



United Nations in the
Kyrgyz Republic

Common Country Assessment for the Kyrgyz Republic

Prepared by:
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Bishkek, September 2016



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List of acronyms

ABND	Social Protection Assessment Based National Dialogue
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BOS	Business Operations Strategy 2015-2017
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CDS	Country Development Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CES	Concept of Environmental Security for 2007–2020
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPD	Country Programme Documents
CPI	Consumer price index
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CT MoF	Central Treasury of the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAO	Delivering As One
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EAPI	Energy Architecture Performance Index
EMB	Electoral Management Body
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FE	Final Evaluation
FMC	Family Medicine Center
GAMSUMO	The State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-ethnic Relations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFCF	Gross fixed capital formation
GG	General Government
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GoKR	Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
GRP	Gross regional product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDA	International Development Association
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMD	International Institute for Management Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration

IPR	Investment Policy Review
JSC	Joint Steering Committee (of the Peacebuilding Fund)
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice survey
KGS	Kyrgyz som
KR-	Kyrgyz Republic
LSGs	Local Self Governments
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	MDG Acceleration Framework
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NAP	National Action Plan
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NSC	National Statistics Committee
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMT	Operations Management Team
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFM	Public finance management
PHC	Primary health Care
PISA	International assessment on learning achievement
PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PRF	Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (of the Peacebuilding Fund)
RC Office	The Office of the Resident Coordinator
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
RUR	Russian ruble
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SF	Social Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SPR	Strategic Prioritization Retreat
SQAM	Quality assurance, accreditation and metrology
SRT	Special Rapporteur on Torture
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TB	Tuberculosis
TOE	Ton of oil equivalent
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCAC	United Nations Convention on Anti-Corruption
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission of Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOSAT	United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Regulation
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States Dollar
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities
WB	World Bank
WDI	World Development Indicators
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization

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Introduction

1. A Common Country Assessment (CCA) is a first step that the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and country partners take when preparing for their next programming cycle. The CCA enables the UNCT and country partners to gain insight into the country context, identify development challenges and suggest where UNCT in the Kyrgyz Republic has a comparative advantage in supporting development priorities. Major challenges are addressed in the next step of the programming process - a multiyear United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) - that contains results and strategies for Government of the Kyrgyz Republic-UN cooperation.

2. This Common Country Assessment for the Kyrgyz Republic is anchored in the country's national priorities sustainable development, paying particular attention to political, economic and social agendas. Importantly, the CCA is also anchored in the Post-2015 National Consultation process that was embraced by the people of The Kyrgyz Republic as a channel to voice their opinions on development issues in their country.

3. This CCA has been developed with a gender mainstreaming and Human Rights Based Approach. This recognizes the right to development as an inalienable human right, which entitles everyone to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development. It recognizes that development efforts should aim for the full realization of the entire range of rights specified under international human rights law, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The CCA also reiterates that development efforts need to be grounded in the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and promote participation, transparency and accountability.

4. The Common Country Assessment has two major and interlinked parts: the overview of the national development context; and the analysis of sectors.

5. National Development Context provides an overview of political, economic and social circumstances in the Kyrgyz Republic, focusing on themes and priorities that are driving national development agenda. It also provides insight into the state of human rights and gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic as critical crosscutting issues.

6. The section dedicated to the analysis of sectors is structured according to the *National Priorities for International Assistance (NAD)*, 2014-2017¹. The NAD was developed to increase the alignment between national priorities and international assistance so that targeted donor interventions will support mainstream public spending on policy reforms from the national budget. In addition, the NAD is intended to reduce duplication of donor activities and to rationalize these activities so that they are as cost-effective as possible.²

7. This section is broad ranging. It examines critical issues related to the state of public administration, home affairs including migration issues, corruption and organised crime, human resources development and culture with the core themes of poverty and social protection, employment and the labour market, education, health, children and youth, and older people.

8. The section also includes an analysis of pressing concerns for energy, environment, and climate change, agriculture and rural development, the state of civil society, and a section on disaster risk reduction and emergency response.

9. The methodology for the CCA involved interviews and consultations with the key national and international development partners and intensive review, analysis, and synthesis of secondary data sources from the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the UN, and other reputable local and international sources.

¹ National Priorities for International Assistance (NAD), 2014-2017, with projections until 2020. SEIO, 28 January 2014.

² Ibid. A.1.1

Acknowledgements

10. The UNCT is grateful to all national and international partners and donors for their support and partnership. The UNCT remains committed to transparent and accountable use of all resources available to it, and commits to further implementation of the Delivering as One principle. The joint efforts of national and international partners result in tangible outcomes and support our dedication to assist the people of the Kyrgyz Republic in their overall national development.

Executive summary

11. The Kyrgyz Republic (herein after the KR) is a landlocked and largely mountainous country, with 0.655 Human Development Index,³ ranked 120 (out of 188) as a medium human development category.⁴ After obtaining independence in December 1991, the country went through a difficult transition that caused disruptions in the economy and increase of poverty. Public dissatisfaction with the conduct of elections in February 2005, along with dissatisfaction in the absence of social and economic improvements, prevailing corruption and increasing perceptions of nepotism, resulted in a popular revolt called the Tulip Revolution. The revolt ousted the country's president, Askar Akaev, in March 2005. Still, the root causes of the Tulip Revolution persisted under the succeeding president, Kurmanbek Bakiev. The 2010 April political unrest was followed by ethnic violence in June same year in which, hundreds of people died and a great deal of property was damaged. Although stability has returned, the reconciliation process has been slow and especially painful in Osh and Jalabad regions.

12. In June 2010, the country adopted a new constitution with clear separation of powers between legislative, judiciary and the executive branches: while the President has the right to appoint military and security heads, as well as high-ranking military officers, the Prime Minister and the government are tasked with directing and executing economic policies, and have final decision on appointing judges. The Constitution is based on best international practices; it guarantees fundamental human rights and a system of governance that is based on the rule of law. The parliamentary elections were held during the same year (2010) on the proportional representation basis, and were praised by international organizations as open, fair and transparent. They laid foundation for the Parliamentary of fifth convocation, whose mandate expired in autumn 2015.

13. The country held nation-wide parliamentary elections on October 4, 2015. One of the requirements for parties to register for election is to have a list of 120 candidates and both genders have to make up at least 30% of the voting lists.⁵ Ethnic minorities have to make up at least 15% of the voting list. The international observers, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), concluded that the elections had been «lively and competitive» and «unique in this region», highlighting problems with the biometric voter registration, with many people not having registered to receive their ID cards. A portion of the population was also concerned about the biometric registration and thus avoided it with a clear consequence on their right to vote. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) mission stated that voters had «made their choice freely among a large number of contestants; however, some concerns were raised regarding transparency of campaigns and party financing. Six parties cleared the threshold to enter parliament. In the aftermath of the elections, the Government was established with participation of the Social Democratic Party (SDPK- winning 38 seats in the 120-member parliament), the Kyrgyzstan party (18 seats), Onuguu-Progress (13) and Ata-Meken (11). The remaining two parties, Respublika-Ata Jurt (28 seats) and Bir Bol (12 seats), will sit in opposition. However, the women's participation in Parliament was 16% in June and in August 2016 the number went further down to 17 seats (14%).⁶ The coalition nominated former Prime Minister Temir Sariyev to retain the post he's held since April 2015. He was replaced by the current Prime Minister, Mr. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, who assumed the duty in April 2016.

14. In 2011 presidential elections, a former prime minister, Almazbek Atambaev, won an outright majority with 63% of votes.

³ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/KGZ.pdf

⁴ Between 1990 and 2014, Kyrgyzstan's HDI value increased from 0.615 to 0.655, an increase of 6.5 percent or an average annual increase of about 0.26 percent

⁵ This is not necessarily translated into women and minorities being represented in the Parliament. If they renounce to their elected positions, they can be replaced by men and candidates of any other ethnicity- more details are provided in the report.

⁶ Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic website at <http://www.kenesh.kg>



15. The population of the Kyrgyz Republic of about 6.03 million⁷ is predominately young: over half of population is under the age of 25. This is a great potential and opportunity for the country's development on the one hand, while on the other hand, the young population is continuously pressing the labour market for new jobs, resulting in very large labour inflows, mainly toward the unemployment pool.

16. The first decade of independence was challenging for the country in political and economic terms. Economic recovery and growth starting from 1996, was severely affected by the 2008-09 global economic crises. The events of 2010 additionally affected the economy, and GDP contracted by 0.5% in 2010. The economy in the country's South was especially hard hit by closure of the borders with Uzbekistan. Growth recovered in 2011 with 6.0%, -0.1% in 2012 and continued in 2013 with 10.9% respectively. Economic development during this period was led by strong expansion in the service sector, growth in construction activity and increased production and export of gold. Remittances inflow represents a significant contribution to economic improvements in the country.

17. Economic growth in the Kyrgyz Republic declined to 3.5% in 2015 from 4.0% in 2014 as slower expansion in industry offset gains in agriculture and services. Growth is projected to plunge to the level of about 2% in 2016-2017 as the external environment weakens⁸. Consumption growth slowed as, declining remittances affected disposable income and consumer sentiment. With consumption slowing, investments have been driving growth. Residential housing construction increased by 6.9% in 2014 and 4.1% in 2015 continuing the trend of rapid expansion which began around 2012.

18. The small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) contribute with modest 19% to employment and 37% to GDP. The environment for private sector development is stable as the country ranks 67 on Doing Business in 2016, the country scored poor on resolving insolvency, paying taxes, and getting electricity. On another measure of the environment for private business—the Global Competitiveness Index—the country's position was 121 in 2013–14. The Kyrgyz performance on these measures occurs despite legislative and institutional reforms, whose impact has been attenuated by a gap between laws and their implementation. Contributing to this problem is weak capacity (low competence, lack of knowledge) of national institutions and the fact that many of the government agencies concerned are new and understaffed.

19. The Kyrgyz Republic was the first Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) country accepted into the World Trade Organization in 1998. On 23 December 2014, President Almazbek Atambaev signed an agreement to join to the Eurasian Economic Union, with a full membership as of August 2015. This concludes three years of negotiations to enter the economic bloc with Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. Membership to the Eurasian Economic Union provided for freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor. The direct implication is that the labor migrants/ citizens of the KR upon arrival to the Russian Federation can be employed without any additional or special requirement; in addition, the income taxes have decreased. At the same time, the accession could have negative impact on the country's growth prospects, including discrepancy between export and import (inflation may rise, because of the large import content⁹), while it is likely that the tariffs have risen towards the Common External Tariff of the EAEU.

20. Besides the obvious positive impacts of migration, there are also negative impacts of migration that the country is facing. Over the past 10 years, about a third of the total population of the republic changed their place of residence. The main flow of migration is from rural to urban areas, with the share of almost 30% of young people under age of 18¹⁰. Export of workforce is another dimension of migrations: more than 26% of all households have at least one migrant

7 National Statistic Office- estimation for 2016

8 <http://www.adb.org/countries/kyrgyz-republic/economy> and <http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2016/07/15/16/25/PR16341-Kyrgyz-Republic-IMF-Statement-at-the-end-of-a-Staff-Visit>.

9 <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/182221/ado2016.pdf>

10 Information from the State Migration Service under the Government

worker¹¹. Due to economic insecurity and lack of employment opportunities, women are becoming more present among the economic migrants: in the last five years statistic shows that women are participating more in the migrant labour force than men¹².

21. The official poverty rate in the Kyrgyz Republic declined significantly by 6,4 percentage points in 2014 compared to the 2013 poverty level¹³. The level of rural poverty reduced by 8,7 percentage points and urban poverty reduced by 1,6 percentage points¹⁴. Access to basic public services such as electricity, heating, clean water, and sanitation remains of suboptimal quality in rural areas where most of the poor live. Rural women and children are facing even greater challenges and disadvantages. They continue to be disadvantaged by limited access to quality education and health care and they receive little help from a still inadequate social protection system whose benefits are limited and insufficiently targeted. The country's high dependency on the import of basic foodstuffs, particularly wheat, and the high and volatile domestic wheat flour price, continue to impact the most vulnerable households, who spend over half of their budgets on food¹⁵. Low quality of general education leaves children and young people unprepared for effective functioning in modern society and globalized world. This is a very serious challenge for the country's long-term development and, without any exaggeration, if it is not effectively addressed in the nearest future, this may undermine all other government's and society's efforts in the areas of governance, economic and social development.

22. Progress towards achieving the country's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is evident but uneven. The Kyrgyz Republic was successful in achieving several key MDGs, especially on achievement of the universal primary education (MDG2), ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7) and development of global partnership (MDG 8). The country continues making serious efforts to achieve reduction of severe poverty and hunger (MDG 1) and decrease of child mortality.

23. However, maternal mortality ratio is a serious problem for the country: according to the NSC, it is 38.5¹⁶. These figures are significantly higher than the MDG target of 15.7. In order to address these challenges, the country together with development partners led by the UN and the WB, has established the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) in identifying high impact feasible solutions to accelerate progress on off track MDG 5. In the education sector, the number of preschool institutions is declining while the majority of country's schools require repairs. The overall approach towards competence-based education needs to be introduced, with continuous development of capacities of educational (teachers) and non-educational (administrative) staff.

24. The Kyrgyz Republic is making progress in ensuring equal status to women and men under the laws¹⁷ and addressing gender gaps; the country is ranked 67th (2014)¹⁸ in the Gender Inequality Index. The KR became the first country in Central Asia to adopt its own National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and is piloting the UN's 7-Point Action Plan on women's equal participation in decision-making bodies and their role in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the protection of women and girls from violence. Both correspond to the National Gender Equality Strategy (2012-2020) and the subsequent Action Plan. The KR is one of the first countries joining the UN Women's "Step It Up" global campaign that calls on governments to commit to addressing the challenges that are holding back women and girls from reaching their full potential.

11 The structure of labour migration stream is at Russia - 74%, Kazakhstan - 16%, the EU - 6%, Asia 3%, North America - 1%.

12 Information from the State Migration Service under the Government

13 <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kyrgyz-republic> and the

14 In 2014 1,801 million persons lived below poverty line with more than 68% poor living in the rural areas.

15 According to the Agro-Industrial Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic 2013-2020, the country produced 58% of its wheat requirement.

16 Kyrgyz Republic- Maternal mortality in 1990-2015 (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and United Nations Population Division Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group)- http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/kgz.pdf

17 In 2011, the Electoral Law was amended and now specifies a 30 percent quota for either sex on electoral lists

18 The value for 2014 was 0.353 ref to: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

25. However, there are many unresolved issues related to gaps between legislation and its implementation. For example, women face disadvantages in access to economic opportunities and access and control over productive resources; as a result the economic activity among women is almost 1.5 times lower than that among men. Employment varies significantly across age groups and sectors with significant gender misbalance (see section 6.3). The gender pay gap has narrowed in the recent years, from 67.3% in 2007 to 74.3% in 2012, but it still remains high and is influenced by the occupational gender segregation and concentration of women in lower-paid sectors. Women are underrepresented in managerial positions in the Government and public administration.¹⁹ There are number of other problems that need to be addressed urgently, such as domestic violence, violence against women and girls, early marriages, adolescent pregnancy, access to and quality of family planning services, bride kidnapping, economic and social status of rural women.

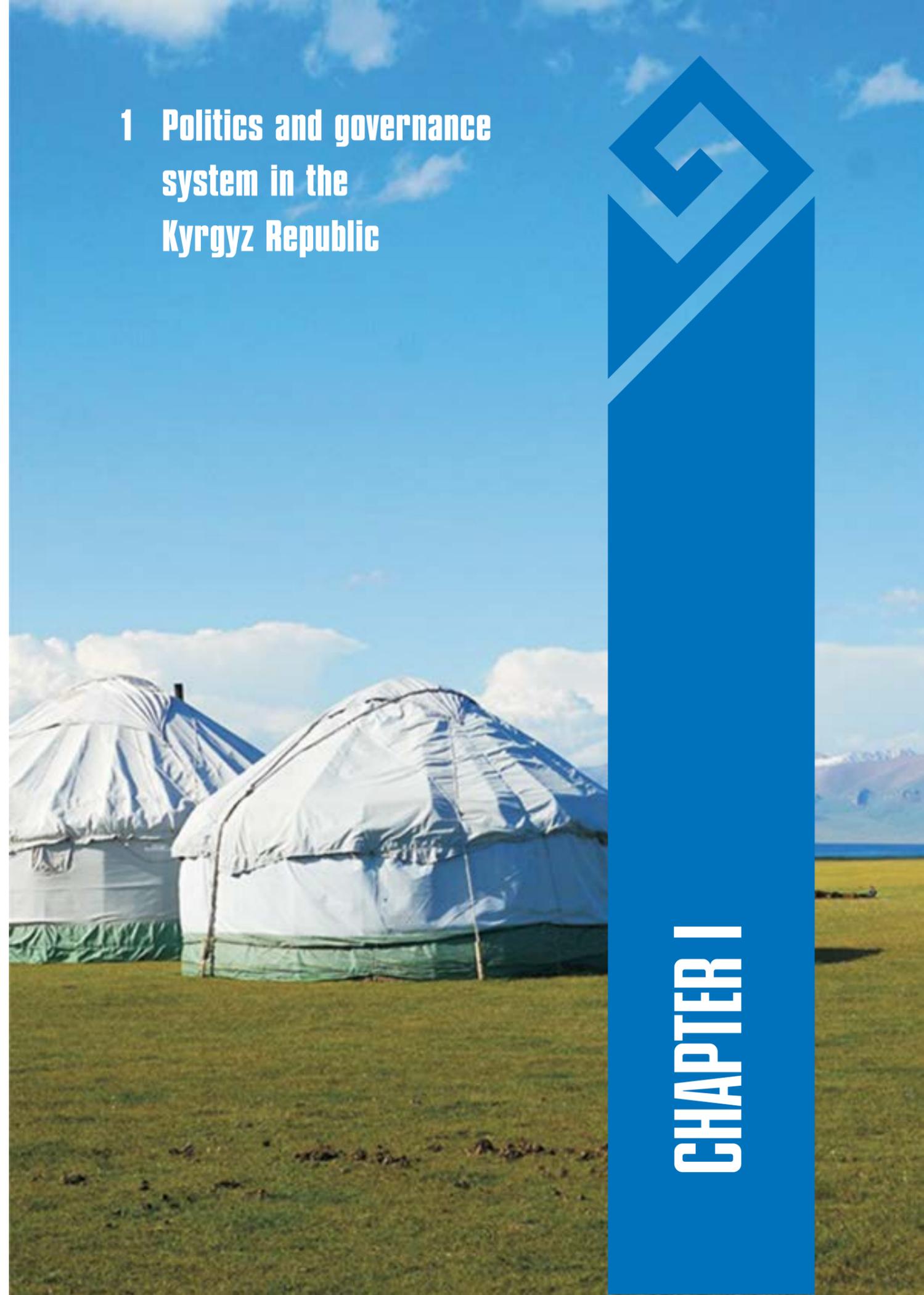
26. The development process in the Kyrgyz Republic is vulnerable to various types of geopolitical, economic and security-related conflicts in the region, as well as to natural disasters and external economic shocks. In the regional context, the country's geopolitical situation is potentially damaging to its sustainable development taking into account its land-locked position, internal tensions, disputed borders with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and «recurring community-level conflicts» with these neighbours over the use of land and water resources. The economy of the Kyrgyz Republic is exposed to external and economic shocks due to significant inflows of remittances from labour force migrated abroad, mainly the Russian Federation, as well as high dependency on imports for a number of food commodities especially its main staple, wheat. Due to its mountainous terrain and location in a seismically active zone, the Kyrgyz Republic is also prone to natural disasters, in particular earthquakes, floods and mudslides. While most natural disasters have a local and limited impact, their cumulative effect on livelihoods is considerable. Climate change is likely to exacerbate these risks through increased glacial melt and variable rain/snow fall.

