working hours and set a schedule that allows them to be both active and involved in raising their children. We've introduced the right for workers to request remote work in the Labour Code. We introduced the option to share childcare leave between spouses in parts of 4 months. We've extended paid paternity leave from 14 days to 15 days (which amounts to 100 per cent of the salary) and the period during which fathers can request the 15-day paternity leave from 56 days to 12 months. We passed legislation (Law no. 241/2023) that allows fathers to take in paternal leave in one single block of 15 days or in blocks of 5 days. The legislation also provides paternal leave for adoptive fathers too that can be taken in the 12 months since the adoption of the child. The law also provides paid parental leave for adoptive parents for up to 90 days in the amount of 60 per cent of the salary of the adoptive parent.

¹²¹ Law no. 367/2022 on alternative childcare services, Law no. 212/2023 on the amendment of some normative acts (concerning budgetary-fiscal policy), Law no. 241/2023 on the amendment of certain normative acts, GD No. 572/2023 approving the Regulations on the organization and functioning of alternative childcare services.

¹²² The law allows employers to open childcare on their site. Alternative childcare services allow the development of services organized by the employer at the workplace, services provided by child caregivers individually at the child's home, and services offered for a limited number of children at the caregiver's residence.

¹²³ Contributory – social insurance rights are derived from the social insurance contributions made by participants; equality – guarantees non-discriminatory treatment in terms of rights and obligations under the law for all participants, both contributors and beneficiaries; mandatory participation – as mandated by law, both physical and legal entities are required to participate in the public system, with social insurance rights being contingent upon the fulfilment of these obligations.

¹²⁴ Law no. 156/1998 on the public pension system: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132852&lang=ro#.

1 July until it reaches 34 years for men by 2018 and 34 years for women by 2024 (Annex 22).

181. The contribution period includes non-contributory periods such as the period of caring for a child up to the age of 3 years, including the period of caring for a child with severe disabilities under the age of 18 years, or for a person with severe disabilities by one of the parents, by a guardian or curator, until the employment as a personal assistant

182. The Law on Social Assistance¹²⁵ provides for equal opportunities for disadvantaged families by granting financial support at a level guaranteed by the state, in accordance with the assessment of the average monthly total income of each family and the need for social assistance. The beneficiary of social assistance is the applicant and its his/her family (Annex 21). In the reporting period, the regulatory framework in the social assistance has been substantially improved.

183. On 28 December 2023, Law on the Ratification of the ILO Convention no. 190 concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace was voted. At the same time, modifications were made to the national legislation in line with international standards on the dimension of preventing sexual harassment.¹²⁶

J. Article 12

184. The right to sexual and reproductive health is considered a fundamental human right.

185. Access to safe and effective services for sexual and reproductive health care, as an integral part of the right to health care, the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents, women's right to abortion, and women's access to safe and legal abortion¹²⁷ methods are guaranteed by the state through special legislation¹²⁸.

186. In line with the most recent international recommendations, in 2020, the Standard for Safe Abortion Practices was reviewed and approved¹²⁹. The National Program on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for 2024-2027, which meets the commitments made by Moldova, is in the process of approval.

187. The state promotes comprehensive policies by strengthening the efforts of all government and non-governmental structures in implementing HIV/AIDS¹³⁰ prevention activities and aims to eliminate discrimination against individuals affected by HIV/AIDS by ensuring human rights and upholding human dignity. The National Program for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections for 2022-2025¹³¹ includes measures that ensure the protection of human rights, which remains crucial in the context of the HIV epidemic. The Human Rights-Based Approach emphasizes the state's obligations to ensure respect for the rights of every individual, including the right to health, and highlights the importance of

¹²⁵ Law no. 133/2008 on social aid: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=139102&lang=ro#.

¹²⁶ Amendments made by Law no. 74/2023: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136606&lang=ro.

¹²⁷ Abortion is performed on request up to the term of 12 weeks, and after 12 weeks based on medical and social indications.

¹²⁸ Law no. 138/2012 on reproductive health: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135028&lang=ro#.

¹²⁹ MHLSP Order no. 766/2020, Approving the Standard for Safe Abortion Practices.

¹³⁰ For the purpose of preventing HIV and sexually transmitted infections during 2020-2023, a total of 5,985,000 MDL was allocated (2020 – 827,300 MDL, 2021 – 805,300 MDL, 2022 – 701,200 MDL; projected for 2023 – 3,651,200 MDL).

¹³¹ GD no. 134/2022 on the National Programme for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections for 2022-2025: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130469&lang=ro.

empowering and actively involving communities and individuals affected or infected by HIV/AIDS, especially those at higher risk of infection such as people living with HIV, men who have sex with men, sex workers, and injectable drug users.

188. The prevalence of HIV among infected individuals decreased from 3.57 per cent in 2020 to 2.94 per cent in 2022, and 2.51 per cent in the first 6 months of 2023. The percentage of women infected with HIV in 2022 (4.06 per cent) was more than double that of men (2 per cent), with the rate of infection in men being below the overall average.

189. The Law on the Rights and Responsibilities of Patients¹³² stipulates the requirement for patient consent¹³³ regarding medical interventions, which must be informed and voluntarily expressed, based on comprehensive information provided by the attending physician or the physician conducting the clinical study.

190. The Penal Code stipulates penalties for severe intentional harm to physical integrity or health, for illegally inducing abortion, and for performing unlawful performance of surgical sterilization.

191. The regulatory framework does not require permission from a third party for a woman who wishes to access family planning services or restrict access to these services only to married women. An exception is teenagers under 16. For minors up to 16 years old,¹³⁴ voluntary consent to obtain reproductive health care services is expressed both by the minor and their legal representative. When it is impossible to obtain the consent of the legal representative, but the medical services are essential for life and health, the voluntary consent of the child alone is sufficient. Decisions are made on a consultative basis, in the best interest of the minor, in accordance with legal norms.

192. Women's right to free gynaecological and obstetrical medical assistance is guaranteed.¹³⁵ In 2020, the percentage of births attended by qualified medical personnel was 99.6 per cent, in 2021 it was 99.6 per cent, and in 2022 it reached 99.7 per cent.

193. Women benefit from better/quick access to emergency gynaecological and obstetric care.¹³⁶

¹³² Law no. 263/2005 on patients' rights and responsibilities: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133163&lang=ro#.

¹³³ Consent is authenticated by the signatures of the patient or their legal representative (a close relative) and the doctor in the relevant medical documentation.

¹³⁴ Law no. 138/2012, Article 6: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106297&lang=ro.

¹³⁵ Law no. 138/2012 on reproductive health, the Unique Program of Mandatory Medical Insurance (GD no. 1387/2007), the Regulation on supplying reproductive-age vulnerable groups with contraceptives, and the Standards for outpatient surveillance of pregnancies with physiological evolution, etc.

¹³⁶ In 2022, 9 hospitals were equipped with advanced medical equipment installed in delivery rooms, operating rooms, intensive care units for mothers and newborns, and gynaecology departments with support from the UNFPA. In 2023, the pre-hospital Emergency Medical Service's response capacity was strengthened by equipping it with 20 new Type B ambulances for territorial subdivisions; the referral mechanism between National and Subnational Perinatal Centers by equipping 9 hospitals that provide gynaecological and obstetrical medical assistance with Type A Ambulances; the National Blood Transfusion Center and 14 hospitals were equipped with the necessary equipment for blood banks; the professional capacity of specialists through the training of 166 health professionals on the clinical management of gynecological and obstetrical emergency cases; the technical capacity of gynaecological examination rooms in 26 other hospital institutions was enhanced with medical equipment adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, allowing the provision of quality sexual and reproductive health services.

194. Data on the maternal mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate disaggregated by the urban or rural residence of mothers and by age are included in Annexes 23 and 24.

195. According to the Generations and Gender Survey (2020), slightly more than half of married women or those in cohabitation (55.1 per cent) use contraceptive methods. The unmet need for family planning (Annex 24) and the demand for family planning met with modern contraceptive methods were also influenced, not least by the epidemiological situation generated by COVID-19, thus recording values below expectations.

196. In recent years, there has been no maternal mortality due to abortion complications. Data on abortion rates are presented in Annex 27.

197. The list of vulnerable groups¹³⁷ eligible for free contraceptives has been expanded, as well as the range of contraceptive products purchased with state budget funds¹³⁸, reflecting the beneficiaries' right to choose their preferred contraceptive method.