27. The Government has prepared a National Sustainable Development Strategy for the years 2013-17 approved by Parliament in December 2013 (also published by the IMF as cr14/247). While this document points to substantial increases already achieved in the share of national resources devoted to education (up from 5.2 % of GDP in 2008 to 7.1 % in 2012), health services (up from 2.4 % in 2008 to 3.7 % in 2012) and social benefits (up from 2.5 % in 2008 to 5.7 % in 2012), it emphasises the continuing problems the country faces: weak public administration, a judicial system which does not function effectively, a large informal economy estimated to amount to 39 % of GDP, widespread perception of corruption, degradation of arable and pasture land, wasteful use of scarce water resources, and deteriorating power, roads and public services infrastructure. Although education absorbs a relatively large share of GDP, its performance is poor, while resources will need to be found to improve public health and prevent diseases. The document lists numerous measures to address these different problems, and adopts a rather optimistic assumption of 7.5 % a year real growth in the economy as its central case. But it does not identify the timing and costs of the measures needed to achieve its goals. In practice, although large externally financed investments in power generation and roads currently in progress should add substantially to the output of the economy, the Kyrgyz Republic seems likely to face a difficult period as a result of a fall in the price of gold and a reduction in workers' remittances as Russia falls into recession as a consequence of economic sanctions and lower world oil and gas prices.

¹⁹ There were 25 women (21%) out of 120 seats in the Parliament in 2012 and now only 16%; in 2012 only 15% of women were in ministerial positions in the Government.

1 Politics and governance system in the Kyrgyz Republic

CHAPTER I

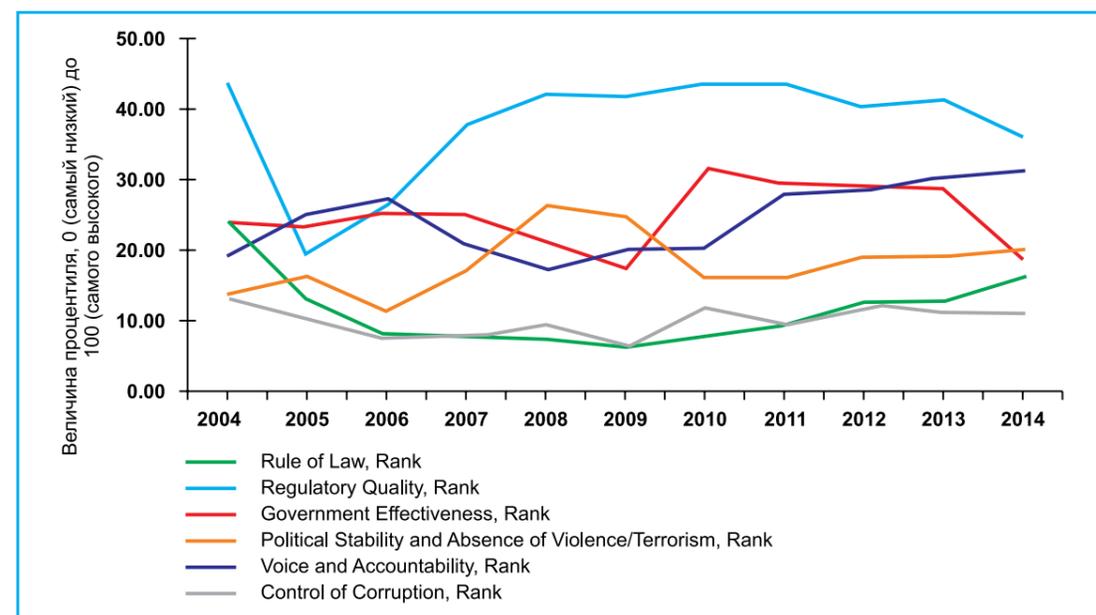


1.1 Governance system in the Kyrgyz Republic

28. Establishment of democratic governance including fight against corruption continue to be high on the Government's priority agenda, including in the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The Public Sector Reform Roadmap (PSRR)²⁰ is the pillar of the strategic framework that is used to pursue governance related initiatives and reforms and the country remains committed to continue with implementation of the priorities from this document. The PSRR enabled a better prioritization of the reforms in the public sector, disaggregated into seven strategic sub-sectors – anti-corruption, the financial mechanism of the judiciary, public finance management, civil service, public administration, energy and electricity, and mining. On more operational level, the PSRR established a set of priorities and short-, medium and long-term actions for their achievement; the document clearly provides for division of responsibilities for implementation of these activities. In addition, the PSRR represents a rather novel approach to anti-corruption reforms by making anti-corruption both a direct objective and an indirect part of the other sub-sectors.

29. Still, establishment of democratic governance in the Kyrgyz Republic is associated with challenges, as the country scored low on all World Governance Indicators.²¹

Figure 4.0. Overview of the Worldwide governance indicators for the Kyrgyz Republic 2004-2014



30. The perception of corruption in the country is still high, although the Corruption Perception Index shows improvements, as the country moved from 150 (out of 177) in 2013,²² and 136 (out of 175) in 2014²³ to 123 (out of 168) in 2015²⁴. The corruption and political instability remain pressing and disturbing problems that negatively affect socio-economic development of the country. The Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) 2015–2016²⁵ confirmed that the country is progressing as the Kyrgyz Republic was ranked 102 (out of 144 countries) compared with 108 in 2014. Still, the GCR highlighted that the corruption and policy instability are exactly the most problematic factors for doing business in the Kyrgyz Republic. Levels of public trust are low²⁶, and citizens have an especially negative perception of economic governance in the energy and mining sectors and in the area of public financial management, particularly in public procurement.

²⁰ The government's official approval of the PSRR on May 20, 2014 meant that it superseded previous strategic documents.

²¹ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#countryReports>

²² <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>

²³ <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>

²⁴ <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/#map-container>

²⁵ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/gcr/2015-2016/Global_Competitiveness_Report_2015-2016.pdf

²⁶ Public trust surveys, 2006 and 2013

31. The public sector effectiveness and efficiency, including transparency and accountability of public institutions and their operational methods remain key areas for improvement. The governance institutions are characterized with insufficient organizational, financial and technical capacities and obsolete operational basis. This situation is further exacerbated by weak policy making abilities and absence of citizens-centred services based on full respect of human rights and system of public oversight. Disconnect between planning for sectorial reforms and budgeting resulted in insufficient resources for necessary actions. Inter-ministerial, horizontal coordination and cooperation is in many cases rather weak and inefficient and some core functions within the Government are overlapping; this is even more evident at lower (regional and district) levels of government.

32. The government policy in the past twenty years has been progressive, striving to establish a legal and policy framework conducive to women advancement in all spheres. However, there is still gender and ethnic under-representation at the public services and in the decision-making structures. Ethnic minorities continue to remain severely under-presented in public life, including in civil service, law enforcement, and judiciary, as well as in political life, with meaningful high level political will to achieve changes missing. This is creating conditions for the gender and ethnic discriminative environment within the public, lack of transparency and gender-blind service provision and in general very low levels of ethnic minority participation in public life and decision-making

33. Parliamentary democracy: The 2010 Constitution provides for a semi-parliamentary system with a directly elected president and a government led by a prime minister nominated by the parliamentary majority and appointed by the president. This has positive impact on the overall democracy in the country, including development of political parties' system and enhanced ability of the parliament to provide a forum for public dialogue, early warn and prevent disputes/conflicts. However, discussions continue among political elites about returning to a presidential system, with more executive power concentrated in the president's office, or moving towards a purely parliamentary system. Although parliament's authority to amend the Constitution is restricted by law until 2020, there is voiced support for constitutional amendments through a referendum. On 29 July 2016 a law asking for a referendum for changes to the constitution was tabled in the parliament. The amendments are of great concern as they could have a detrimental impact on certain aspects of human rights, may significantly weaken the independence of the judiciary and judicial control, and may lead to potentially problematic changes in the system of checks and balances.²⁷

34. Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 2010 Constitution, the 2011 Constitutional Law on Presidential and Parliamentary Elections (hereinafter Election Law), and the 2011 Law on Election Commissions to Conduct Elections and Referenda. Other relevant laws include the Law on Political Parties, Law on Peaceful Assemblies, Law on Biometric Registration, Code on Administrative Responsibility, and the Criminal Code

35. The Election Law was amended in April 2015 following inclusive discussions among political parties, state institutions, and civil society. Recent amendments were supported overall by the parliamentary parties and introduced mandatory biometric voter registration and the use of ballot scanners, streamlined electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, increased electoral deposits for political parties, revised the electoral threshold, raised campaign finance contribution and spending limits.

36. The elections are administered by a three-level system of election commissions: the Central Electoral Commission (CES), the Territorial Election Commissions (TECs), and Precinct Election Commissions (PECs).

²⁷ More details on the proposed amendments to the Constitution are provided under the chapter 4.5 Human rights in the Kyrgyz Republic

The President of the Kyrgyz Republic

37. The President of The Kyrgyz Republic is the head of state and the highest official of the Kyrgyz Republic. The President, according to the constitution, «is the symbol of the unity of people and state power, and is the guarantor of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, and of an individual and citizen.» The Kyrgyz electorate directly elects the President for no more than one six-year term. The office of President was established in 1990 replacing the Chairperson of the Supreme Soviet that existed, in different forms, from 1927 whilst the country was known as the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic.

38. The first popularly-elected office-holder was Askar Akayev, who served from October, 1990 until March 24, 2005. In July 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiyev was elected. He was re-elected in 2009, but large riots in April 2010 forced him to resign and flee the country. Roza Otunbayeva was chosen in April 2010 to head the interim government, the first female president of the Republic and in Central Asia, albeit not elected. She was sworn in on July 3, 2010 as President for a limited term, until elections could be organised. Her successor, Almazbek Atambayev, was elected in the Kyrgyzstani presidential election, 2011 and took over on 1 December 2011.

39. Currently, the procedure of election, competences, termination of power of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic are regulated by the third section of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic called "President". Powers of the President are defined in article 64 of the Constitution of the KR. According to the Constitution, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic is the head of the state, the supreme official and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. In addition, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic directs foreign policy, represents the Kyrgyz Republic inside and outside the country, takes measures to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kyrgyz Republic, and ensures the integrity and continuity of the state power and coordinated functioning and interaction of state bodies, and their responsibility to the people.

40. The President introduces nominations to Supreme Court judges and Chairperson of the National Bank to the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic for appointment or election; appoints Prosecutor General with the consent of the Jogorku Kenesh, signs and promulgates laws or returns them with his objections, publicizes laws; appoints elections to the parliament, as well as to local councils, chairs the Council of Defense.

41. The President mandate is implemented through a President Apparatus, with heads in charge of different sectors/ areas of work. It is important to note, that although progress has been made to promote women's participation in high level responsibility posts, a look at the gender statistics showed that as of June 2016, all eight Directors of State Agencies and the Heads of the eleven State Services were men, as well as the five Heads of State Funds and Inspection. In the President Apparatus out of 45 Heads and Deputies, only six were women.²⁸

The National Assembly (Jogorku Kenesh) of the Kyrgyz Republic

Parliament and the establishment of parliamentary democracy

42. The National Assembly (Jogorku Kenesh) of the Kyrgyz Republic was established in 1990 at the terminal session of the republican Supreme Soviet, transforming itself into the first session of Jogorku Kenesh. During the first decade of the post-independence period, the Parliament was bicameral (1995 – 2005). Since 2005 it is unicameral, with currently 120 seats. Members of the parliament are elected for a term of five years in constituencies on a proportional basis.

43. On 25 July 2015, President Almazbek Atambayev called parliamentary elections for 4 October. The elections took place in a stable political environment, influenced by the ongoing debate about the country's future political structure- about returning to a presidential system, with more executive power concentrated in the president's office, or moving towards a purely

28 Pravitel'stvo Kyrgyzskoj Respubliki at http://www.gov.kg/?page_id=27298&lang=ru, Information retrieved on 4th June 2016

parliamentary system. The country held nation-wide parliamentary elections on October 4, 2015; one of the requirements for parties to register for election is to have a list of 120 candidates and both genders have to make up at least 30% of the voting lists. Ethnic minorities have to make up at least 15% of the voting list²⁹. The international observers, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)³⁰, concluded that the elections had been «lively and competitive» and «unique in this region», highlighting problems with the biometric voter registration, with many people not having registered in time to receive their ID cards. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) mission stated that voters had «made their choice freely among a large number of contestants. Six parties cleared the threshold to enter parliament. In the aftermath of the elections, the Government was established with participation of the Social Democratic Party (SDPK- winning 38 seats in the 120-member parliament), the Kyrgyzstan party (18 seats), Onuguu-Progress (13) and Ata-Meken (11). The remaining two parties, Respublika-Ata Jurt (28 seats) and Bir Bol (12 seats), will sit in opposition. The coalition nominated former Prime Minister Temir Sariyev to retain the post he's held since April 2015.

44. As regards women's participation, party lists are required to have at least 30 % of the candidates from each gender, and every fourth candidate has to be of a different gender (in practice this means one woman every four persons for the national parliament and one woman every three persons for local government bodies).³¹ However, women are almost never placed close to the top of the party lists and the *post-election candidate withdrawals resulted in only 20% of members in the new parliament being women*.³² Further, these gender quotas are not binding on the number of seats, thus the 30% limit did not apply and in May 2016 women occupied 22 (18.3%)³³ out of 120 seats of the parliament (Jogorku Kenesh). In June a new resignation brought the women's participation in Parliament to 16% and in August 2016 the number went further down to 17 seats (14%).³⁴ Thus falling 16 per cent short of the mandated quota for women on electoral lists and also an important regression compared to the previous legislature when women occupied 26 seats (21,7%)³⁵. It is evident that bylaws have to be adopted to ensure the quota enforcement³⁶ with a clear obligation for the whole parliament mandate that no more than 70% of MPs should be from one gender.³⁷ In 2011 inside Parliament a Forum of Women-members of the Parliament (MPs) was established to unite women MPs and used as a platform to promote gender equality legislation. The role of the Forum is key as it brings together cross-party collaboration with currently six political factions and has fostered a gender perspective into parliamentary discussions. However, gender analysis of the legislation is often conducted in a formal rather than in a substantive way, thus limiting the impact of the 2006 approved Decree on Gender Policy improvement.³⁸

45. Ethnic minorities continue to remain severely under-presented in public life, including in civil service, law enforcement, and judiciary, as well as in political life, with meaningful high level political will to achieve changes missing.

46. Challenges related to policymaking highlighted as part of the functioning of the Government are almost identical in the functioning of the parliament. This is further affected by not sufficiently effective co-ordination between the Jogorku Kenesh and the Government

29 However, this does not mean that they actually represent at least 30% and 15 % respectively of the members of parliament
30 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/219186?download=true>
31 Interview with MP Nikitenko, 20 May 2016, House of Parliament
32 Kyrgyz Republic Parliamentary Elections 4 October 2015- OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, p. 2 at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/219186>
33 This was during the mission organized in May 2016.
34 Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic website at <http://www.kenesh.kg>
35 Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, National Statistics Committee, Bishkek 2015, p. 71 (Russian version)
36 Reference to the Annex 1 of this report
37 Women's representation is too often a token with a few elected individuals who are held accountable to change the system and blamed if they fail to do so. Experience has shown that when few women hold the office it is hard to promote women's rights and gender sensitive policies. Only when women are present in critical mass (the figure set by the UN in 1995 is at least 30% to have women's voice heard) they can have an impact on legislative outcome and influence decision making and thus we can have a different perspective and view on issues that is conducive to gender-sensitive policies and practices that takes into consideration women's and men's needs.
38 Interview with MP Nikitenko, House of Parliament, 20 May 2016



(and within the Government). Draft laws prepared as part of the Government's programme are delayed at the parliamentary level; in other cases (scarce) parliamentary time is taken up with the discussion of laws with little prospect of being passed or which fail to meet minimum standards of quality. Further, there are instances when draft laws prepared by a ministry and state agency are submitted to the Jogorku Kenesh by Members of the Jogorku Kenesh, thereby by-passing the Government's approval process. If laws prepared by parts of the executive are to be introduced to the Jogorku Kenesh via Members of the Jogorku Kenesh, this should be done based on an official Government decision, and not by an individual ministry or state agency.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

47. According to the Constitution, the executive power is exercised by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the ministries subordinated to it, the state committees, administrative departments, and local state administration. The government is headed by the Prime Minister and consists of the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, vice-prime ministers, ministers and chairpersons of the state committees of the Kyrgyz Republic.

48. The legal status of the Government and its competences are regulated by the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and in the Law "On the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic". The Law provides that the Government ensures the implementation of the Constitution and laws of the Kyrgyz Republic; implements internal and foreign policy of the state; carries out measures to uphold law and order, rights and freedom of citizens, to protect public order, and to combat crime; ensures the implementation of financial, pricing, tariff, investment and a tax policy; drafts and submits the national budget to the Jogorku Kenesh and provides for its implementation; reports to Jogorku Kenesh on implementation of the national budget; ensures the implementation of a unified state policy; develops and carries out nation-wide programs of development; ensures implementation of foreign economic activities; ensures the interaction with the civil society.

49. Most recent Government was established following the Order of the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic from April 19, 2016 № 191, that derived from the Article 18 of the constitutional Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «About the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic». The current Prime Minister is Mr. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, as of 13 April 2016, succeeding the previous Prime Minister Temir Sariyev (who was in the seat from 1 May 2015 until 13 April 2016)

50. The document provides for allocation of responsibilities among the Prime Minister, First Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.

51. The Jogorku Kenesh approved following structure of the Government in 2016: Ministry of Interior ; Ministry of Health; Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism; Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Agriculture and Amelioration; Ministry of Transport and Roads; Ministry of Economy ; Ministry of Emergency; Ministry of Justice ; Ministry of Labor and Social Development and the Ministry of Finance. Only two ministers are women, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education and Science.

52. Policymaking process in the Kyrgyz Republic shows that it is often disjointed, not fully coherent, and multi-layered. This situation is further exacerbated by a weak implementation capacity and insufficient budgetary and personnel resources assigned to preparation and implementation of policies. The analysis of the policy making process through a policy cycle model identified number of challenges that require attention of the Government and key governance actors:

53. The analysis showed that strategic and long terms perspective in policy development is missing. Definition of issues and agenda setting are often done on an ad-hoc basis, under the external pressure or clear requests. This decreases national ownership and results in limited understanding of priority in the focus of policy.

54. Regulatory impact assessment is seldom done, and most often upon the adoption of the laws and policies. This serves more as justification for the decision rather than as an aid to evidence-based policy making.

55. Specialist resources in legislative (and policy) drafting within the Government and individual ministries are limited and scarce. Additionally, among policy makers there is a very limited knowledge on the why a gender sensitive analysis of laws and policies is needed, and on the how it must be carried out. This has negative implications on the quality and applicability of the policies and laws that are drafted and adopted. In addition, the Government does not have formal, written guidelines or manuals on policy and legal drafting starting from issue definition, agenda setting to policy design, which could supplement the Law on Normative Legal Acts. In addition, the analysis highlights challenges if the used language in the legal acts is understandable for all persons. Further, the need to prepare legal texts in two languages (Kyrgyz and Russian) aggravates these pressing challenges; reportedly, there are problems with the quality of the Kyrgyz texts of numerous laws³⁹.

56. The lack of legislative drafting resources is further affected by the fact that there are almost no professional development opportunities, e.g. trainings and learning programs for the existing staff⁴⁰. As far as the professional training in legal drafting techniques is concerned, the learning process for drafters is frequently confined to "learning by doing", although some welcome initiatives have been taken to replenish this gap. The legislative work of both the Government and the Jogorku Kenesh suffers from a lack of human resources to provide adequate technical support to relevant stakeholders in the legislative procedure⁴¹

57. Implementation of policies and laws remains a key challenge for the Government because the drafting and implementation process is rarely linked with costing and budgeting. There have been some progresses with the development of National Action Plans for which costing was done with the support of the International community (see Gender Action Plan). However, very limited resources are assigned to implementation and reliance on donors is very high. There is no systematic approach to monitoring the implementation of policies and laws. Another challenge is a weak coordination and cooperation among key governance actors in the policy (and law) making and implementation process.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets:

- 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
- 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.b promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

39 "Assessment of the legislative process in the Kyrgyz Republic", OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2015

40 ibidem, OSCE

41 ibidem, OSCE



Targets:

- 17.9 enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all sustainable development goals, including through North- South, South-South, and triangular cooperation
- 17.13 enhance global macroeconomic stability including through policy coordination and policy coherence
- 17.14 enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15 respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
- 17.16 enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries
- 17.17 encourage and promote effective public, publicprivate, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
- 17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- 17.19 by 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries

1.2 Public management system in the Kyrgyz Republic**Public administration reform**

58. The post-independence period in the Kyrgyz Republic was characterized with several public administration reforms, largely driven by pressure and support from donor organizations. Many of the reform initiatives were perceived as “imposed”, rather than nationally owned and planned. These efforts were further weakened by poor coordination of the activities that were supported by international development partners.

59. Yet, public administration reform is an area of critical significance and remains a priority for the Kyrgyz Republic, recognized in the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSSD). Namely, the NSSD states that previous reforms of the public sector did not produce the desired results; it is stated that these results were “cosmetic” rather than substantive reforms and changes of governance system. Therefore, enhancing citizens’ trust in government through fundamental modernization of its work, strengthening its professionalism and fighting corruption is at the heart of the national development strategy.

60. The Government is dedicated to apply a holistic approach to public administration reform, focusing on legal reform, restructuring of the organization of public structures, improving work methods and increasing transparency, accountability, work ethics and capacities in the civil service. At the same time, work on systematic development of human resources is on going, with a particular focus on recruitment, compensation, ethics, and performance management.

61. *The Kyrgyz Republic is working towards establishment of e-governance as a tool for modernization of public management system. In this area, the Government has adopted E-Governance Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2014-2017. The Strategy is primarily focused on establishment of a more effective, transparent, accountable, participatory and citizen oriented public administration. Initial work for the establishment of an integrated E-Governance system is done and this should enable citizens to have access to the priority services. Still, use of*

e-governance and other innovative solutions as tools for achieving greater transparency and accountability (such as e-governance, open data, etc) remains a work in progress and requires further development⁴². The work on implementation of the Strategy is focused on development of roadmaps in the priority areas and preparation of individual plans for government bodies to introduce e-services. In parallel, work on the systemic level for creation of the enabling environment is continuing.

Civil Service System

62. Civil servants are governed and protected by the Law on Public Service (adopted in 2004, and revised several times). The Law aims to “ensure a stable and independent professional civil service” and to “attract qualified cadre into government service”⁴³. The law also outlines the rights and responsibilities of government employees⁴⁴. The new law considers as (career) civil servants state civil servants, diplomatic servants, military, law enforcement and deputy ministries (former political appointees). Only ministers remained as political appointees and are appointed by the president. Other laws that are relevant for the functioning of the civil service in the Kyrgyz Republic are the Regulation on Public Servant Ethics, the Labor Code of the Kyrgyz Republic; the Ethics Codes adopted by various government ministries. The legal framework undergoes frequent changes and further adjustments are needed within a broader framework of reform of public administration. :

63. The Law on Public Service stipulates that civil servants are subject to a qualification exam, which aims to “identify their professional knowledge and skills ... and to assess the productivity of his/her work at a governmental agency”⁴⁵. At the same time, the Law provides that a civil servant cannot be subjected to attestation more often than once every 3 years⁴⁶. In terms of actual implementation of the qualification exam, the Law stipulates that it should be the task of the independent and impartial Attestation Committees. Aside from attestation, a regular performance evaluation of public servants is not conducted. Training of civil servants is done mainly on an ad-hoc basis, without comprehensive personal advancement plans.

64. In addition, the Law outlines classification ranks of civil servants and the process for awarding such ranks⁴⁷. The ranks are actually linked with the salary scale, as each rank is linked with a specific amount that is paid monthly on top of the salary. The compensation system is rather fractured: there are several wage systems for various types of government employees, including law enforcement personnel, civil servants, central bank staff, and educators. These wage systems are governed by a large number of regulations amended on a regular basis.⁴⁸

65. In terms of specific institutions, the Law provides for creation of the State Personnel Agency (SPA), responsible for development and implementation of civil service policies. The SPA defines rules for competitive selection of candidates for vacancies at government agencies. In this regard, the Agency has established testing center for “unbiased selection of personnel for public agencies” as part of the recruitment process. In addition, the Agency is responsible for development and maintenance of the Register of Government Positions with uniform position titles and their classification (category)⁴⁹.

42 The E-Government Development Index of 0.4657 (rank 101 of 193) declined, as in 2012 the country was ranked 99 out of 193 and 91 out of 193 in 2010.

43 The Law on Public Service including amendments, Act No. 190 of 5 August 2003 to amend the Act on public service (Text No. 547); Act No. 132 of 30 November 1999 on public service (Text No. 172) Amending text(s), Law No. 158 of 24 July 2013 to Amend and Supplement the Law of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan on Public Service; Law No.78 of 9 June 2012 Amending the Law on Public Service.

44 More specifically, it provides for the following rights of civil servants: i) be paid a salary, vacation, and other appropriate benefits; ii) receive training to improve their professional qualifications; iii) be promoted according to their education, competence, professional qualifications, experience, and work results; iv) join professional unions; v) protection from harassment from a supervisor and security of tenure even following political changes.

45 Law on Public Service 2004, art. 20

46 The Law, article 20

47 The Law on Public Service

48 Many of these regulations are not publicly available and are marked “for official use” – ref to the World Bank report on Public Administration Reform

49 Created in 2009, in line with the Article 16 of the Law on Public Service



66. There is a significant turn over of staff in the civil service, primarily due to political changes and low wage scale. The Law has a provision to hire a person from the least represented gender and ethnic group but it did not provide specific measures for women's or ethnic groups advancement (although there is awareness that this is something the government should be doing in the immediate future⁵⁰), while barely any civil servants in recruitment panels are aware of the provision related to ethnic groups. According to the latest data published by the National Statistics Committee, as of 1 January 2015, women represent 39.8% of the Civil Servants in the country and women occupy only 26.4% of political and specialist posts, whereas they hold 40,7% of the administrative positions.⁵¹ An analysis by region elucidates that the number decreases drastically in Chuy and Osh regions where women occupy respectively only 12.1% and 14.6% of political specialist posts.⁵²

67. Ethnic minorities continue to remain severely under-presented in the public management system including civil service and local self-government bodies.

Local self-governance in the Kyrgyz Republic

68. The Kyrgyz Republic is a unitary country divided by law into administrative-territorial units, namely, 7 provinces (Batken, Chui, Issyk-kul, Jalal-abad, Naryn, Talas, Osh) and cities recognized as having 'republic' (national) importance (Osh and Bishkek); 40 districts; 22 cities and 483 local self-government units. Self-government units are governed by keneshs—local representative organs, to which deputies are elected for four-year terms. Keneshs exist at four levels of local governments: rayon (district), town, village, and ayl okmotu (a big village or a number of small villages united in one structure of local government). Following the last elections, women account for only 12 % of local council members, with a mere 6 % in Osh and 18 % in Chuy and Issyk-Kul regions.⁵³

69. Development of the local self-government system was stipulated with the adoption of the law «On local self-government»⁵⁴ in 1991. However, less than a year later, the law was substantively revised as the new Law «On local self-government and local state administration in the Kyrgyz Republic»⁵⁵ became effective. Similarly to other legal documents, this Law was revised several times. Currently, the new Law «On local self-government» of July 15, 2011 is in force. According to the Law, the system of local self-government includes such concepts as local communities, municipal property, municipal services, local self-governance body, local representative bodies called kenesh (council), local executive-administrative bodies, officials of self-government, other bodies formed by the population, and assemblies and meetings of citizens.

70. The system of local self-government is comprised of local kenesh and mayor offices. Executive bodies (embodied in the mayor administration) are accountable to local keneshes (representative bodies) in their activity. Local keneshes approve local budgets and oversee their implementation, approve programs of social and economic developments and social protection of local community, impose taxes and dues and take decisions on other issues of local importance.

71. Responsibilities of local government authorities include primary and secondary education and health care, with significant contributions from the central budget; social services; and municipal public services such as road maintenance and repair, water supply and sewerage, and waste management. However, due to severe underfunding, the quality of municipal public services is inadequate. Citizen participation (and consequently, local self-governance) is implemented either through direct participation of citizens (community meetings, discussion forums, etc) or through local self-government bodies.

50 Meeting at State Personnel Office, Bishkek, 20/05/2016.

51 Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, National Statistics Committee, Bishkek 2015, p. 71 (Russian version)

52 Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, National Statistics Committee, Bishkek 2015, p. 26 (Russian version).

53 Zulfya Kocorbaeva- Зульфия Кочорбаева, ОО «Агентство социальных технологий»

54 The Law was adopted in April, 19 1991, creating a legal mechanism for decentralization of the government

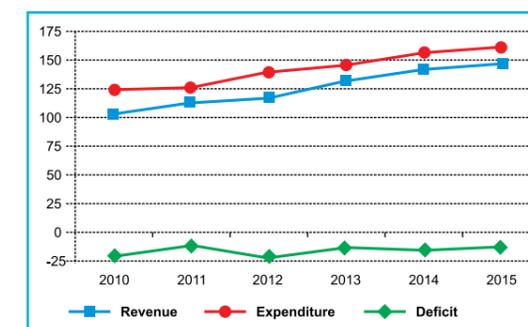
55 A On March, 4, 1992 Jogorku Kenesh has inserted cardinal amendments to the Law "On Local self-governments"

Public finance management in the Kyrgyz Republic

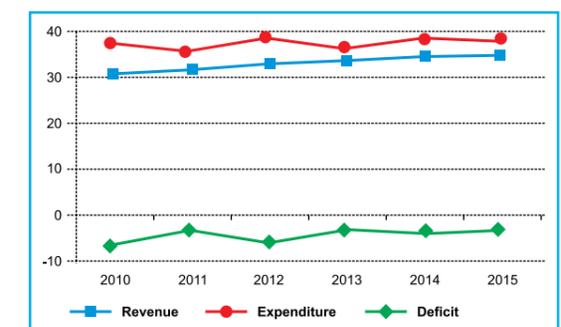
72. In the period from 2010 to 2015 the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (GoKR) managed to significantly improve government budget⁵⁶ revenue collection (Figures 1.1a, 1.1b). For five years the GG budget revenue increased by 43% in real terms or by 4% GDP. This increase has been achieved due to domestic revenue mobilization; tax collections grew by 2.1% GDP and non-tax revenue grew by 2.8% GDP. This improvement in revenue collection is due to general economic growth, growth in imports—key component of the tax base of the country—fuelled by the inflow of remittances from the Kyrgyz labor migrants working in Russia, Kazakhstan and some other countries, and structural changes in the economy (e.g. accelerated growth of companies in gold mining and communications which are the largest taxpayers) as well as institutional strengthening of the public finance system in the country. Simplification of the tax system and some strengthening of tax administration provided by the Tax Code which entered into force on 1 January 2009 have also contributed to the revenue mobilization.

Figure 1.1. Revenue, expenditure and financing of deficit of the general government budget of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010-2015⁵⁷

a) Billion Kyrgyz soms, constant 2015 prices



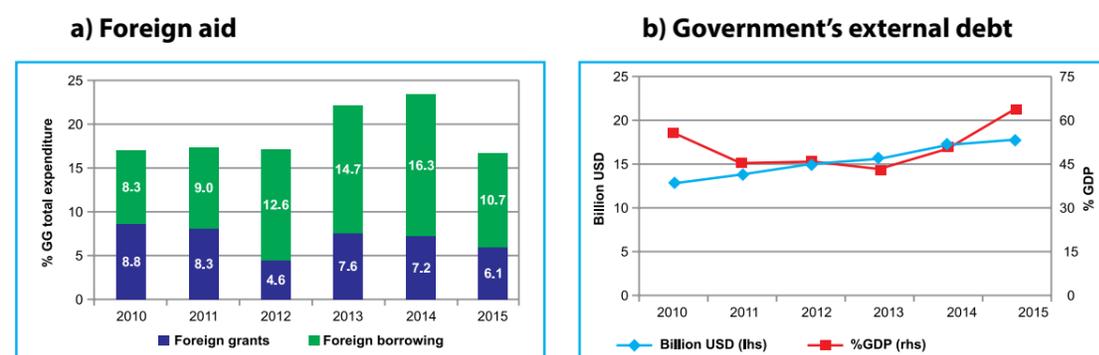
b) % GDP



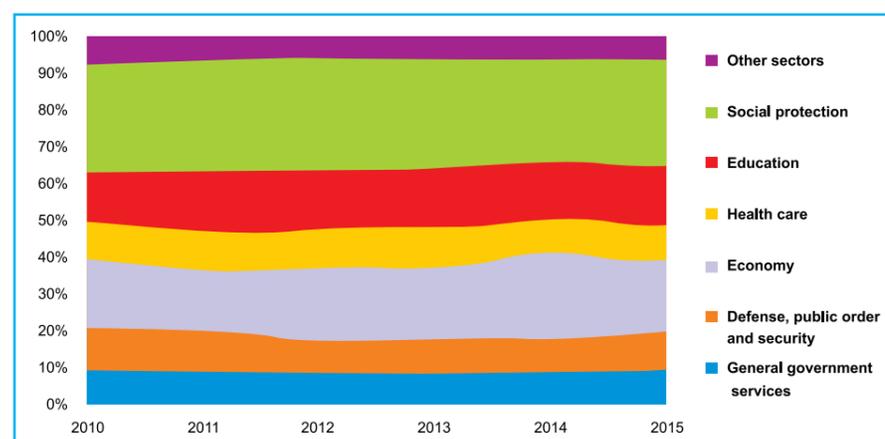
73. Foreign borrowing is another government's expenditure financing source. The GoKR borrows only from donor countries (China, Russia, Japan etc.) and organizations (World Bank/ International Development Association, Asian Development Bank, IMF and others) on highly concessional terms. Foreign aid consisting of donors' grants and concessional loans constitutes a substantial part of the government expenditure (Figure 1.2a) fluctuating between 16 and 24 % of total GG expenditure. Thus, the government budget remains aid-dependent. This aid is spent on both investment projects in the framework of the Public Investment Programme and financing of recurrent expenditure. Due to massive borrowing and devaluation of the Kyrgyz som against US dollar in the last several years, the external debt of the government, which stabilized in 2011-2013 at the level about 45% GDP, resumed its growth with respect to GDP in 2014-2015 (Figure 1.2b). In 2015 it has already exceeded the ceiling of 60% GDP established by the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic. Debt sustainability analysis conducted by the IDA and IMF in 2016 indicates that external public and publicly guaranteed debt is expected to remain at a moderate risk of debt distress, but immediate action is needed to contain it and bring it back to sustainable levels.

56 Here and below government budget means general government (GG) budget which consolidates republican (central government's) budget, local budgets and the budget of the Social Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic (extra-budgetary fund accumulating resources for payments of old-age pensions and medical insurance).

57 Central Treasury of the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic (CT MoF), Social Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic (SF), own calculations

Figure 1.2. Foreign aid and government's external debt, 2010-2015⁵⁸

74. For the period of time under consideration, the GG budget expenditures stay at the level just below 40% GDP (Figure 1.1b). The government expenditure in The Kyrgyz Republic has already achieved rather high level for the country which has only recently made a transition from low-income to lower-middle-income group according to the classification of the World Bank with GNI per capita of USD1,170 (2015). This means that further increase in government expenditure (expressed in % GDP) could not be expected (nor be desirable), at least, in the medium term.

Figure 1.3. GG expenditure by functional classification⁵⁹

75. More than half of the GG expenditure is spent on social sector (social protection and social insurance, education, health care); the only other large budget function is support to economy, mostly investments into energy and transport infrastructure (Figure 1.3). Despite of the large share of government expenditure allocated for social services, absolute level of social spending remains low by international standards. For example, in the Kyrgyz Republic public expenditures on secondary education per student and public expenditures on health care per capita are \$1,036 and \$215, respectively, to be compared with \$4,979 and \$1,068 in Kazakhstan (close neighbour) and \$6,850 and \$1,668 in Estonia (one of the best performers among transition economies).⁶⁰ As mentioned above, there is no much room for increase in government expenditures, so the only option to somewhat close this spending gap is to significantly improve the efficiency of government spending. As existing studies suggest (e.g. the World Bank's public expenditure review), large efficiency reserves could be found in all areas of government spending.

58 CT MoF, SF, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC), own calculations

59 CT MoF, SF, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC), own calculations

60 All values are at PPP in constant 2011 international dollars; data for 2014 or latest available year; source: WDI.

76. The government is gradually reforming its public finance management (PFM) system. As indicated in the 2015 PEFA Assessment Report, the situation has dramatically improved in 2014 in comparison to the previous assessment conducted in 2009. The PFM system received good scores on 14 indicators out of 31 (6 in 2009) and poor scores on 6 indicators (14 in 2009) with performance improvement registered for 18 indicators and performance deterioration for just one indicator. Improvements were observed in almost all areas with the most significant progress with regards predictability and control in budget execution, accounting, recording and reporting, and external scrutiny and audit.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets:

- 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
- 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.b promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Targets:

- 17.1 strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
- 17.3. Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
- 17.4 assist developing countries in attaining longterm debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) to reduce debt distress
- 17.13 enhance global macroeconomic stability including through policy coordination and policy coherence
- 17.14 enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15 respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
- 17.16 enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries
- 17.17 encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships Data, monitoring and accountability
- 17.18 by 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

17.19 by 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement GDP, and support statistical capacity

1.3 Rule of law

The legal system of the Kyrgyz Republic

77. The legal system of the Kyrgyz Republic is influenced by its legal heritage from the Soviet time although in the post-independence period has been moving towards modern legal system. The Law “On normative legal acts of the Kyrgyz Republic”⁶¹ determines the hierarchy of statutory acts, with the Constitution from 2010 as the backbone and the national laws as the key elements of the judicial system of the Kyrgyz Republic.