198. The percentage of women (ages 25-61) covered annually with cervical screening services to prevent cervical cancer has increased from 36 per cent in 2021 to 62 per cent in 2023.¹³⁹ The percentage of women with cervical cancer (aged 18+) remains unchanged at 0.4 per cent during 2020-2022. Women from various regions of the country now have better access¹⁴⁰ to services for early detection and treatment of precancerous cervical lesions.

199. The quality of medical services is also influenced by the level of training of specialists.¹⁴¹

200. To enhance access to medical services for the rural population, the National Health Insurance Company (NHIC) annually allocates financial resources for preventive examinations (screening) aimed at early detection of diseases (Annex 25).

201. Between 2020 and 2023, salaries for medical staff in public health institutions enrolled in the mandatory medical insurance system were increased by 95 per cent.¹⁴²

K. Article 13

202. According to Law no. 289/2004 on temporary incapacity benefits and other social security benefits¹⁴³, insured persons in the public social insurance system are entitled to maternity and paternity allowances; for parental care until the child reaches

¹³⁷ Twelve categories of beneficiaries eligible for free contraceptives include survivors of exceptional situations, humanitarian crises, and public health emergencies.

¹³⁸ In 2023, under the National Program on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 750,000 condoms were purchased with state budget funds.

¹³⁹ Data from the Cervical Screening Implementation Coordination Unit.

¹⁴⁰ Thanks to the creation of a national network of 12 colposcopy clinics equipped with modern medical and IT equipment supported by the UNFPA, there is now a connection between healthcare providers.

¹⁴¹ Training sessions are also held on the prevention and combating violence against women and girls (Order of MH).

¹⁴² The average national salary for doctors increased from 8,890 MDL in 2019 to 19,550 MDL; for middle medical staff from 5,750 MDL to 12,250 MDL; and for lower medical staff from 3,210 MDL to 7,160 MDL, by +10 per cent from 1 April 2020, +30 per cent from 1 September 2020, +30 per cent from 1 January 2021, +10 per cent from 1 October 2022, and +15 per cent from 1 October 2023.

¹⁴³ Law no. 289/2004 on temporary incapacity benefits and other social security benefits: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138817&lang=ro#.

the age of 3 years, and for caring for a sick child. These are available for women and men equally. The Law¹⁴⁴ establishes state payments for childbirth,

childcare, the raising of twins, triplets, etc., as well as social support¹⁴⁵ benefits for adopted children, children placed in family-type services, children temporarily without parental care, and children without parental care, including for the continuation of studies. These payments are made from the state budget.

203. From January 2021,¹⁴⁶ freelance professionals in the justice sector are entitled to social security benefits.¹⁴⁷

204. Maternity allowance is automatically calculated based on the income of the spouse with the highest salary. From 1 January 2024, the allowance for raising a child up to the age of 3 will be calculated similarly.

205. To support female entrepreneurs, Organisation for Entrepreneurship Development (ODA) launched the first *Women in Business Program*¹⁴⁸ in 2016, which addressed the support needs of women throughout the entire lifecycle of their enterprise, by providing access to funds, granting investment grants, and offering educational opportunities to acquire entrepreneurial skills (Annex 28). In 2023 *the Women's Entrepreneurship Program* was approved. The purpose and objectives of the program are detailed in Annex 8. Between 2020-2023, the Credit Guarantee Fund managed by the ODA handled 296 financial guarantees,¹⁴⁹ aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises led by women, worth 265.41 million MDL, to guarantee loans totalling 561.87 million MDL (Annex 29).

206. Permanent thematic working groups and temporary working groups have been formed within the Economic Council created alongside the Prime Minister, including the group for Economic Empowerment of Women and Gender Equality. To support and facilitate women's involvement in the economy, the Government launched a Roadmap containing actions to encourage female entrepreneurship¹⁵⁰ in particular entrepreneurship of women in rural areas.¹⁵¹

207. Tax legislation does not specify any different criteria for taxing men or women but refers to the equal and equitable treatment of each taxpayer. Tax exemptions are detailed in Annex 30.

208. There are no banking regulations that establish different rules based on gender regarding the right to request loans. Annex 31 includes disaggregated data by gender on loans granted by licensed banks during 2020-2023.

¹⁴⁴ Law no. 315/2016 on social benefits for children: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133513&lang=ro#.