78. The courts are in charge of administration of justice. The Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic is the highest court of appeal in the legal system of the country, with judicial power in sphere of civil, criminal and administrative legal proceedings⁶². This is highlighted in the Article 14 of the law on Supreme court and local courts “The Supreme Court supervises the judicial activity of local courts in the form of review of judicial acts on complaints stakeholders”. The Plenum of the Supreme court unifies judicial practice and issues guidelines in the form of enactments which are mandatory for all courts since August 2016. Since the abolition of the Constitutional Court under the 2010 Constitution, the Supreme Court determines the constitutionality of laws⁶³ through its Constitutional Chamber. The competences, the organization and the procedure of activity of the Supreme court is defined by the Constitution, the Law On the Supreme court of the Kyrgyz Republic and local courts, the Law on Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, the Law on Judges Self-Governance, the Law on Jurors of the Courts, the Law on Public Service, the Law on State Duties and the Law on Enforcement Proceedings and Judicial Enforcement Agents. .

Strategic framework for the reform of the judiciary in the Kyrgyz Republic

79. Currently the Government operates under two strategic documents – President’s National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2017, and Government’s Programme for implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2017

80. The National Sustainable Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic 2013-2017 identifies establishment of the state government by the rule of law as one of the key priorities. The Strategy clearly highlights problems and challenges and specifies on more operational level areas of main concern for the achievement of rule of law⁶⁴. The Government’s Action Plan for Implementation of the Programme for Transition of the Kyrgyz Republic to Sustainable Development for 2013-2017 defines in chapter «Strengthening the rule of law of the Kyrgyz Republic for sustainable development» the specific objectives, actions, implementation periods and expected outcomes (outputs) in the sector.

81. The Government’s Action Plan sets out three specific sector objectives: (1) Modernize the legislative process with consideration for sustainable development of the Kyrgyz Republic; (2) Develop high-quality legislation based on the full range of human development and national economy matters, and (3) Legal education and raising public awareness of legal matters. These sector specific objectives are further emphasized by the Presidential decree “On the measures for improvement of judiciary in the Kyrgyz Republic”⁶⁵ established a solid ground for the implementation of numerous recommendations concerning reform of the legal and judicial

61 The Law was adopted on July 20, 2009 and revised on March 14, 2014

62 Kyrgyzstan: The Challenge of Judicial Reform Crisis Group Asia Report N°150, 10 April 2008, p.3

63 Ibid

64 These areas are: i) Strengthening of the legal system as a basic prerequisite for creating a country governed by the rule of law; ii) Ensuring stability of the Constitution and laws, implementation of their potential; iii) Respect to the law and increase in legal culture of citizens iv) Reforming the judicial branch, ensuring that its activities are governed by the rule of law and v) Reforming the law-enforcement branch, ensuring that its activities are governed by the rule of law – ref to The National Sustainable Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic 2013-2017

65 The Decree of the President from 8 August 2012

sectors. These reforms aim, among others, at greater independence and transparency of the judiciary, better training for judges, streamlining of court procedures, better legal aid for citizens and administrative law reform.

82. The policy, legal and institutional frameworks for improved judiciary continue to evolve along these priority objectives. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted the first Judicial Sector Development Programme (JSDP). The primary objectives of the JSDP are to improve transparency and to ensure the independence of judges and enforcement of their decision, while at the same time to increase public confidence in the justice system.

Progress and challenges of the judicial reform

83. During 2015, the Parliament approved the draft codes in the first plenary reading and in June 2016, the parliament approved the codes in second plenary reading. While the new Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code contains a number of progressive provisions to improve the legal system in the Kyrgyz Republic, there were some inconsistencies and technical flaws that could jeopardize the process of judicial reform. Therefore, the Expert Working Group on the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code continued its work on harmonizing the two draft codes and improving compliance with international human rights standards. The new laws, which are currently before the Parliament: decriminalize and depenalize minor offences; strengthen judicial oversight over investigations through the establishment of a new institution, the pre-trial judge; move the criminal justice system from an inquisitorial to a more adversarial model, including better guarantees to ensure equality of arms; and promote the social reintegration of offenders through the establishment of a new, socially oriented probation service to manage and oversee the application of alternatives to incarceration.

84. Important progress was achieved in selection, appointment and promotion of judges. Currently, the authorities have already started publishing court decisions in pilot courts and are revising the judge selection process to reduce subjective influences.

85. Another challenge is that the actual implementation of strategies and policies which is still lagging behind. The State authorities with the help of international support have undertaken important steps towards improving the strategic planning of laws by also developing a methodology for estimating costs of new laws. In an unprecedented positive development, state agencies and civil society representatives have side by side worked together to draft complex implementation plans that provide a detailed list of all necessary secondary legislation changes needed to implement the Judicial reform Laws. Such positive development is expected to have a key role in the efficiency of the Rule of Law and improve the perception of the Democratic Governance by the citizens.

86. Despite amendments introduced in the legislation after the adoption of the new Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, judiciary remains to be very vulnerable to corruption⁶⁶. The trust of the Kyrgyz society towards the institution is low. Additionally, corruption of judiciary increase women’s vulnerability to biased and unlawful court decisions, especially in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, as most often their financial means and networks are inadequate along with their knowledge of the system, which is dominated by gender stereotypes and socially-constructed expectations. Some remarkable progress has anyway been achieved with the opening of legal support centers across the country and the creation of a pro bono mechanism for assisting women victims of domestic violence.

87. Some progress was made related to improved transparency in the selection of judges. Still, according to the analysis⁶⁷, the overall process remains politicized and is used as the tool to influence court decisions. The criteria of appointment and dismissal of the judges are not specified in legislation nor based on the objective factors. This enables different interpretations and brings ambiguity to the process.

66 OECD “Anti-Corruption Reforms in KYRGYZSTAN, Round 3 Monitoring of the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan”, March 2015

67 Ibidem- OECD, March 2015



88. One of the most persistent challenges for the Kyrgyz judicial system is the human resource capacity, with little professional training, no continuous education and a workload that exceeds ability of the employees to handle it, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Improvements in this regard are expected stemming from the improved ability in planning the implementation of laws which, inter alia, will allow more time for the development of adequate curricula.

Access to justice

89. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic remains committed to enhance and improve access to justice especially for the vulnerable groups. Noticeable progress has been achieved inter alia with the increase number of Free Legal Aid Centers, the Bus of solidarity which visits the most remote regions of the Country and the Drafting of the Concept on Legal Education. However, the country still faces with significant problems and challenges related to access to justice.

90. The population is often not aware of their rights, entitlements while the accountability: financial and language constraints, legal illiteracy and complicated judicial procedures, unavailability of legal assistance, legal gaps further affect it. Mechanisms to monitor access to justice are weak. These affect the population overall, while some vulnerable categories are even more deprived (rural women, people with disabilities and children and youth, refugees and stateless persons, persons of ethnic minority background...). In relation to children, problems and challenges include lack of capacity of the justice and law enforcement sectors in working with children and lack of specialized services and facilities.

91. People living in remote areas still to some extent are dependent on Aksakal courts (literally “white beards” as predominantly composed by elder men) as they cannot access relevant governmental institutions in the distant provincial centres. Women are especially affected as in these areas there is a pressing need to deal with early marriage, bride kidnapping and other women’s rights issues⁶⁸. These courts may provide fast and inexpensive justice when mediation on civil law disputes between families is concerned, but are not legally competent to deal with human rights and especially women’s rights violations, and property rights, and alimonies in case of divorce.

92. The recommendations of the CEDAW Committee to the State Party call to take measures to end impunity for acts of violence against women by ensuring prosecution and punishment of offenders.⁶⁹ Though the Government has accepted these recommendations, so far, the number of cases prosecuted is very limited.

93. The Child Rights Committee, although commended the Government for the amendment of the Criminal Code, recommended the State Party to take all necessary measures to ensure that all incidents of “bride kidnapping” are promptly, impartially and effectively investigated, that all those responsible for such abuses are held accountable, prosecuted and sanctioned, and that victims of such abuses obtain redress.⁷⁰

94. Low level of legal awareness among people in the Kyrgyz Republic on their rights and available legal instruments represents a real barrier for claiming redress for human rights violations. In addition, existing institutions both at the local and national levels seem to be weak and staff not well aware of human rights, nor adequately trained on gender sensitive issues and victim/survivors’ treatment. Moreover, beyond gender bias and discrimination issues, there are other factors that play a critical role to enabling real access to justice for women, which are the financial possibilities, the knowledge of the system and women’s ability to convey their distress

68 UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan. 6 march 2015, p. 4

69 The CEDAW Committee in its Concluding Comments to the government report expressed concern that not only cases of VAW are underreported being considered a private matter, but taken mainly to Aksakal Courts not competent in dealing with them CEDAW COB p.5

70 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Concluding observations on the consolidated third and fourth periodic reports of Kyrgyzstan, 13 June 2014, p.8

and concerns, women’s counterpart to whom they can speak to (lack of female officers), and clearly the family support. Without all these together it’s for many women simply unthinkable to approach the justice system, let alone to get fair and transparent justice.

95. Protection issues and gender vulnerability are also intertwined with displacement especially in those cases when women are without a valid identity document making access to justice even more arduous.

96. Media bias and stereotypes also play an important role in discouraging vulnerable groups, especially women and ethnic minorities, from reporting on cases of violations of their rights.

Law enforcement sector reform- security forces and police

97. Following violent inter-ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, upon request of the government, the Community Security Initiative (CSI) was established by the OSCE, to help deal with the fragile security situation in the country. The CSI has the mandate to strengthen the respect for human rights by the police and build relations with local communities. Through the introduction of community-based policing principles, the goal is to turn the police from a force into a service, and to build trust, confidence, and inter-communal tolerance.⁷¹ In April 2013 the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic by its Resolution introduced “Measures on Police Reform”. The Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic approved on 24 February 2015 a set of regulations on the comprehensive evaluation of police performance, a proposal submitted for approval by the Interior Ministry’s working group and the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. The new approach is part of the Police Reform Measures approved by the government in April 2013. It aims at establishing an effective system of law enforcement and public safety. It refocuses the police on improving the efficiency and quality of work, increasing personal responsibility and the professionalism of each employee, enhancing the quality of management and increasing public trust of the police.⁷² Furthermore UNODC and OHCHR as part of their UN Peacebuilding Fund projects attempted to work with law enforcement and others to increase participation of ethnic minorities in law enforcement agencies. This was met with very little meaningful engagement on the side of authorities and no progress was achieved.

98. The 2010 events provided a new impetus for the Police and other actors to work on gender based violence issues. OSCE and UN Agencies focused their efforts on making the police service more impartial and gender sensitive, but results are still minimal and complaints of female and LGBT community on police abuse are widespread. Under the UNSCR 1325 framework the Ministry of Interior with the support of the international community, including the UN, conducted work to improve response to gender based violence crimes. UNODC advocated for enhancing the number of women in the police and for gender sensitisation of all officers. A new competitive recruitment policy for police officers, adopted by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in November 2014, introduced one specific measure: if two candidates obtain equal results, preference shall be given to the candidate belonging to the underrepresented ethnicity or gender.

99. Today women account for only 12,3% of the police forces (the total figure in not available) and only 7,4% of them hold decision-making posts.⁷³ Changes are happening, but a very slow pace and progress is patchy and based too often on a personal commitment rather than on a professional duty. There is a strong need to conduct more active recruitment campaigns for female officers, and adopt policies that support both the retention and advancement of female officers. In parallel it is a must to conduct vetting of all officers and rigorous training for staff and sensitisation of law enforcement agencies so that they can fully understand and comply with their duty and role to serve the community and to protect women’s rights under the national and international framework.

71 OSCE Website and meeting with the OSCE Staff, Bishkek, May 2016.

72 OSCE Website at <http://www.osce.org/bishkek/143421>

73 UNODC, UN Peacebuilding Fund, Zhenshchiny v milicii, Bishkek 2016, p. 7



100. There is also a clear need to conduct in depth gender training that goes beyond the illustration of a few theories and definitions and making it mandatory for all police cadets and uniformed officers and as a condition for promotion. Deconstructing gender norms and promoting models of positive masculinity within the security forces will help reduce violent approaches of officers and a more consistent respect for the human rights of the population.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1 end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations
- 5.c adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets:

- 16.1 significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2 end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children
- 16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.4 by 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
- 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.a strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime
- 16.b promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Targets

- 17.14 enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15 respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
- 17.16 enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries

1.4 Anti-corruption policies and measures

101. Fight against corruption remains high on the national development agenda. This is high priority for the key national institutions, the Government, the President and the Parliament, as well as for the people in the Kyrgyz Republic, clearly highlighted during the national consultation process on Post-2015.

102. In terms of **legal and policy frameworks**, the country has adopted number of documents to regulate this area. The Government is working on the analysis and revision of the existing anticorruption legislation aimed at bringing it in line with the international standards. The new Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Law on Combating Legalization (Laundering) of Proceeds of Crime and Financing of Terrorist or Extremist Activities have been prepared. The Law on Countering Corruption provides that the President of the Kyrgyz Republic is responsible for defining the main directions of the fight against corruption⁷⁴. Based on this provision, the State Strategy of Anti-corruption policy in the Kyrgyz Republic (the State Strategy)⁷⁵ was prepared and adopted. The State Strategy highlights as two key priorities prevention of corruption and involvement of civil society, based on situation analysis and critical overview of the previous anti-corruption efforts. The areas of anti-corruption measures outlined in the State Strategy are very general, such as involvement of civil society in prevention of corruption, development of system of awareness raising, eradication of corruption risks which hinder creation of a proper investment climate, etc.

103. Following the adoption of the Strategy and the Article 8 of the Decree, the Programme and Action Plan of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic on Countering Corruption in 2012 – 2014 was adopted. It was succeeded by the new Action Plan of Public Institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic for Implementing the State Strategy of Anti-Corruption Policy in 2015-2017. In addition, the President's Decree No 215 on Measures to Eradicate the Causes of Political and Systemic Corruption in Public Bodies was adopted (November 2013). Amendments have been made to criminal legislation and work is ongoing to thoroughly revise the legal framework.

104. The **anti-corruption institutional framework** in the Kyrgyz Republic involves the Defence Council Secretariat, the Ministry of Economy, the Anti-corruption Service of State Committee of National Security, the General Prosecutor's Office and the Committee on Countering of Corruption in the Parliament.

105. The general coordination and main oversight institution in charge of the control over the implementation of anti-corruption policy is the Defence Council Secretariat. In addition, the Secretariat is tasked with eradication of systemic corruption and corruption schemes and improving the efficiency of law enforcement institutions in the area of fighting corruption. The Secretariat is chaired by the President's Office, who is a champion of several anticorruption initiatives.

106. Despite the efforts to streamline its anti-corruption policy and strengthen the institutional framework, widespread corruption continues to be a major challenge for the development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

107. At the policy level, the priority remains to strengthen monitoring of implementation of anti-corruption policy, by further analysing results and impact on the level of corruption. At the same time, there is a need to ensure anti-corruption policy co-ordination and allocate adequate resources for institutions, ensure their independence and provide qualified employees to implement activities.

108. The anti-corruption legislation is still largely inconsistent with international standards and law enforcement institutions still lack sufficient cooperation and resources to fully enforce anti-corruption laws. Therefore, it remains priority to bring the legislation to fight corruption in line with international standards and improve separation of functions, level of cooperation and **capacity of law enforcement anti-corruption bodies**. At the same time, it is paramount to ensure

⁷⁴ The Law on Countering Corruption (version of 17 May 2014).

⁷⁵ The Strategy was adopted by President's Decree Nr. 26 on 2 February 2012



and prevent conflicts of interest in the public sector, strengthen public ethics culture and proceed to implement civil service reform to ensure professionalism and integrity of public employees and civil servants.

109. Among the key priorities in the Public Sector Reform Roadmap are higher standards in public accountability, the enforcement of control over the budget, and stronger management of public assets.

Internal audit

110. The authorities in the Kyrgyz Republic are progressing with introduction of the internal audit. Some of the major results in this area are: internal audit units were created and capacitated and the internal audit standards were improved. In addition, new internal audit guidelines have been prepared. In the previous period the country was active to boost capacities of public employees including ministers and state- secretaries, to use internal audit standards. Still, the following priorities in this area remain: to continue work on capacity development and trainings of key governance actors; to improve the methodology of controlling the quality of internal audit; to strengthen the role of Chamber of Accounts and co-operation of internal and external audit.

Public procurement system in the Kyrgyz Republic

111. Public procurement is one of the areas that are exposed to corruption; still, positive moves were recorded in this area. One of the key achievements of the Government's reform efforts was the adoption of the revisions to the Public Procurement Law (April 2015). The revised law brought public procurement practices in the Kyrgyz Republic closer in line with international standards. The law now mandates procurement units at the state and municipal level to publish on a centralized web portal (www.zakupki.okmot.kg) all tender announcements and documents, information about tender participants, as well as the reasons for selecting or rejecting a particular bidder, thus providing a single point access to the information on public procurements.

112. The direct impact of this is that more than 2,000 businesses have registered since May 2015 in the e-procurement system as suppliers of goods and services, and around 700 state and municipal organizations have switched to e-procurement⁷⁶.

Access to information

113. The country and its public bodies are committed to public access to information: they are generally open and responsive to the citizen requests. The legal framework that ensures free access to information is comprehensive, it includes the Constitution⁷⁷, and the key laws such as the Law on guarantees and free access to information (1997), Law on Personal Data (2008), the Law on Access to information held by state bodies and local self-government bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic (2006) and the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic (1998, last amended 2006). The revision of key laws is work in progress: recent modifications decreased time for answering requests and enabled the possibility of e-request of information. Still, there is a need to proceed with comprehensive revision of the legislative framework: the existing two laws on access to information should be merged and the substantive revision of the law on state secrets is pending.

114. Another issue is deficiency of information about the number of requests received and the responses provided by state agencies while proactive approach to publicize public information is at rudimentary level. This shows the need to enforce and ensure full implementation of the laws and improve the oversight over the right of access to information.

115. In addition to the mentioned concerns about voters not being able to receive their biometric ID in time prior to voting, there were concerns voiced by civil society on the safety and protection of biometric data that is to be ensured by the state within the framework to protect rights for privacy and safety of personal data.

⁷⁶ Information provided by Ulan Danikeyev, Director, Public Procurement Department, Ministry of Finance

⁷⁷ Part 3 of the Article 33 states that: "Everyone has a right for receiving information about activity of governmental organs, bodies of local governments and their officials, legal entities with participation of governmental bodies and bodies of local governments and also organizations which are financed from national and local budgets.

Relevant SDGs

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets:

- 16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
- 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.a strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime
- 16.b promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

1.5 Peace building process in the Kyrgyz Republic

116. In 2010, the country underwent an unprecedented year of social unrest and violence that led to approximately 100 deaths in Bishkek alone, the ousting of the President, and a shift to a semi-parliamentary political system, making the Kyrgyz Republic the first Central Asian country to abolish presidential rule. In June 2010, amid political and social tensions, violence erupted in the southern cities of Osh and Jalalabad, and their surrounding areas, resulting in the death of at least 470 people and displacement of 400,000 people, of whom 75,000 fled to Uzbekistan.⁷⁸ These events exacerbated the tensions and mistrust between communities and led to a rise in discriminatory practices against ethnic minorities by police and authorities⁷⁹. The vast majority of violations committed in the context of the June 2010 events have not been addressed, neither through legal, nor alternative mechanisms of justice, leading to further distrust of especially ethnic Uzbek's in structures including the judiciary, and law enforcement. Following these events, the Kyrgyz Republic made efforts to reform its constitutional, legislative and institutional framework, striving to mainstream international human rights principles in legislation, implement recommendations received by UN Human Rights Mechanisms including during its first Universal Periodic Review, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On 27 June 2010, the Kyrgyz Republic adopted a new Constitution, incorporating significant provisions on human rights, equality and non-discrimination. The draft amendments to the constitution tabled in the parliament July 2016, however, if approved, would mean a significant setback with regards to aforementioned provisions.

117. In addition, the Presidential Administration started working on policy documents aimed at strengthening the national policy framework addressing minority rights issues. Two key documents were adopted: the National Strategy on Sustainable Development 2013-2017 (the National Strategy) in January 2013 and the Concept on Strengthening the Unity of People and Inter-Ethnic Relations (the Concept) in April 2013, establishing a new State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations, responsible for improving the inter-ethnic situation in the country and developing a common civic identity.

⁷⁸ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2011), Kyrgyzstan Revised and Extended Flash Appeal, End Report (June 2010 – June 2011). P. 1. By 28 June 2010, almost all refugees had returned to Kyrgyzstan.

⁷⁹ Joint UNCT submission for the 2015 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Kyrgyzstan- Second cycle, May 2014



118. These strategic documents highlight, among others, the importance to advance the state language (Kyrgyz) as integral to the society. The National Sustainable Development Strategy (2013-17) considers linguistic and cultural diversity as a source for enrichment of the society and a key for sustainable human development. Proficiency in the language or languages spoken by the country's inhabitants help create a unified civic identity while can symbolize an inclusive society by respecting varieties of languages spoken in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Concept for National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations aims to develop multilingual education to increase knowledge of Kyrgyz among all citizens of the country while at the same time fostering language diversity by ensuring that citizens can preserve and study their native language⁸⁰ without facing language-based discrimination.⁸¹ The concept also mentions the need to increase ethnic representation in municipal and civil service, law enforcement and in the judicial system

The Concept envisages measures towards promoting the unity of the country, inter-ethnic concord and tolerance as part of the common civic identity that will unite all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, while preserving cultural diversity⁸². The Government is steadily working on the civic identity. The concept also mentions the need to increase ethnic representation in municipal and civil service, law enforcement and the judicial system.

119. The Concept envisages measures towards promoting the unity of the country, inter-ethnic concord and tolerance as part of the common civic identity that will unite all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, while preserving cultural diversity. The Government is steadily working on the civic identity.

120. The Peacebuilding Needs and Priorities Assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic (supported by the UNCT and implemented in 2013) highlighted a series of still existing underlying factors that need to be addressed to reduce the likelihood of resumed violence in the future. Human insecurity⁸³, that can quickly amplify other tensions amongst local populations, remains common. This is even more emphasized by stereotypes, nationalism, inequality and discrimination, poor management of natural resources, lingering poverty and food insecurity.

121. Another challenge is weak governance: this includes inadequate legislation and only partial implementation of laws and policies. The prevailing feeling among minorities is that their rights and dignities are inadequately protected; which creates local impunity and mistrust⁸⁴. Part of the weak governance is confirmed in significant underrepresentation of national minorities in state institutions. While the minority communities represent about 30% of the population, they hold slightly above 10% of seats in the current Parliament⁸⁵, only 6.5% in the judiciary and 7.5% in the prosecutor office⁸⁶, while the minority representation in the civil service was about 6% in the public administration (without municipal services in 2015). Minorities were in leadership positions – serving as heads of local self- government (LSGs) – in 6% of municipalities across the country. Women with ethnic minority background (except ethnic Russians) have even more limited representation in the Parliament, law-enforcement and LSG bodies.

80 However, it has to be noted that University entrance tests in Uzbek language were abolished in 2015. This is making it difficult for students attending primary and secondary schools in Uzbek language to enter tertiary education, with testing only taking place now in Russian and Kyrgyz.

81 In the letter of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN Secretary General, one of the priorities articulated is to 'Ensure stimulating support in implementing the Concept of national unity aimed at strengthening interethnic relations and also in implementing language policy and education.'

82 Some worrisome comments have been made by the President with regards to multiculturalism failing, ref to http://www.president.kg/ru/news/vystuplenija_obraschenija/7897_obraschenie_prezidenta_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_ashatambaeva_k_narodu_kyrgyzstana_v_svyazi_s_6-y_godovschinoy_tragicheskikh_sobyitiy_ityunya_2010_goda/

83 Human security is defined as freedom from want and from fear, ref to the Commission on Human Security (2003), Human Security Now, New York

84 The Rights of Ethnic Minorities in Kyrgyzstan by Zhazgul Arystanbekova, February 2014 www.kenash.kg

86 From 436 judges, 28 were minorities in 2010, from 53 prosecutors only 4 people are from minorities in 2012, from "Legislation in the Kyrgyz Republic: Ensuring the Rights of Ethnic Minorities" (Path to ethnic peace in Kyrgyzstan), Zakir Chotaev, Bishkek, 2012, p.79.

122. This situation is aggravated further by tense and unresolved regional conflict dynamics, such as border demarcation disputes, (caused by access and distribution resources), which are at the origin of cross-border tensions and hinder healthy interethnic relations in some areas of the Kyrgyz Republic.

123. From a gender perspective, a good conflict analysis and post –crisis strategy should look at all powers relations, including gender norms and beliefs. Reinforced notion of masculinity, manhood, and patriarchal norms can be enabling factors for armed conflict and violence. However, the post conflict analysis and peacebuilding process has focused more on the impact of conflict on women, but very little on gender norms as a possible trigger of the conflict to be addressed by working with men and women. There has been an emphasis on cases of sexual and gender based violence during the conflict, but these were not adequately addressed within the development of a post-crisis strategy, except for the development of the NAP on UNSCR 1325. Sources state that as a result of the rapes committed and subsequent (perceived or real) lack of safety and security for women and girls the number of early marriages is dramatically increased in the southern regions during the last five years. It would be crucial to work on these perceptions with both men and women and to conduct a comprehensive work with men and boys, which valorise a positive model of masculinity, non violence, equality, respect and tolerance.

124. Women may also play a vital role in perpetuating gender norms that incite men to violence in order to "protect" their women, thus peacebuilders should pay attention to promote non-violent masculinity and femininity within the society. Women's Peace-building committees have been established, which is initial and important step in the process. Yet, the dominant feeling is that women are not meaningfully involved into peacebuilding activities and that work in this area must be strengthened.⁸⁷ It would be crucial to ensure that the role of women peace-building committees is not marginalised, but mainstreamed with the overall peace-building work. The second NAP on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 provides an opportunity to strengthen and improve the work commenced in 2013 and to integrate as relevant the main principles of the subsequent women, peace and security (WPS) resolutions adopted in the past two years with also a clear focus on women's involvement in countering violent extremism and terrorism.

125. Support to peacebuilding process requires strengthening respect and tolerance between minority groups. This can only be achieved with adequate education starting from kinder garden to the university level, supported by a guarantee of the Kyrgyz government to protect minority's rights. In southern part of the Kyrgyz Republic, ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz have been living together for many years, and they have to live together in the future too. The authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic should take all necessary measures and ensure that laws should not only apply equally to every citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic in spite of their ethnicity but that affirmative actions as foreseen in the Constitution are applied to achieve effective equality.

Religious sphere in the Kyrgyz Republic

126. The Kyrgyz Republic is characterized by religious diversity, represented by numerous denominations and different religious organizations and movements. The country has more than 30 different religious movements, with the Sunni Islam of Hanafi school and Orthodox Christianity as traditional religions to which majority population belongs to. There are 2,362 mosques and 81 Islamic schools included in the structure of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (hereinafter, the "SAMK"). There were 68 registered Muslim centers, foundations and associations, which have been engaged in education and charitable activities and the construction of places of worship⁸⁸. The number of Christian organizations in the country reached 378⁸⁹. The Bishkek

87 The Rights of Ethnic Minorities in Kyrgyzstan by Zhazgul Arystanbekova, February 2014

88 The concept of State policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020. - P. 116 http://www.president.kg/ru/news/ukazy/4901_podpisan_ukaz_o_kontseptsii_gosudarstvennoy_politiki_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_v_religioznoy_sfere_na_2014-2020_godyi

89 Ibid.



and Kyrgyz Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (the ROC) has 49 parishes and one convent; two schools and three new schools are in the process of registration. Among other Christian religious organizations in the country, officially there have been registered four Catholic, 50 Baptist, 20 Lutheran, 56 Pentecostal, 31 Seventh-day Adventist communities, 38 Presbyterian, 43 Charismatic, 41 Jehovah's Witnesses, and 18 other Christian organizations and 26 foreign Protestant missions. Moreover, one Jewish Religious Community, one Buddhist and 12 communities of the Baha'i Faith are functioning in the Kyrgyz Republic⁹⁰.

127. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic provides that expression of religious beliefs and freedom of choice of religious beliefs cannot be banned⁹¹. According to the Constitution, there are no mandatory and state religions, and each religion bears equal responsibility before the law, recognizing the rights and freedoms of individuals as the highest value, and bans any discrimination based on religion. Formally, religion is separated from the Government and cannot interfere in the activities of government agencies⁹². Establishment of political parties based on religion, pursue of political aims and inciting of religious discord are banned in the Kyrgyz Republic⁹³. However, the law does not ban establishment of a secular political party comprised of ordinary believers who may pursue religious goals. (For e.g. arrangement of «namazkana» (prayer room) in the White House, which was initiated by the Parliamentarians).

128. The Concept of the state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere, adopted in 2006, was one of the main documents in the state-religious relationships. It provided for separation of the religious organizations from the state, as embodiment of one of the core the principles of a secular state. Due to rapidly changing situation in the area of religious sphere, the Government adopted a new document, The Concept of State policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020⁹⁴. The document openly admits the existence of all the problems in the sphere of religion and openly stated its intention to regulate, monitor the situation and, thus, assumed responsibility for all processes in the religious sphere. The concept states that «Kyrgyzstan creates a model of a secular democratic state with a predominantly Muslim population in the Central Asian region through effective state regulation of the religious sphere and increase in the level of cooperation between public authorities and civil society, especially religious organizations and associations. Furthermore, it provides main directions for the policy in the area of religion, specifically: i) national policy on cooperation with religious organizations; ii) national policy in the sphere of religious and religion-related education; ·iii) prevention of religious extremism⁹⁵.

129. The concept of state policy in the sphere of religion in the Kyrgyz Republic should not be viewed as the key to solving all the problems in this field, but only as part of, or even the beginning of attempts to solve the topical issues of this delicate and sensitive aspect of social life⁹⁶. Another considerable challenge is the implementation of the Concept, due to limited financial resources.

130. The analytical reports highlighted that the “primary problem that requires immediate solution is religious education⁹⁷. This is recognized in the Concept, as it provides opportunity for religious studies and highlights the need for improvement of religious education. Also it provides

90 The concept of State policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020. - P. 116 http://www.president.kg/ru/news/ukazy/4901_podpisan_ukaz_o_kontseptsii_gosudarstvennoy_politiki_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_v_religioznoy_sfere_na_2014-2020_godyi

91 According to Article 20, Clause 4 (5.7)

92 Article 7, Clauses 1, 2, 3

93 (Article 4, Clauses 4, 3.5).

94 The Concept of State policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020 was adopted in November 2014; prior to formal adoption there were consultations with key governance actors in the country- ref to Comments on the Concept Paper on State Policy in the sphere of religion of the Kyrgyz Republic”, 2014- <http://www.osce.org/odihr/118672?download=true>

95 http://www.president.kg/ru/news/ukazy/4901_podpisan_ukaz_o_kontseptsii_gosudarstvennoy_politiki_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_v_religioznoy_sfere_na_2014-2020_godyi

96 Nurgul Esenamanova: How the concept in the religious sphere can solve the problem of radical Islam?, Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting CABAR, 2015

97 Nurgul Esenamanova: How the concept in the religious sphere can solve the problem of radical Islam?, Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting CABAR, 2015

for implementation of certification, standardization and unification of curricula⁹⁸. In the religious sphere of education, there will be licensing of religious educational institutions for the purpose of: unification of training programs to prevent the radical contents of the curriculum and the practice of radical ideologies⁹⁹. The concept proposed «analysis of foreign religious educational institutions, which educate the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, informing citizens about the appropriateness of training in these institutions»¹⁰⁰.

131. In order to improve the level of quality of education of the clergy and education of civil servants, the Concept provides for education of the clergy: the creation of a system of centralized training with the involvement of religious and theological faculties, departments of universities and government agencies of the Republic; civil servants: the implementation of educational programs for public servants in religious issues¹⁰¹. Still, one of the core problems are the capacities and the ability of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic to use a professional approach to the licensing.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Targets:

- 16.1 significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2 end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children
- 16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.4 by 2030 significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
- 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.a strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime
- 16.b promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Targets:

- 11.1 by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums
- 11.2 by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with

98 The Concept of state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020, PP. 23-24

99 The Concept of state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020, page 23

100 The Concept of state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020. P. 25.

101 The Concept of state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020. P.19.



special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

- 11.3 by 2030 enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- 11.4 strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.7 by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

1.6 Human rights and access to justice in the Kyrgyz Republic

Human rights protection framework

132. Democratization and the protection of human rights remained high on the national development agenda in the Kyrgyz Republic. Since its independence the Kyrgyz Republic ratified seven of the nine major United Nations (UN) human rights treaties: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Right of Child (CRC) and International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CRMW). The government also ratified the Optional Protocols to the ICCPR and the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (signed in 1991 and ratified in 2010), two Protocols to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

133. The Kyrgyz Republic has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2002, which provides additional mechanisms for individual complaints and inquiries procedures.¹⁰² However, these mechanisms have never been used, as there is no competent body established to handle this type of complaints. The Gender Department for protection against domestic violence and gender discrimination within the Ombudsman Office could take up on this duty with the support of the UN agencies. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed in 2011, but it was not ratified.

134. According to the treaties it has ratified, the Kyrgyz Republic agreed to become a subject to review and examination of its progress with implementation of the above treaties by the UN Treaty Bodies (TB) and engage into dialogue on improvement of its implementation. The country has already received concluding observations on its initial reports, with recommendations on the improvement of its compliance efforts under ICCPR, ICESCR, CRC, CAT, CERD, CEDAW, CRMW, and entered into next periodic cycles of reporting and implementation of the UN Committees' concluding observations. In addition to the monitoring mechanism of TB, progress on compliance with human rights obligations is also subject to assessments and review by other mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council that are Special Procedures (SP) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR). With respect to the Special Procedures, the Kyrgyz Republic received the visits of six Special Rapporteurs, on: i) Human Rights Defenders; ii) the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; iii) Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes; iv) on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences (SR on VAW), v) on Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment and vi) on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

¹⁰² Ratification status for Kyrgyzstan. At UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) Website. http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=93&Lang=EN

135. The visits of the following Special Rapporteurs were requested: i) on the situation of human rights defenders (in 2015 and again in September 2016); ii) on freedom of religion or belief; iii) on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association (Accepted) ; iv) on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; v) on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and vi) on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation (Accepted).

136. With respect to the Universal Periodic Review, the Kyrgyz Republic went through the second cycle of the UPR on 19 January 2015, receiving 196 recommendations. Out of 196, Kyrgyzstan accepted 150 recommendations and noted 46. In an effort to prioritize, cluster and ultimately implement the recommendations received by UN human rights mechanisms (in total, 664 recommendations in the period 2010-2015) , the Coordination Council on Human Rights under the Kyrgyz Government has initiated the process of drafting a National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), which is expected by December 2016

137. However, the country is still lagging behind on the implementation of measures to combat gender inequality and discrimination, gender-based violence, bride-kidnapping and trafficking in human beings and anti-corruption initiatives, accountability for June 2010 violence, combatting of torture, to promote meaningful participation of ethnic minorities in state structures, independence of the Ombudsman Institute and more. The report on UPR implementation had been prepared during a process of wide-ranging national consultations that had included representatives of State bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Given the amplitude of the problems related to violence against women, the Office of the Ombudsman prepared two special reports on the violence against women and domestic violence, respectively in 2012 and in 2014. Moreover, based on the CEDAW's Committee concluding observations, the Office will soon conduct a survey on women's harassment at work. Trade Unions will support the survey to look into issues such as maternity leave, discrimination against pregnant women, and work without pay on holidays, etc.

Mechanisms for protection of human rights in the Kyrgyz Republic

138. On October 28, 2015, the UN General Assembly elected the Kyrgyz Republic to sit at the UN Human Rights Council (UN HRC) for the period 2016 - 2018. As such, members elected to the Council commit themselves to (1) uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights; and (2) fully cooperate with the UN HRC¹⁰³. Moreover, in 2014, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) decided to grant the Kyrgyz Parliament Partner for Democracy Status, the third time that this status has been granted to a parliament since being created in 2009. This status is viewed as an important incentive to further develop democracy, the rule of law and protection of human rights.

139. In December 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic voted in favour of a UN General Assembly Resolution on the important role that human rights defenders play "in building and maintaining sustainable, open and democratic societies"² while Kazakhstan abstained and the Russian Federation voted against.

140. In terms of institutional support, in 2013 the Government established the Coordination Council on Human Rights under the Government, as an interministerial consultative and advisory body. The Coordination Council was authorized, inter alia, to conduct regular monitoring of the human rights situation, to facilitate Kyrgyzstan's engagement with all UN Human Rights Mechanisms, take measures to implement recommendations of international human rights bodies, engage with civil society and other stakeholders and to discuss and develop recommendations in order to ensure the protection of human rights in the country.

141. Following the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) in 2008, the National Centre

¹⁰³ See UN OHCHR, Suggested elements for voluntary pledges and commitments by candidates for election to the Human Rights Council: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/Pledges.pdf>.



for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment had been established in 2012 and started functioning in March 2014. The Coordination Council of the national preventive mechanism consists of representatives of civil society, the Ombudsman and the Parliament. The Centre had been facing some challenges, including a lack of sufficient funding for its effective functioning. Despite the challenges, one central office in Bishkek, including the regional representative of Chui region, and six regional offices of the Centre had already been opened.

142. An inter-ministerial working group had been established for the preparation of the national report for the second cycle of UPR. Legal and comparative analysis of law and practice as well as an analysis of root causes of human rights violations had been conducted in the process of the preparation of the national report. The national report documented achievements and remaining challenges.

143. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Coordinating Council in 2013, the issue of a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders was being discussed within the relevant government bodies, however, no such standing invitation has yet been issued with the Special Rapporteur for human rights defenders having requested a visit repeatedly since 2015.

144. The parliament had an important role in the realization of human rights, through monitoring human rights issues and cooperating closely with the Coordination Council, the national preventive mechanism, the Ombudsman, civil society and the international organizations. However, numerous attempts have been made, including by members of the parliament to pass laws impeding with human rights including related to LGBT, foreign funded NGOs, the right to peaceful assembly and more.

145. The Committees of Jogorky Kenesh (the Committee on constitutional legislation, judicial issues, state structure and regulations, the Committee on social issues..) were discussing different versions of draft amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman submitted by the Office of the Ombudsman and several members of the parliament. At the beginning of 2016, the parliament tabled a draft law (compliant with the Paris Principles) on Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic. The draft law was, then, approved by the Committee on constitutional legislation, judicial issues, state structure and regulations of Jogorky Kenesh. However, the Amendments have not been considered by the Parliament yet, and the current Law on the Ombudsman remains non-compliant with the Paris Principles, international standards regulating the mandate and function of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).

146. Recognizing the importance of the freedom of religion and belief, the Government had set up a working group to revise State policy on the freedom of religion. In 2014, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court had removed from the legislation “unconstitutional provision” that made the registration of religious organizations subject to the approval of local authorities. However, the Parliament did not make required changes in the Law “about freedom of religion and religious organizations” and Jehovah’s witnesses (who had brought this issue to the attention of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court) has still not been able to register as a religious organisation.