¹⁴⁵ Starting from 1 January 2024, both parents are eligible for a unique allowance for the period of custody of an adoptable child, a unique allowance for the adopted child or the child placed in guardianship/trusteeship, and an allowance for raising a child older than 3 years who was adopted or placed in guardianship/trusteeship.

¹⁴⁶ In implementing the CEDAW Committee's Recommendation (2020) on enhancing social protection for freelance women.

¹⁴⁷ Benefits are provided for temporary incapacity to work caused by common illnesses or non-work-related accidents; for illness prevention (quarantine); for the recovery of work capacity; maternity; for child-rearing until the child reaches the age of 3; for caring for a sick child; and death grants.

¹⁴⁸ From 2016 to 2022, a total of 112.4 million MDL in investments were provided, through the awarding of 749 small grants and 13 large grants, training 1,203 women, and mentoring 3,206 women.

¹⁴⁹ Intended for enterprises founded or managed by female entrepreneurs.

¹⁵⁰ The Roadmap contain actions aim to improving women's access to financing and investment opportunities, business development, and professional training.

¹⁵¹ https://consecon.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FP_-Abilitarea-Economica-Femeilor_12.12.22_FIN.Actualizata.pdf.

209. Cultural activity is an inalienable right of every individual, irrespective of national origin, social background, language, sex, political beliefs, religious beliefs, place of residence, financial situation, education, profession, or other circumstances.¹⁵² There is also a policy of zero tolerance towards any form of direct and indirect discrimination against employees in the cultural sector. In three theatrical institutions, a working group was established to analyse harassment situations. Subsequently, it was decided to set up an Ethics Council¹⁵³ at the Ministry of Culture.

210. To support vulnerable people to pay for their bills due to energy crisis during 2021-2023, in addition to social aid, the *Help at the Meter Program* was established in 2022.¹⁵⁴ In 2023, the program benefited 716,476 people, of whom 49.9 per cent were women.

L. Article 14

211. To ensure efficient access for rural women to quality water, it is worth mentioning the National Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation for 2014-2030,¹⁵⁵ which mandates gender consideration in water resource management and encourages more active participation of women in decision-making in this field. Rural women participate in the management of Water User Associations for Irrigation (WUAI)¹⁵⁶, which has led to positive changes in facilitating women's access to irrigation.

212. Farms led by women grow industrial crops on 18 per cent of their arable land, while farms led by men use 26 per cent of their arable land for this purpose.¹⁵⁷ Households headed by women are more involved in vegetable production. The Intervention and Payment Agency for Agriculture manages the National Fund for Development of Agriculture and Rural Environment (GD no. 20/2019). Legislation¹⁵⁸ regulating the allocation of funds for potential subsidy beneficiaries specifically encourages female farmers. To encourage priority agricultural activities, subsidies granted under general conditions from the eligible investment value are increased at the request of female farmers and calculated from the authorized subsidy value at 20 per cent (in 2020-2021 it was at 15 per cent). During 2020-2022, female farmers annually received 17-20 per cent of the fund¹⁵⁹ (Annex 32).

213. In agriculture, less than a third of the population is employed, with women holding 49.6 per cent of jobs in this sector. Women own less than 12 per cent of the agricultural machinery and livestock in the country. In 2021, 37.9 per cent of farmers in Moldova were women, managing 19 per cent of the agricultural farms. Men control 81 per cent of the farms and are more numerous than women when it comes to agricultural technology. The average monthly income of women in the agricultural

¹⁵² Law no. 413/1999 on culture: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=141530&lang=ro#.

¹⁵³ The Equity Council of Ministry of Culture operates under the Framework Regulation on preventing and combating harassment at work.

¹⁵⁴ Law no. 241/2022 on the fund for the reduction of energy vulnerability, GD no. 704/2022 on the approval of the Regulation on the assignment of energy vulnerability categories and the method of establishing and paying compensation for energy bills and energy compensation in the form of monetary payment.

¹⁵⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132532&lang=ro#.

¹⁵⁶ In 2014, women represented 34 per cent of the governance structure of newly established WUAI, 51 per cent of the members of audit councils, and 36 per cent of the members of dispute resolution commissions.

¹⁵⁷ Government Decision no. 56/2023 approving the National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for 2023-2030: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136318&lang=ro#.

¹⁵⁸ Although GD no. 455/2017 is now repealed, it was applicable during the reporting period 2020-2022.