Human rights challenges

147. The recent reports on status of human rights in the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁰⁴ underlined the issues of judicial process and routine violations of fundamental procedural protections in all stages, use of arbitrary arrest and torture by law enforcement officers while sexual and ethnic minority groups are exposed to attacks, threats, and systematic, police-driven extortion¹⁰⁵. The reports emphasized other human rights problems such as poor prison conditions; difficult

104 World Report 2016- Kyrgyzstan issued by the Human Rights Watch; <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/kyrgyzstan>; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015- the Kyrgyz Republic issued by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253179.pdf>); UNOHCHR annual reports on Kyrgyzstan

105 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253179.pdf>;

position and harassment of human rights defenders¹⁰⁶, and journalists; pressure on independent media; restrictions on religious freedom; pervasive corruption; discrimination and violence against women, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity; child abuse; trafficking in persons; and child labor¹⁰⁷. In addition, the close linkages between the human rights violations and corruption practices remain. Namely, the atmosphere of impunity for officials in the security services and elsewhere in government who committed abuses and engaged in corrupt practices prevails, without consistent attempts of the Government to address it.

148. Overall during the recent past a shrinking democratic space has been noted including through numerous restrictive legislative initiatives having been discussed, with attacks against human rights defenders having been observed, with a heavy “security” response to threats of so called violent extremism and radicalization with little regard to human rights standards having become a regular occurrence, and with an increased narrative in media with regards to international human rights mechanisms interfering with national sovereignty.

149. The country is still facing cases of restriction of fundamental freedoms including through regressive legislative proposals. Some of the most recent examples are: i) proposals for the reform of the Constitution: as virtually all of the proposed changes warrant concern in regards to their effect on the rule of law and the respect for human rights¹⁰⁸. These amendments would affect the independence of the judiciary, weakening affirmative action and introducing provisions in violation of international human rights standards¹⁰⁹; ii) a draft legislative proposal, which would establish criminal and administrative liability for “propaganda”¹¹⁰ of non-traditional sexual orientations”, is pending for review in third reading in Kyrgyzstan’s parliament (Jogorky Kenesh); iii) the so-called “foreign agents law” was rejected by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic in the third reading on 12 May 2016, as the draft law had been subject to wide-spread criticism by international organizations and civil society; iv) the draft law on restricting the freedom of assembly, aimed at curtailing foreign-funded assemblies and demonstrations, was returned to the Ministry of Interior by the Parliament; this proposed law was heavily criticized by international community and civil society; v) new law “On Amendments to Certain Legal Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic related to Combating Terrorism and Extremism”¹¹¹ introduced a variety of new provisions, while the change to Article 26 of the “Law on Citizenship” should be regarded with particular concern¹¹².

Relevant SDGs

SDG 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- 1.4 by 2030 ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services..

106 Human rights defenders is a term used to refer to anyone, individuals, groups and organs of society, who, in conformity with international instruments of protection of human rights, acts on behalf of individuals or groups for the promotion and protection of universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms, whether individually or in association with others.

107 Ibidem

108 i) introduction of nearly 30 new, so-called, supreme values; ii) a progressive provision requiring the automatic implementation of views of UN treaty bodies issued, which establish a violation of human rights, would be removed; iii) the President and the Parliament would be enabled to review a decision of the Constitutional Chamber in regards to the constitutionality of a law, prior to publishing its final decision; iv) Numerous changes aimed at the balance between the state branches would be implemented. For example, without the Prime Minister’s approval no legislation with financial implications would be allowed for discussion in the Parliament.

109 For further information please note the Joint Opinion on the amendments by the Venice Commission, published on 29 August 2016: <http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-PI%282016%29009-e>

110 Please note that in Russian the word “propaganda” has a more neutral connotation as compared to its English counterpart.

111 http://www.president.kg/files/docs/Laws/v_sfere_protiv-ya_terr-u_i_eks-u_2_08_16.PDF

112 The Article now states that a Kyrgyzstani citizen can be stripped of her or his citizenship for entering into the military or intelligence service of a foreign state, acquiring skills for committing terrorist or extremist crimes or participate in armed conflict on the territory of a foreign country (except when on official duty). This new provision appears to be in conflict with the Constitution’s Article 50, prohibiting deprivation of citizenship.



- 1.b create sound policy frameworks, at national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies to support accelerated investments in poverty eradication actions

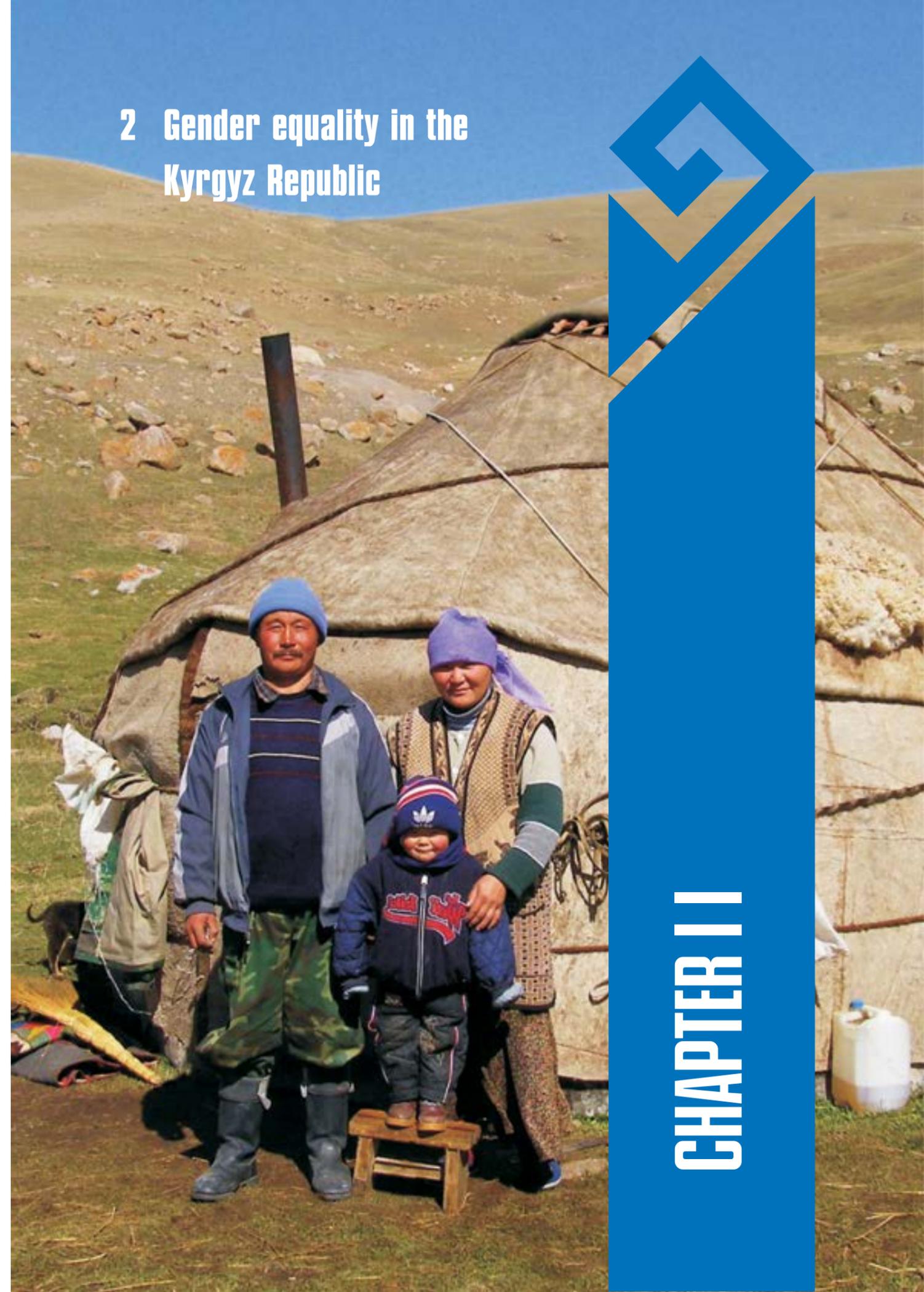
SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- 16.1 significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2 end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children
- 16.3 promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.6 develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.5 substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms
- 16.a strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacities at all levels, in particular in developing countries, for preventing violence and combating terrorism and crime
- 16.b promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

2 Gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic



CHAPTER I I



2.1 Challenge of Gender Equality

150. The advancement of gender equality and the protection of women's rights remain key challenges for the Kyrgyz Republic. Gender discrimination continues to impact on every sector, and gender inequality remains a significant barrier not just to the achievement of SDG 5, but to all SDGs. It undermines the economic and social rights of Kyrgyz women, their health, well-being and livelihoods, and is among the root causes of poverty in the country. The prevalence of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and in particular the continuing practices of bride-kidnapping and early marriage, give special cause for concern.

151. Significant progress has been made in building a legislative framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights over recent years. Among other notable advances, the Kyrgyz Republic has ratified the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and adopted a long-term National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality (2012-2020). However, this has not yet yielded tangible results. Often this is due to the problem of impunity, with the state frequently doing little to bring perpetrators of gender-related crimes to justice. There has been only limited progress in translating the gender equality principles and commitments now enshrined in legislation into practical policy. Long-term sustainable development in all spheres relies on more effective implementation of the legislation, and enhanced governance.

152. Women and girls in the Kyrgyz Republic face significant discrimination that limits their opportunities throughout their lives, typically from adolescence onwards. The Country Analysis demonstrates that this discrimination is present in both private and public spheres. It impacts on education, marriage and reproductive choices, socio-economic and cultural life, as well as on participation in public life, with particular respect to access to official decision-making positions.

2.2 Key areas in the sphere of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)

5.2.1 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

153. Domestic violence against women is widespread. The 2012 Health and Demographic Survey indicated that 23% of all women between the ages of 15-49 had experienced domestic violence. 13% had suffered violence in the preceding 12 months. However, only two out of five women sought help after an incident.¹¹³

154. Currently around 10,000 women a year attend crisis centres for victims of domestic abuse but there is a large discrepancy between the thousands of cases informally reported¹¹⁴ and those actually registered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (2521 cases of domestic violence against women in 2014).¹¹⁵ This situation is compounded by the fact that the courts review only a fraction of the registered cases, and the majority of perpetrators are charged only with 'disorderly conduct' rather than domestic violence.¹¹⁶

155. This underreporting of cases of domestic violence is partly due to inadequate mechanisms for both the protection of survivors and for prosecution of perpetrators and the stigma attached to reporting. The common perception of such abuse as a private matter can also deter victims from making an official report, and the problem is exacerbated by the fact that cases may be referred to the local traditional 'Aksakal Courts' which are not competent to deal with them.¹¹⁷

156. A significant majority (73.5%) of those women affected are economically dependent on their abuser, be it their husband or other member of the household. This underlines the

113 National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p.29

114 Cases brought up to the attention of crisis centres and police that have not been officially registered.

115 Report of the Ombudsman, p.304 and NSC data collection, 2015

116 HRW Report, p.9

117 Highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women after her visit to Kyrgyzstan in 2009 and in the CEDAW Committee's concluding observations on the fourth periodic report, March 2015

importance of promoting women's economic autonomy in order to help them escape from abusive and potentially life-threatening situations (although economic dependence is only one of the factors for victims to stay within abusive situations).

156. Violence against women and girls has also costs implications. According to calculations of study from 2012, each fatal domestic violence case costs the State more than 2 million soms (\$ 42 194), sexual violence 232 040 soms (\$ 4895)¹¹⁸ Another issue that deserve attention with regards to VAWG is the sex ratio at birth. It is 1.07 male(s)/female (versus average natural 1.05), which may suggest some use of sex-selective abortion and infanticide as family tend to prefer boys.¹¹⁹

5.2.2 Bride-Kidnapping and Early Marriage

158. The traditional practices of bride-kidnapping and early marriage, which are deeply entrenched in Kyrgyzstani society¹²⁰ merit special attention.

159. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has recognized Kyrgyzstan as having the highest prevalence of bride kidnapping in the world.¹²¹ One estimate suggests that 35-45% of marriages countrywide involve bride kidnap.¹²² The 2015 Country Review of the Beijing Platform for Action puts the figure for rural areas at 60%.¹²³ Unofficial estimates have given a figure of 43 girls being kidnapped each day.¹²⁴

160. Both practices are associated with other women's rights violations, as they typically involve avoiding registration of the marriage with the authorities, and thereby deprive the wife of legal protection, e.g. under the Family Code. They also play a role in early school dropout rates. Enrolment of girls at school in the period 2008-2012 decreased by 9.7%. It was also an issue for boys, whose enrolment in the same period decreased by 7.3%.¹²⁵ However, official figures on the number of girls who fail to complete their schooling are not kept, and school is not compulsory after the ninth grade. This is one area where research is hampered by the absence of sex-disaggregated data.

161. Given their illegal nature, statistics on the prevalence of bride-kidnapping and early marriage are difficult to determine. However, a recent increase in early motherhood in the 15-17 year old age group is a strong indication that early marriage is an on-going issue. In 2006, 4.4 children were born to every 1,000 women in this age group. By 2014, this figure had risen to 7.4¹²⁶ children. In a 2014 monitoring study by UNICEF and the NSC 12.7% of women then aged 15-49 reported that they had married while minors. In rural areas this figure rose to 15.9%.¹²⁷

162. The Ministry of the Interior keeps annual statistics on forced marriage, which show that just five criminal cases were initiated in 2014. This low figure reflects the largely hidden nature of the crime. For more details on early marriage and bride kidnapping please refer to Annex 1, pp.131-133.

118 The cost of domestic violence report, UNDP http://www.k.g.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/the-cost-of-domestic-violence/

119 http://www.indexmundi.com/kyrgyzstan/sex_ratio.html

120 UN Women, Gender In Society Perception Study (GSPS), presentation of initial findings, 20th May 2016

121 UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Mission to Kyrgyzstan, Rashida Manjoo, 28 May 2010, A/HRC/14/22/Add.2 2010 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/A.HRC.14.22.Add.2_en.pdf

122 UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Mission to Kyrgyzstan, Rashida Manjoo, 28 May 2010, A/HRC/14/22/Add.2

123 National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p.31

124 Meeting with Rule of Law Officer, UNDP, Bishkek, 14/06/16 referring to <http://www.rferl.org/content/bride-kidnapping-in-kyrgyzstan/25403604.html>

125 National Review, p.15

126 Report of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, p304 and NSC data collection, 2015.

127 Report of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, p303, 2015



5.2.3 Economic potential and employment

163. Attention should be paid to the fact that economic activity among women is actually declining in Kyrgyzstan, dropping from 52.3% in 2010 to 50.4% in 2014.¹²⁸ This figure is almost 1.5 times lower than that for men. There is a tendency for women to be pushed into the informal labour market, and to be forced to migrate in order to find work, exposing them to workplaces with limited legal and social protection, which in turn make them an easy prey to trafficking in persons.¹²⁹ Although the gender pay gap has narrowed in recent years, with women's pay rising from 67.3% of men's in 2007 to 74.3% in 2012, it remains significant. This gender gap is even more worrisome considering that educational attainment of women who participate in the labour force is higher than men's educational attainment.

164. Higher rate of unemployment among women is also due to care and domestic responsibilities, which is unequally shared by women and men. The burden of unpaid care for women is very likely to increase given the high fertility rate deriving from early marriage, but also due to lack of social structures to care for children, ill, disabled and elderly people. The CEDAW committee particularly recommends the country in its concluding observations from 2008 to implement measures to promote the sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men.¹³⁰ It also calls the State to ensure that all employment-generation programmes are gender-sensitive and that women effectively benefit from all programmes to support entrepreneurship. (Please look also at sections 6.2 and 6.3 on poverty and employment and Annex 1).

5.2.4 Participation of Women in Public and Political Life

165. According to the latest data published by the National Statistics Committee, 39.8% of Civil Servants are women. However, they occupy only 26.4% of political or specialist posts, holding by comparison 40.7% of administrative positions.¹³¹

166. There are currently no women in political posts in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Transport or the Ministry for Emergencies.¹³²

167. As of June 2016, all eight Directors of State Agencies and the Heads of the eleven State Services are men. The five Heads of the State Funds and Inspectorates are also male. In the Presidential Administration, 39 out of 45 Heads and Deputies are men.

168. There have been particular challenges for women entering parliament. After the 2005 parliamentary elections resulted in no female candidates being elected at all, a law was introduced which obliges political parties to give a minimum of 30% of the places on their party lists to candidates of each gender, with a gender having to occupy at least one place in each block of four candidates. However, this quota system is only respected up to the point of candidates' registration. In practice, it has not been upheld when seats are taken, resulting in women holding only 18.3% of the seats following the 2015 parliamentary election (see also introduction and section 4.1).¹³³ Following local elections held in March 2016 in some regions, women hold only 12% of local council positions countrywide.¹³⁴

169. The table below also reveals a negative trend of the share of women in decision-making, both at Parliament and local levels since 2007, despite the gender quota introduced after the 2005 elections that resulted in no woman member of the Parliament.

128 Asian Development Bank, gender analysis summary

129 The Scale of Human Trafficking in Central Asia, p. 49, IOM, RCMRI, 2010.

130 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2008

131 Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, National Statistics Committee, Bishkek 2015, p 71 (Russian version)

132 ibid

133 Figure at May 2016, which subsequently dropped to 16% in June 2016 and to 14% in August 2016, following resignations. Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic website: <http://www.kenesh.kg>

134 Zul'fya Kocorbaeva- Зульфья Кочорбаева, ОО «Агентство социальных технологий»

Table 1. Women's representation at decision-making levels from 1995 to 2015¹³⁵

Parliamentary elections	% of female deputies (Parliament)	Local level elections**	% of female deputies (local level)
1995	4,7%		
2000	6,8%	1998	14%
2005	0%	2004	16%
2007*	25,5%	2008	14%
2010*	22,3%	2012	13,4%
2015*	16,7%		

*years since the quota mechanism was used

** no data available until 1998 - via electronic sources

170. With regard to women voting in elections, in some rural areas women are unaware of the principles of confidentiality and transparency of the voting process.¹³⁶

5.2.5 Girls education

171. Despite the national legal framework of Kyrgyzstan provides for equal access to education for boys and girls, gender segregation in subjects in both technical and vocational education training (TVET) is significant and has an influence on the career prospect of both boys and girls and facilitates the horizontal segregation in the job market.

172. The Kyrgyz Republic had achieved almost gender equality in education enrolment from pre-primary to secondary education. However, a negative trend shows that enrolment of girls in secondary education decreased in Kyrgyzstan during 2008-2012 by 9.7 per cent while boy's enrolment decreased by 7.3 per cent.¹³⁷ Investing on boys is still perceived to be more worth because they will be ultimately responsible for taking care of old parents, while girls will leave the household once they get married.¹³⁸

173. It is important to note that data on educational attainment show that girls have higher attainment level than boys. National Statistics Committee data for 2014 shows that 52.6 per cent of girls graduate from high school compared to 47.4 per cent of boys. 58.6 per cent of girls complete vocational training, while for boys this figure is 41.4 per cent. 54.4 per cent of girls received higher education compared to 45.6 per cent of boys. Regrettably, girls' higher educational attainment and better results don't translate well into economic employment and political participation due to socio-cultural and economic factors.