¹⁵⁹ This indicator does not imply that other payments from the Fund are restricted for women regarding access to funding sources; it simply acknowledges the norms that separately support this category.

sector is \$128 (for men it's \$141). As of 1 January 2023, the average size of the retirement age pension for men in the non-agricultural sector is 4,253.3 MDL, compared to 3,242.7 MDL for women. The average size of the retirement age pension for employees in the agricultural sector was 2,361.8 MDL for men, compared to 2,276.1 MDL for women.

214. The ratio of qualified medical staff to the rural population is as follows: availability of specialist doctors in district institutions is 20.3 per 10,000 inhabitants, with medical assistants – 59.0, and with medical-sanitary personnel – 79.3 per 10,000 inhabitants.

215. In 2021, 1.5 per cent of the rural population and 0.4 per cent of the urban population cited the great distance to a medical facility as the reason for not seeking medical help for their most recent illness.¹⁶⁰

216. The prevalence rate of modern contraceptives in rural areas is 46.7 per cent (ages 15-49).¹⁶¹

217. Table 4, Annex 16 provides data on secondary and post-secondary technical vocational education institutions in rural areas, including the number of students by speciality and gender.

M. Article 15

218. Citizens of Moldova, regardless of gender, enjoy equal rights in the judicial protection of their rights and legal interests. Legislation on ensuring equality aims to prevent and combat discrimination and ensure equality for all individuals in Moldova in all areas of life without distinction.

219. Civil and procedural civil law is based on recognizing the equality of participants in civil/procedural relationships, protecting private, intimate, and family life, and acknowledging the need for the free exercise of civil rights.¹⁶²

220. An individual is considered a physical person, holding rights and civil obligations. The capacity to have civil rights and obligations is recognized equally to all individuals.

221. The Civil Code recognizes civil capacity equally to all persons, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, wealth, social origin, level of education, or other similar criteria. An individual can only be deprived of or limited in their capacity to use and exercise rights in the manner and under the conditions provided by law. In cases where an individual, due to mental illness or a physical, mental, or psychological deficiency, cannot fully understand their actions or express their will, a judicial protection measure in the form of trusteeship, temporary protection, or guardianship may be instituted by a court decision. In all cases, the protected person has the right to independently conclude minor value legal transactions, to receive free benefits that do not require notarial authentication or state registration of rights derived from them, and acts of conservation.

222. The domicile of an individual is the place where they usually reside. It is considered that a person retains their domicile as long as they have not established

¹⁶⁰ According to *Populations' Access to Health Services Study* by the National Bureau of Statistics, 2022.

¹⁶¹ Generations and Gender. Be the voice of your generation! Report, 2022.

¹⁶² The regulation of realizing and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with other non-pecuniary values, is governed by the Civil Code and other laws, considering the provisions and principles set forth by international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

another. The establishment or change of domicile only occurs when the person occupying or moving to a particular place has done so with the intention of maintaining their usual residence there. Proof of intention comes from the person's statements made to the competent authorities to operate the establishment or change of domicile, or in the absence of such statements, from any other factual circumstances.

223. The regulatory framework related to the Real Estate Registry (Law no. 1543/1998) provides equal rights and obligations for women and men and contains no form of discrimination against women citizens of Moldova, as well as foreign nationals and stateless persons.

224. Since 2014, citizens of Moldova benefit from a visa liberalization regime for short-term travel in the Schengen area with biometric passports.

225. Coordinating social security systems is an important component of social policy promoted by the Government amid increasing population migration flows. Bilateral agreements in the field of social security¹⁶³ were signed between 2020 and 2023.¹⁶⁴

226. SGLA is granted on the principle of equal rights for applicants. Over 50,000 people benefited from SGLA during 2020-2023. Currently, within the SGLA system, there are: 540 lawyers (13 public, 527 on request), including 20 lawyers specialized¹⁶⁵ in providing assistance to victims of crimes and 73 paralegals.

N. Article 16

227. All measures set out in Article 16 of the Convention are contained and implemented as binding rules in the family and civil status legislation of Moldova. Constitutional norms¹⁶⁶ state that family is based on the freely consented marriage between man and woman, on their equality in rights and on the right and duty of parents to provide for the upbringing, education and training of their children.

228. The Family Code¹⁶⁷ guarantees the right to build a family and enter into marriage, monogamy, marriage between a man and a woman by free consent, the right of spouses in marriage, equality in rights of spouses, as well as in their property and non-property relations.

229. Minimum marriage age is 18 years. The age reduction exception¹⁶⁸ can only be invoked for good cause and with the agreement of the local guardianship authority and the minor's parents.

230. When entering into a marriage, the spouses, if they wish, choose the surname of one of them. The surname can also be chosen by linking the names of both spouses

¹⁶³ With the Italian Republic, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Spain and the Republic of Latvia.

¹⁶⁴ In total, 18 agreements on social security have been signed, of which 16 are currently in force. Currently, Moldova is in the process of negotiating the draft Agreement on social security with the Swiss Confederation, with the second round of negotiations taking place on 15-17 January 2024, in Bern. Additionally, bilateral discussions are ongoing regarding the need to initiate negotiations on a draft Agreement in the field with the Slovak Republic, the French Republic, Cyprus, and Ukraine. Negotiations have also been initiated with Albania and Canada. In 2021, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Federal Republic of Germany regarding the employment of Moldovan workers in seasonal jobs. In 2023, the process of signing Protocol B to the Agreement with the State of Israel (regarding the home care) was initiated. By 2024, Agreements in the field of labour migration regulation have been concluded with the State of Israel, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Federal Republic of Germany.

¹⁶⁵ The list of specialist lawyers is updated regularly.

¹⁶⁶ Article 48(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova.

¹⁶⁷ Family Code no. 1316/2000: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=138943&lang=ro#.

¹⁶⁸ Which cannot be less than 16 years old.

or each spouse keeps the surname they had until marriage. In the Republic of Moldova, the marriage relationship continues to be the standard model in the formation of family partnerships. Cohabitation has increased in recent years.

231. Marriage of a person under *trusteeship* is allowed at his or her own will unless the court stated in the decision establishing the trusteeship that it is allowed only with the consent of the trustee or, if the trustee refuses, with the authorisation of the trusteeship authority. Marriage of a person under *guardianship* is allowed only with the authorisation of the family council or the guardianship authority, after hearing the future spouses and, where appropriate, the parents.

232. The Family Code provides for the voluntary conclusion of the marriage contract before or during the registration of the marriage. The contract stipulates the property rights and obligations of the spouses during the marriage and/or in the event of its termination and may establish that property acquired by each spouse during the marriage is the personal property of the spouse who acquired it.

233. The assets acquired by spouses during the marriage are owned jointly by both spouses. Property in joint ownership property may be divided by agreement between the spouses. In case of disagreement, the court shall determine the shares and how to divide the joint property.

234. The wealth must be declared by the subject of the declaration and his/her family members, his/her cohabitant.¹⁶⁹ The legislation regulates the control mechanism of the wealth acquired by the subject of the declaration¹⁷⁰ and his/her family members, his/her cohabitant during exercising their mandate or holding public service or public dignity positions.

235. In line with developments in international law, in 2018 the provisions of the Civil Code related to inheritance were amended to be applied uniformly to all subjects. To ensure predictability of the costs of preparing notarial acts, including inheritance papers, a draft law on notarial payments is being prepared.¹⁷¹

236. The State, through the responsible public authorities and specialised human rights institutions (People's Advocate), provides the right of persons with disabilities to enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life and guarantees equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on any ground.

IV. Conclusions

237. The national law has been supplemented with multiple provisions, stipulating the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all areas of activity (equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, development of alternative childcare services for children aged 0-3 years in both the public and private sectors, offering three options to parents with children to ensure childcare leave, provisions on preventing and combating sexual harassment in the workplace, etc.).

238. There is a state institutional mechanism for gender equality demonstrated by: the strengthened specialized directorate in the MLSP, strengthened Gender Coordinating Groups; established specialized Commission of the NCHR coordinated by the MLSP which monitors the implementation of CEDAW Convention; professional development

¹⁶⁹ Law no. 133/2016 on the declaration of assets and personal interests: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134895&lang=ro#.

¹⁷⁰ The income in the previous tax year, movable and immovable property, financial assets, personal debts in the form of debt, pledge, mortgage, etc., property in the form of precious metals, copyrights, patents and other income stipulated by law shall be declared.

¹⁷¹ Once it is approved by the Government, it will be submitted to Parliament.

for specialists in labour inspection, education, social system, security and defence bodies; established a National Anti-Violence Agency; introduced positions of professionals in DV and rehabilitation of crime victims at the local level.