174. A recent preliminary findings of the UN Women commissioned qualitative research Study on Gender in Society Perceptions point out to causes of school drop outs being of a hidden nature but emerging trend of parents encouraging their daughters to leave school after the 9th grade is attested, girls being encouraged to perform household related tasks and act as caregivers.

175. According to the MICS Study 2014, girls often drop out of school when they are pregnant, or become pregnant when they have dropped out of school, and are unlikely to complete their education at a later date. As a result, adolescent girls who have not finished school become mothers – a situation that they may not be ready for physically in terms of their reproductive health, and emotionally. Adolescent girls face significant gendered barriers to their participation in society, impacting their education, work prospects, reproductive and relationship choices, access to information, education and services such as health care, and exposure to violence and abuse in the home, family, and community and at school¹³⁹.

135 "Combating gender inequality in political participation in Kyrgyzstan" case study, UNDP in Kyrgyzstan

136 UNDP interview

137 National review, p.15

138 UN Women, Gender In Society Perception Study (GSPS), presentation of initial findings, 20th May 2016

139 Multiple Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), 2014

2.3 Progress made in the normative framework

176. While the challenges to establishing gender equality in all sectors are clearly substantial, the Kyrgyz Republic has taken significant steps in recent years towards creating a normative legislative framework designed to empower women.

177. As mentioned above, the Government has ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), along with its Optional Protocol, which allows for individual complaints and inquiries to be pursued.¹⁴⁰ The 2010 Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic affirms in Article 16(4) that 'men and women shall have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for their realization.'¹⁴¹ A number of laws have been enacted which address specific aspects of discrimination against women and women's rights. Major achievements include the 2003 Law on Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence, the 2003 Law on State Guarantees for ensuring Gender Equality, and more recently the 2013 amendment of Articles 154 and 155 of the Criminal Code as it relates to bride-kidnapping. Thanks to the initiative of women parliamentarians and lobbying of CSOs a Law was developed on prohibition of Islamic religious marriage - for those under age 17. The law passed the first reading in the Parliament Committee on Social Issues also in June 2016. (see Annex 1).

178. As previously noted, a comprehensive long-term National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality (2012-2020) has been adopted, alongside relevant National Action Plans covering the periods from 2012-2014 and 2015-2017. The first NAP was developed and costed by Government and civil society, and was facilitated by UN Women, with assistance from the OSCE. The second NAP was facilitated by UNDP. A National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was adopted in 2013 with the support of UN Women with assistance also from OSCE for the period 2013-2015. A second NAP facilitated by UNDP was adopted for the period 2016-2017.

179. Other temporary special legislative measures are in place to promote gender equality in areas where women are under-represented.

180. However, it is clear that while the improvement of the legal and policy framework is an essential step towards achieving the SDGs, and SDG 5 in particular, the implementation of the legislation and de facto results out of its implementation, remains a formidable task. The fact remains that while many people now understand the laws, positive practices are scarce and poorly used to educate a culture where legislation is acted upon uniformly, consistently, without privileges and impunity.

2.4 Underlying Causes of Gender Inequality

181. Tackling gender inequality is key to furthering sustainable development in the Kyrgyz Republic, underlying as it does so many aspects of economic and social life. Kyrgyz society is still dominated by traditional, patriarchal values. Women are viewed primarily as homemakers, and as responsible for child-rearing, although they can take on culturally acceptable jobs if they do not interfere with these responsibilities. Young women are expected to take on traditional subservient roles. Authority is gained with age, which often leads to older women supporting and perpetuating accepted gender norms, as they have significant influence over the younger generations.

182. In rural areas in particular, women have de-facto limited access to property, assets and financial services, which contributes to the feminization of poverty. This situation is exacerbated by the current economic climate, with many male heads-of-households having left to seek work elsewhere. The general inadequacy of social welfare provision across the country, when combined with ingrained gender bias, tends to keep women in the home or in the informal labour market.

¹⁴⁰ Ratification status for Kyrgyzstan. At UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) Website. http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=93&Lang=EN

¹⁴¹ Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (Unofficial translation), Legislation online, Kyrgyz Constitution - adopted by referendum 27 Jun2010_f_EN-3.pdf at www.legislationline.org/documents/id/5045

This exposes them to various forms of exploitation. In addition, they suffer from lack of social protection in areas of health and maternity leave, pensions and regulated working hours.

183. In local communities, many of the patriarchal traditions and ideas continue to take VAWG is often exacerbated by real or perceived impunity by the authorities and a culture of silence, which can extend to those who should be prosecuting these crimes, such as law enforcement officers. Although there has been extensive training of teachers, local officials and police officers with regard to VAWG and other gender sensitive issues, this work is not yet yielding significant results.

184. Gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained and much more practical work needs to be done on the ground with local communities in order to combat these problems. Women who dare to contravene social norms are acutely aware of the attendant stigma. Lack of knowledge of where to go for help, social pressure, a culture of blaming the victim, and isolation are all factors that result in years of abuse going unreported.

185. The participation of women in public life is constrained by social and institutional barriers. According to research carried out by UN Women, although women are participating in politics at both local and national level, social stereotyping and self-imposed gender roles often limit their work. Typically, female politicians are regarded as 'negotiators' and 'implementers', while men are seen as the 'idea generators' and 'leaders'. Although female politicians are perceived as less corrupt and more effective, they are nevertheless expected to put their duties as a wife and mother first.

186. In summary, the continuing dominance of patriarchal values and the strengthening of traditions or religious beliefs detrimental to women's rights are undermining progress made so far in addressing gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Limited educational opportunities for girls, the marginalization of women in the public and political space, and in the country's economy, is eroding their rights and their potential as economic actors, and making them more vulnerable to VAW, and the closely related risks of maternal mortality, school dropout, polygamy and unregistered marriage.

187. Although the Ministry of Social Development is working hard to implement the legislative framework, progress is frequently undermined by the presence of weak and corrupt institutions, widespread impunity with regard to acts of violence against women and general ignorance of legal rights and duties. At the governmental level there is often a misperception about what constitutes de jure and de facto equality, with little consideration given to the multiple factors that can prevent the achievement of real gender equality. Even when a woman is recruited to the civil service, this does not mean that in practice she is included and given a voice.

188. Given these circumstances, the promotion of GEWE must be considered a key national challenge for development. The national and international commitments of the Kyrgyzstan Government, as well as the recommendations of UN Treaty bodies, require that action must be taken to ensure that legal, social and economic barriers to women's empowerment are removed.

2.5 Positioning of the UN and its capacity to bring about positive change

189. The UN and its agencies are trusted and respected by the State. The UN enjoys excellent access to Government, and benefits from openness towards the work of its agencies, both from the side of the state and from that of civil society. The State collaborates with civil society actors towards strengthening the legislative system.

190. The UN agencies have demonstrable knowledge and expertise in transformative approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the organisation is currently playing a pivotal role in coordinating development actors working on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in Kyrgyzstan. The mandates of all agencies involved ensure that all vulnerable and marginalized groups benefit from their assistance and put them in a



strong position to tackle the root causes of gender inequality. The UN can demonstrate extensive experience in successfully linking policy with practical programmes. Coordinated action by UN agencies, combined with appropriate technical support, has the potential to make very significant advances in GEWE and in doing so to help lay a strong foundation for the realisation of all SDGs.

2.6 Strategic Entry Points for the UN in support of GEWE

191. A comprehensive approach to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) is not only key to achieving SDG 5, but has the potential to make significant contributions to the fulfilment of many other SDGs. Women's empowerment can serve as an effective implementing tool for achieving a wide range of desired outcomes.

192. Based on the analysis by UN Women, strategic entry points for taking the GEWE agenda forward include:

- **Investing in the education of girls and addressing gender inequalities in the education system**
- Promoting women and girls in non-traditional profession will not only contribute to improving their economic opportunities, but also challenge current stereotypes and the division of roles between women and men in the society. Investment in adolescent girls' education will lead to stronger, healthier and more prosperous families who are the basis for socio-economic development.
- **Improve women and girls' access to quality health and family planning services** as a powerful tool for women's empowerment, participation in the economic and social life and contribution to the development of the country.
- **Support development and implementation of robust legal frameworks and administrative arrangements** to facilitate de facto women's participation in decision-making through policy and administrative actions and social services to reduce the burden of unpaid work and expanding the pool of capable women to run for elections, including those from particular excluded groups, such as ethnic and language minorities, etc.
- **Communication for behaviour change and advocacy for inclusive development and women's empowerment at both national and local level.** This includes promotion of women's full participation in public life, the economy and in the electoral process. It means supporting women to be agents of change through the provision of education, training and life-long learning, and economic opportunities. Women must not be stereotyped as victims but as actors in their own right, with agency.
- **Working with young people through educational programmes to raise awareness of gender bias and its role in inhibiting sustainable development.**
- **Practical education on GEWE and gender transformative programming that targets men, women, girls and boys.** Areas for discussion would include reproductive health and responsible parenting, conflict management and diversity, violence against women, and early marriage and bride kidnapping.
- **Addressing social acceptance of, and impunity for, VAWG and gender-based discrimination.** This includes demonstrating that combatting VAWG has a key role to play in creating a stable, safe and secure society. It would involve engaging women, men and young people in designing and implementing educational campaigns intended to promote tolerance, respect and diversity. New innovative approaches are needed where by national ERAW policies and programmes are co-created jointly with survivors who are regarded as key experts.
- **Evidence-based policy making and programming.** This involves developing models for transformative change that address root causes of gender inequality and impediments to women's full agency. This also requires more gender analysis and research. For instance, there is a lack of detailed information regarding rape and sexual violence in Kyrgyzstan (CEDAW report, 2008, p.4)

- **Improving women's access to justice.** This requires that justice sector reform takes into consideration the reality of gender-based violence, inherent gender bias and other challenges currently faced by women. It implies continued support for gender sensitive reform of the law enforcement system, which must embrace the principle of zero tolerance towards gender-based violence. Aspects include the vetting of law enforcement officers, tackling corruption within the system and the introduction of robust accountability mechanisms. This process will also give rise to opportunities to address gender stereotyping and widespread discrimination on the part of the law enforcement agencies towards women, the LGBT community and those who are HIV positive or suffering from AIDS.
- **Supporting implementation of the legislative framework, turning policy into practical action.** In this respect, the UN can support the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in strengthening its institutions and tackling the implementation gap with regard to all relevant policies. In particular, this relates to the Law on Gender Equality, the Law on Domestic Violence, the Law on Early Marriage, the Law on Bride-Kidnapping, the Family Code, the Law on Property and the National Action Plan as regards UNSCR 1325. It also concerns providing expertise for the further development of gender sensitive indicators and statistics, which can be used to monitor the application of the legal framework and so increase accountability.
- **Informing the public finance reform process** so that it pays necessary attention to the interests of women and girls through gender-budgeting initiatives. Systemic development of gender responsive budgeting in all governmental bodies is a crucial step to ensure a more efficient and equal use of public resources.

2.7 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as a critical SDG catalyst:

193. The preceding sections demonstrate the crucial role that gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) must play in the further development of the Kyrgyz Republic as a stable and democratic state, ensuring safety and respecting human rights and the rule of law for all its inhabitants.

194. The continuing advancement of GEWE has profound implications for the transformation of Kyrgyz society and the country's economy. While being self-evidently essential in order to achieve SDG 5, GEWE is also inherent and necessary to the fulfilment of the majority of the other SDGs, including SDG 1, to end poverty, SDG 2, to end hunger, SDG 3 to ensure health and well-being, and SDG 16, to promote inclusive societies with equal access to justice. All of these and many other SDGs require gender sensitive strategies and the empowerment of women.

195. It is evident that GEWE acts as a catalyst in accelerating progress across all SDGs.

196. Given the wide-reaching transformative potential of GEWE, the UN in Kyrgyzstan as elsewhere needs to adopt a twin-track approach. This would not only see gender mainstreamed in the work of all agencies, but would establish a stand-alone gender goal. Such a stand-alone goal focusing on the challenges faced by adolescent girls where the mandates of many UN agencies interface with the comparative advantage to make a difference on a number of serious challenges such as maternal mortality, lack of an adequate skills base to compete in a global knowledge economy, impunity and lack of governance in relation to protecting women and girls against violence, and others would strongly leverage the UN contribution to Kyrgyzstan meeting SDGs overall.



Relevant SDGs**SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

- 5.1 end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations
- 5.4 recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- 5.6 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws
- 5.b enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment
- 5.c adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

SDG 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- 1.2 by 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.4 by 2030 ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services.
- 1.b create sound policy frameworks, at national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies to support accelerated investments in poverty eradication actions

SDG 2 End hunger achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.2 by 2030 end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving by 2025 the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under five years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons
- 2.3 by 2030 double the agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

SDG 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**Targets:**

- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services,

including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

- 4.3 by 2030 ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.5 by 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.6 by 2030 ensure that all youth and at least x% of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.a build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.2 by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- 8.5 by 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.2 by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 11.7 by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities





3 Economic situation

CHAPTER III

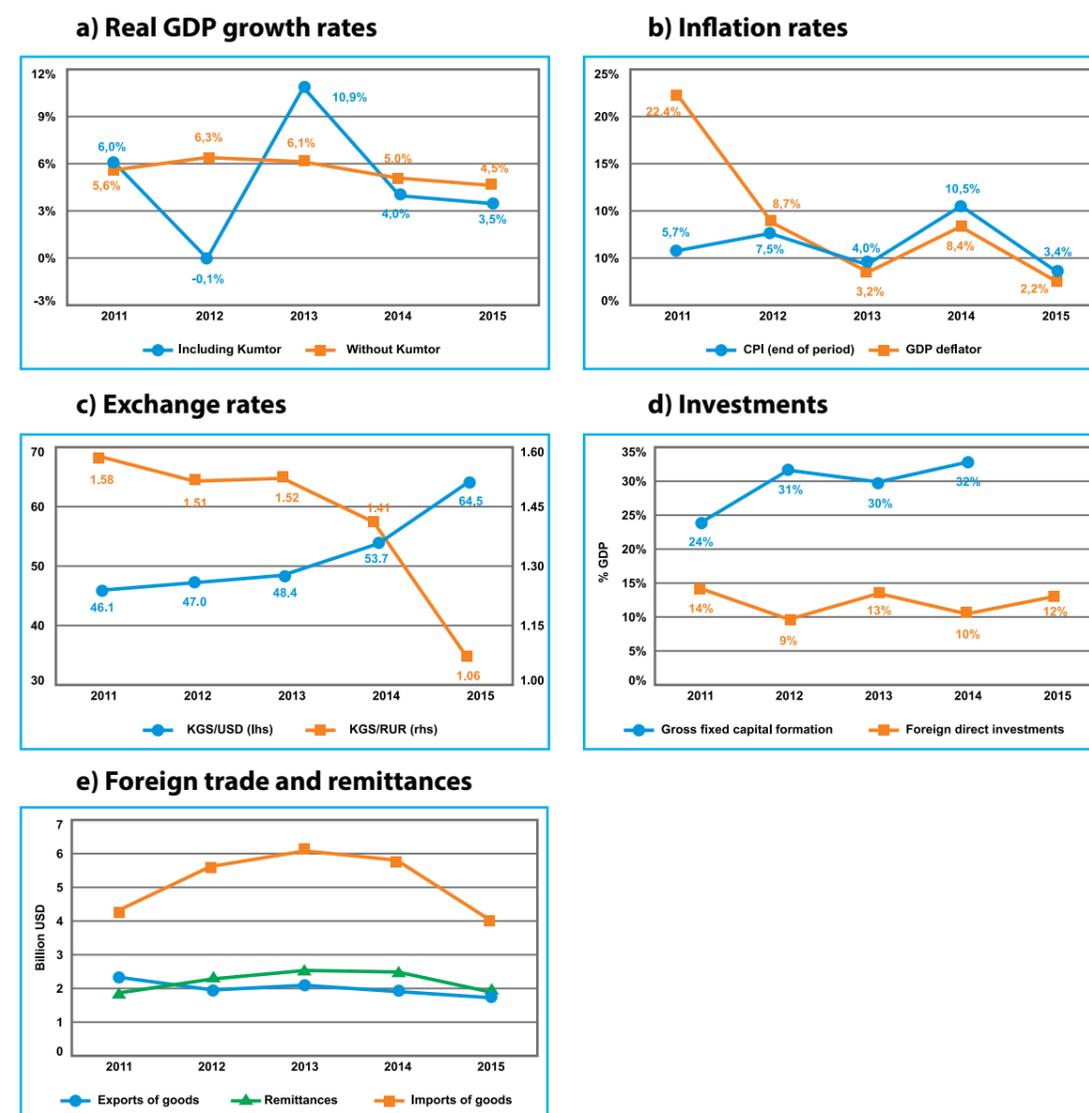


3.1 Macroeconomic developments

197. During the period under consideration, Kyrgyzstan graduated from the status of low income country and entered the group of lower-middle income countries according to the classification of the World Bank. But GDP per capita values are still rather low: in 2015 these values were US\$1,103 (at current exchange rate) or \$3,427 (at PPP).¹⁴²

198. In 2011-2015, GDP dynamics in Kyrgyzstan was uneven (Figure 3.1a). Average annual growth rate of real GDP appeared to be 4.8%; this value is in line with long term GDP growth rate which is equal to 4.7% (for 1996-2015, source: NSC). Volatility of GDP growth rate has been mostly related to the performance of the largest enterprise of Kyrgyzstan – Kumtor gold mine. Without Kumtor, the average annual GDP growth rate in 2011-2015 was 5.5%. This rate has been on gradual decline since 2012; in 2016 the IMF expects further decline of the economic growth rate to 2.2%¹⁴³. This slowdown of the economy of Kyrgyzstan is related to the deteriorating regional environment (recession/stagnation in Russia and Kazakhstan).

Figure 3.1 Key macroeconomic indicators of Kyrgyzstan in 2011-2015



Sources: NSC, NBKR

142 Source: WDI.

143 <http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2016/07/15/16/25/PR16341-Kyrgyz-Republic-IMF-Statement-at-the-end-of-a-Staff-Visit>.



199. Inflation performance of the economy in 2011-2015 was uneven with episodes of relatively high inflation (>10% per annum) followed by low inflation years (Figure 3.1b). Average annual inflation rate for this period of time was 6.2% and 8.7% measured by consumer price index (CPI) and GDP deflator, respectively. These inflation rates are modest compared to Kyrgyzstan's historical rates and inflation rates in other countries of Central Asia. Moderation of inflation helped to develop financial sector of the country and contributed to poverty reduction.

200. An important factor influencing inflation rate is the dynamics of Kyrgyz som (KGS) exchange rate. During the period of 2002-2014 KGS was loosely pegged to Russian ruble (RUR) with the exchange rate KGS/RUR fluctuating in the corridor $1.5 \pm 5\%$ (Figure 3.1c). This pattern had changed at the end of 2014 when Russian ruble dramatically devaluated against US dollar (from 30+ to about 70 RUR/USD). The economy of Kyrgyzstan would suffer very much in case of similarly sharp fall of the national currency, so in 2015 the NBKR had to proceed with massive interventions on foreign exchange market to stabilize som by the end-2015 at the level of 76 KGS/USD (appreciated back by 10-12% in the first half of 2016). So, the long-term KGS/RUR relationship of about 1.5 is now broken with mid-2016 level of KGS/RUR rate of almost 1. This simultaneous depreciation against USD and appreciation against RUR helped to avoid high inflation in 2015-2016 and basically saved financial sector of the country from a collapse, but adversely affected external competitiveness of the Kyrgyz economy.