239. The Istanbul Convention was ratified and the procedures for aligning the national regulatory framework with its provisions started. Two new public policy documents were approved: Gender Equality Program and Anti-Violence Program.

240. There is a functional mechanism in place at legislative level that provides for a wide circle of subjects who benefit from unconditional state-guaranteed legal aid.

241. Legislative measures for the reconciliation of work and family life, a new National Employment Program that provides for concrete measures to increase women's employment and participation in the labour market results in less gender-based discrimination.

242. The Government has taken measures in the area of healthcare and education ("Education 2030" Strategy) to ensure access to reproductive health services and education for girls and women.

243. Considerable efforts have been made to promote gender equality in the security and defence sector, having two Programs that implement Resolution 1325 and were approved since 2017.

244. Together with development partners, the Government carried out multiple activities: capacity building for gender specialists, preventing and combating DV and THB; mainstreaming gender equality in the private sector and in STEM; started the transposition of the EU Directives on gender equality.

245. Information on Moldova's implementation of each of the CEDAW Committee (2020) recommendations can be accessed at <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Raport-privind-realizarea-Setului-de-masuri-pentru-implementarea-Observatiilor-finale-ale-Comitetului-ONU-pentru-eliminarea-discriminarii-impotriva-femeilor-CEDAW-pentru-2020-2023.pdf>.

Barriers and Limitations

246. For more than three decades, Moldova has been facing a steady and profound deterioration of the demographic situation, caused by political, economic, and social changes, the exodus of the able-bodied population in search of attractive jobs. Over the recent decades Moldova has encountered problems with labour mobility and migration of the working age population.

247. The masculinisation and feminisation of certain professions is a challenge in vocational education and on the labour market.

248. The need to ensure access for people with disabilities to educational institutions persists.

249. Violence against women, DV, and THB remain considerable challenges, calling for a coordinated multidisciplinary response of all relevant stakeholders, allocation of adequate resources, implementation of educational/awareness-raising programs for the population, development of appropriate services, training of specialists.

250. Many female victims of sexual violence are still unable to access health services because of fear of reporting, yet the health worker is obliged to report the identified cases. There is a reason for these challenges: accessing health services within the first 72 hours is very important in order to collect samples and provide the needed treatment to rule out unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

251. Efforts are needed to inform the population about gender equality, their rights and the possibilities to claim them. The active involvement of mass-media in educating the society in the spirit of gender equality, the elimination of sexism from language and advertising are necessary.

252. Men and women in the rural areas need special attention, especially in the context of migration, demographic challenges. Continuing developing and supporting entrepreneurship programs, especially for women, young and older people, would improve the socio-economic situation, diminish the migration flows, mitigate the negative consequences of population ageing.

253. To correctly refer DV cases, the rural (community) police officers require additional in-depth training.

254. Rural people's access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health, is insufficient. Youth-friendly health services are underdeveloped, resulting in a declining teenage birth rate.

255. Efforts are needed to strengthen the monitoring of regulations implementation, as the enforcement mechanism is not in line with international standards and EU Directives.

256. The authorities' reluctance to gender mainstreaming in sectoral policy documents and gender-responsive budgeting is still prevailing.

257. Another sensitive area concerns the weak involvement of men as promoters of gender equality in care, education and other feminised areas of the labour market.

258. Now it is too early to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance due to potential impediments in ensuring its observance on the left bank of the Dniester River, where self-proclaimed structures operate outside the legal field of Moldova.

259. Based on the above, note that Moldova has demonstrated a significant commitment to promote gender equality and fight discrimination by ratifying international conventions and adopting relevant national legislation. Significant progress has been made in reducing violence against women, promoting women's participation in politics and public life and improving access to education and health.

260. However, there are persistent challenges, including uneven implementation of the legislation, the need to combat gender stereotypes and address economic and social inequalities. Migration and population decline are demographic challenges that require innovative solutions to ensure social and economic sustainability.

261. For the future, it is crucial to continue the reforms and enhance efforts to effectively implement the international commitments. Priorities include improving the legislative and institutional framework, supporting women's economic participation, and strengthening mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress on gender equality. Cooperation with civil society and international partners will be key to achieving gender equality and sustainable development goals.

262. We also initiated the elaboration of the Report for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) for 2020-2024.