201. For the period 2011-2015 gross FDI inflows were at the level of 9-14% GDP (Figure 3.1d). Together with somewhat increased domestic savings, this allowed to keep gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) growing; in 2012-2014 GFCF was equal or above 30% GDP. This historically high level of investments is partially explained by massive public investments in energy and road infrastructure.

202. Current account of the country has always been in large deficit (15-20% GDP in 2012-2015). Imports of goods systematically exceeded exports of goods and migrant workers' remittances – two main sources of foreign exchange for the economy (Figure 3.1e). This deficit is financed by inflows of foreign direct investments (FDI) and foreign aid. All key external flows (imports and exports of goods and remittances) achieved their maximum values in 2013¹⁴⁴ and then started declining due to the above mentioned exchange rate developments and the crisis in the region which has been negatively affected by the fall in international energy prices. Despite of being net energy importer, Kyrgyzstan suffered from this energy price fall via spillovers from the economies of Kazakhstan and Russia through falling exports and remittances.

203. Kyrgyzstan is WTO member since 1998, participant of the CIS Free Trade Area (since 2011), and signatory of the Economic Cooperation Organization's Trade Agreement. In 2015 Kyrgyzstan joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).¹⁴⁵ There is still not enough evidence to assess the economic impact of the EAEU accession, which is going to be felt in the medium and long term. Early positive implications of this move include increased migration to and remittances from Russia compared to the previous period and especially to neighbouring migrant-sending countries – Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (see more on this in section 3.5) as well as some increase in financing for the Kyrgyz private sector provided by the Kyrgyz-Russian Development Fund. On the other side, the hopes on FDI inflow and increase in exports to the EAEU have not materialized yet; the removal of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh customs border helped more to importers from EAEU than to the Kyrgyz exporters to these countries. Many other EAEU effects for trade with EAEU and third countries are difficult to disentangle from the effects of exchange rate dynamics and other external factors. For example, Kyrgyz entrepreneurs started feeling acute competition from Russian, Belarusian and Kazakh imports; however, this is mostly related to the strong appreciation of KGS to these countries' currencies. The imports from China fell significantly in 2015, but this is mostly related to the fact that Chinese goods became more expensive due to exchange rate dynamics rather than due to EAEU-related increase in import taxes.

¹⁴⁴ Maximum exports were registered in 2011 due to the highest in recent history international prices for gold – main export product of the country.

¹⁴⁵ Other members of EAEU include Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russian Federation.

204. In 2015, the Government adopted Plan for Export Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2015-2017. It accords priority to the following four cross-cutting areas: (i) simplification of procedures for exporters; (ii) improvement of quality control and quality management; (iii) access to trade information and export promotion; and, (iv) trade finance. To achieve progress on these priority directions, it is important to address the issue of regulatory and administrative barriers to trade in the country.¹⁴⁶

205. In general, in the past five years the government managed to preserve macroeconomic stability and keep economic growth rates at the level usual for Kyrgyzstan. However, in the medium term the external economic environment is going to be challenging, so the task of maintaining macroeconomic balances becomes even more important.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Targets:

- 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 % gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
- 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors
- 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

SDG9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

- 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
- 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
- 9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
- 9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities

SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

¹⁴⁶ UNECE Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Kyrgyzstan, Needs Assessment. 2015.



Targets:

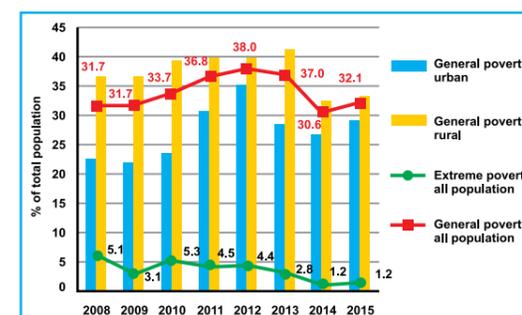
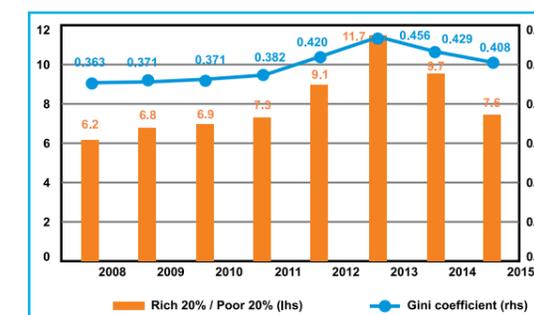
- 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
- 17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress
- 17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation
- 17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda
- 17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020
- 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence
- 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
- 17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
- 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
- 17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- 17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

3.2 Poverty and income inequality

206. Two poverty rates are used in Kyrgyzstan—general and extreme—which correspond to general and extreme poverty lines (\$4.2 and \$2.4 PPP/person/day, respectively in 2015).

207. Trends in general poverty were not uniform in the last several years (Figure 3.2a).

208. After long period of poverty reduction in 2000s general poverty rate started growing after the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 followed by 2010 conflict increasing by more than 6 percentage points in 2012 in comparison to 2008. With stabilization of the economic and social situation poverty rate fell to 30.6% in 2014, but then again bounced back to 32.1% in 2015. In 2015 the general poverty rate was still a bit higher than in 2008; thus, there was no general poverty reduction during last seven years. This outcome is a result of some reduction in rural poverty and substantial increase in urban poverty. The gap between rural and urban poverty rates has shrunk from 15 percentage points in 2008-2009 to just 4 percentage points in 2015. Urban poverty has become an important factor to consider, although some 68 percent are still found in the rural area

Figure 3.2 Poverty and inequality**a) Poverty rates****b) Income inequality indicators**

Source: NSC

209. The volatility of general poverty rate during the period of time under consideration is partially a consequence of the fact that per capita incomes of a large population segment are concentrated around poverty line, so that external shocks (such as good/bad agricultural harvest, fluctuations of international energy and food prices, remittances etc.) easily drive them in or out of poverty.

210. The chances to be poor increase with the number of children in a household. Children are, therefore, one of the most vulnerable categories of the population, and child poverty rate is always higher than general poverty rate in the country. For 2014, the child poverty rate was 37.9% in urban areas and 39.7% in rural areas.

211. Extreme poverty rate demonstrated a much more consistent dynamics. Except from setback in 2010, there was a gradual decline in extreme poverty. In 2014-2015, the extreme poverty rate fell to 1.2% of total population. Most probably, this value is already within the measurement error margin, i.e. does not differ statistically from zero. In other words, the current extreme poverty line and associated extreme poverty rate lost their relevance for Kyrgyzstan; the economy graduated from the situation of such acute monetary poverty. The country needs either abandon the notion of extreme poverty line and concentrate on general poverty reduction, or revise the extreme poverty line upwards. Additionally, poverty analysis has to be gendered and men and women's poverty should be analysed separately.

212. The lack of general poverty reduction in the conditions of economic growth in 2008-2015 could be explained by the dynamics in income inequality (Figure 3.2b). Both Gini coefficient and the ratio of income shares of 20% richest and 20% poorest segments of the population show a significant growth in inequality between 2008 and 2013. This means that the poor (in the sense of general poverty line) did not benefit much from the economic growth. The poverty rate fell simultaneously with inequality. Still, inequality in 2015 was much higher than in 2008.

213. Poverty is closely correlated with food insecurity and malnutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic, with the poorest spending 68 percent of their budget on food. This results in a two-way relationship, whereby food insecurity and malnutrition have debilitating physical effects, such as stunting and reduced cognitive capacity, as well as susceptibility to diseases and diminished labour productivity. With roughly 70% of the poor and vulnerable dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, many undernourished people are unable to fully use their labour to move out of poverty. Also, children who suffer from impeded physical growth and related cognitive deficits attain fewer grades of schooling, have poorer cognitive skills, lower wages and are more likely to live in poverty. Furthermore, through intergenerational effects, women affected by stunting are more likely to have children who also suffer from undernutrition, and live in poor households as adults (International Food Policy Research Institute - IFPRI reports).

214. The increase in urban poverty and fall in extreme poverty may have some important policy implications. Many development policy instruments in the area of social protection, rural development etc. had been designed to aim at extreme rural poverty. These policies may need to be revisited now. More attention is needed for such issues as urban poverty, chronic poverty,¹⁴⁷ inequality, and non-monetary dimensions of poverty (poor access to education and health services, clean drinking water and other utilities, archaic gender attitudes etc., pls. see relevant sections of this report). It is further recommended that data be collected to enable a gendered poverty analysis. In fact, lack of sex- disaggregated figures (headcount index etc.) does not permit to conclude that extreme poverty has been eliminated for women as well as for men. It would be also extremely important to examine the gender implications of poverty by conducting a multi-factor analysis accounting for all usual poverty correlates (rural/urban, number of children, education status etc.) and, on gender structure of the household.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Targets:

- 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
- 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
 - 1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions
 - 1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Targets:

- 10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 % of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

147 According to (World Bank, 2015), up to 10% of the population may be considered as chronically poor.

SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Targets:

- 11.a support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
- 11.b by 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels

3.3 Employment in the Kyrgyz Republic

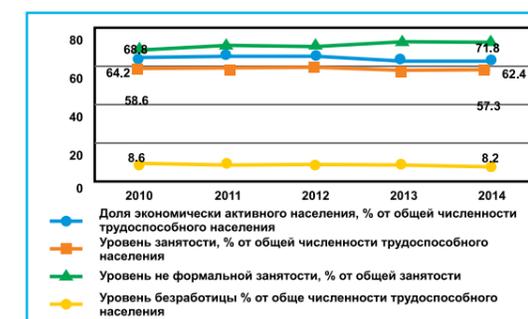
215. Kyrgyzstan has rather young population (median age is 24 years, and people of working age constitute 60% of total population), so the demand for jobs is high in the country.

Labour force participation rate (LFPR) is not very high (just above 60%) and is slowly declining (Figure 3.3a). Labour migration is a partial explanation for the relatively low LFPR – people do not participate in the Kyrgyz labour force, because look for employment abroad (see section 3.5). Another explanation is related to gender differences. Women's labour force participation rate (50%, Figure 3.3b) is much lower than that of men (75%). In all age groups the male employment rate is higher, with the biggest gap observed in the age group 25-34, which corresponds in most cases with the maternity and child-rearing period¹⁴⁸ (Figure 3.3d). Women tend to concentrate on child care and household responsibilities as required by patriarchal family model increasingly popular in rural areas. Another reason for such a low-level employment rate has to be found in the lack of available social support structures for working women. A decline since independence in government social support such as free or affordable childcare has put pressure on women to stay at home or to work in positions that are flexible and do not interfere with their domestic responsibilities.¹⁴⁹

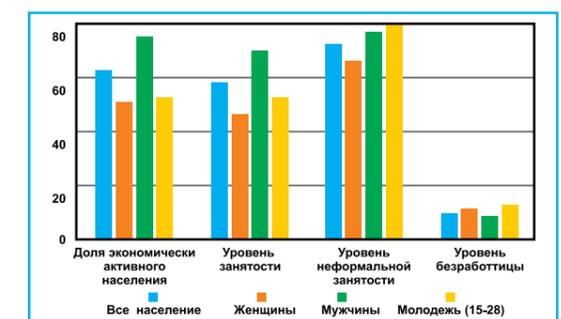
Both these explanations also help to understand the low LFPR for youth: young women are involved in child care and both young women and young men constitute a core of migrant workers.

Figure 3.3 Labour market in Kyrgyzstan

a) Dynamics of labour market indicators



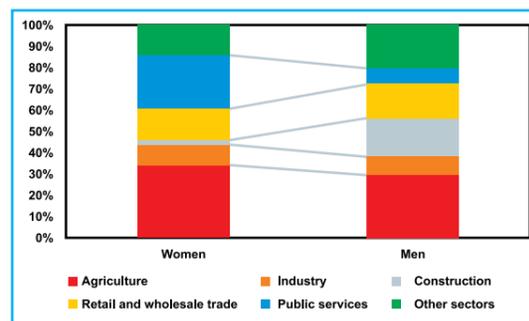
b) Labour market indicators by population group, 2014



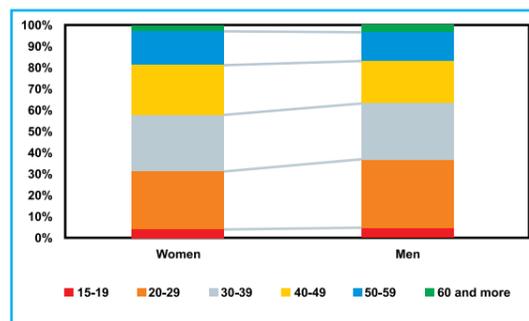
148 NSC, Women and Men, p.50 (Russian version)

149 Meeting with ILO staff and ADB brief

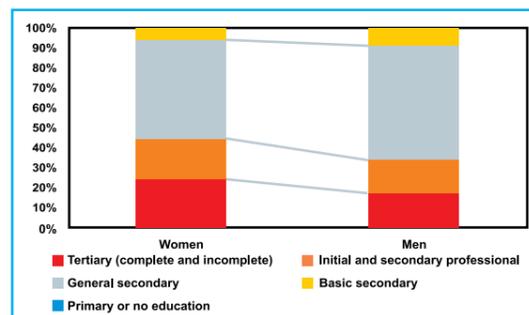
c) Sector structure of employment, 2014



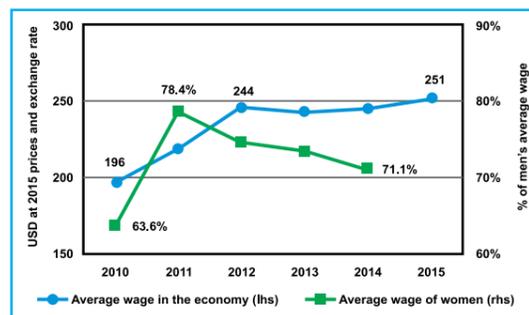
d) Age structure of employment, 2014



e) Education structure of employment, 2014



f) Wages



Source: NSC, own calculations

Non-participation of many people in the Kyrgyz labour force reduces unemployment indicators in the country. Unemployment rate has been quite stable in 2010-2014 at the level above 8% which is not very high by international standards (but see below info on partial employment). Namely, the official unemployment rate in 2014 was 9.5% for women and 7.0% for men. In fact, women and young people have higher chances to be unemployed than middle age men.

Agriculture remains the main employer in the economy of Kyrgyzstan – 32% of total employment in 2014 (Figure 3.3c). Other major sectors of employment include retail and wholesale trade, construction, industry, and public services (general government, education and health care). There is an accentuated horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the labour market. Women and men work in distinct sectors and also occupy different levels in the work hierarchy; e.g. construction, mining and energy production are employers mostly for men, while women are overrepresented in public sector jobs that are paid through state budget and generally carry low salaries, such as those in education and (76,6%) and health care (80.3%). Due to the large share of garment industry, women also prevail among manufacturing workers.

Child labour is an important issue in the country. According to 2014 NSC survey supported by ILO, 580.6 thousand children are involved in some form of employment; 71.4% of them and 27.8% of all children aged 5-17 do work unsuitable for children. This means some improvement in comparison to 2007 when the latter ratio was equal to 32.9%. On the other side, the percentage of hazardous child labour grew from 12.5% in 2007 to 18.6% in 2014. The overwhelming majority of child labourers are employed as unpaid family workers (95%). Agriculture, trade, consumer services and manufacturing are the sectors with highest child labour incidence in the country.

About 40% of total number of employed have some professional education: tertiary (more than 20%), secondary or initial. Others mostly have general or basic secondary education. In average, working women are better educated than men (Figure 3.3e); women prevail among skilled personnel. However, they occupy less than one third of managerial positions in the

government and private sector (NSC data for 2014). This is a worrisome trend as it means that women's potential is not fully exploited and their participation as skilled individual to contribute to sustainable development is not fully valued.

About 70% of total employment is in informal sector (i.e. at enterprises which are not legal entities according to the NSC definition; this includes self-employment). This share keeps growing as Figure 3.3a suggests. Informal employment means low standards of job safety, lack of long-term labour contracts and no protection of workers' rights. Often, informal employment also means partial employment¹⁵⁰, which does not really allow for earning income sufficient for living.

As a consequence of reduced support services, women are also very active in the informal sector as it leaves more flexibility in terms of time management for carrying out traditional tasks of child rearing, caring of elders and housekeeping. This has important repercussions on their economic stability as not only do they not have any protection against dismissal, but also as the informal sector does not provide such benefits as sick and maternity leave and pensions. Thus there is an increasing risk for women to be in the poverty group when they reach the retirement age.¹⁵¹ From the point of view of the Government there is also an interest that both men and women move from informal to formal employment, where they would be required to pay higher taxes and pay social contributions and in return benefit from social and labour protection.¹⁵²

In general, wages¹⁵³ are not high in Kyrgyzstan (Figure 3.3f). Their level provides another explanation for massive non-participation in the labour force: for many people, especially unskilled women and young people, it is more economical to emigrate or concentrate on household work rather than earn small money as hired worker. After good growth in 2010-2012 wages stagnated in real terms in 2013-2015. So, hired workers do not seem to be beneficiaries of economic growth in recent years. As mentioned above, gender divide in sector allocation of labour results in wage differences between women and men. The gender gap in wages was high in 2010, then the difference between wages of women and men reduced considerably in 2011 and is now gradually increasing again. The temporary improvement of the situation in 2011 may be attributed to one-off substantial increase in staff salaries in education and health sectors that, as mentioned above, employ mostly women. Gender equality in education was achieved in Kyrgyzstan many years ago and is still maintained now as one of the most important accomplishments of the society and is a key to strengthen position of women on the labour market. However, women higher educational attainment is not yet reflected in their economic empowerment with a consequent risk of parents and students devaluing the importance of getting a higher education and pulling their children out of school, especially in periods of economic crisis. Additionally, another key policy to accompany educational attainment, curb girls' dropout, and support female labour force participation and professional development of women is the promotion and government investment in the care economy including pre-school education and different child care and development services which would reduce the burden of unpaid work on women, including the promotion and support of paternal leave and father caring as a positive model of parenting and giving value to unpaid work. All these measure could contribute for young women entering the job market and working mothers to stay active on the labour market and pursue professional career as much as men.

Labour market policies of the government include all traditional measures: minimum wage regulations, unemployment benefits and active policies: public works, retraining programmes, micro-credits for unemployed. However, these measures are not really effective. For example, the official minimum wage has been set in 2016 at the level of KGS1,060/month (about USD15/month) is well below wages offered to unskilled workers at the least generous enterprises of

150 According to NSC, in 2014 39% of women and 24% of men worked less than 30 hours per week. Partial employment is especially widespread in rural areas.

151 Meeting with ILO staff, UN House, May 2016

152 Asian Development Bank – Gender Analysis, summary- Country Partnership Strategy: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013–2017

153 Statistic on wages is representative for formal enterprises only. There is no data on remuneration of workers in informal enterprises. The concept of wage is not applicable to those who are self-employed (including farmers) as they earn so-called mixed income combining worker's wage and entrepreneur's profit.

the country. The number of unemployment benefit recipients is below 500 persons (less than 1% of the total number of officially registered unemployed). Active policies are poorly funded and do not seem to be very popular among unemployed. It seems that the best the government can do in the current fiscal situation is to concentrate on encouraging job creation in private enterprises which can be achieved through other policy tools – taxation, financing, deregulation, social security etc. (see section 3.7).

Professional education system in charge of supplying the labour market with skilled workers of different level of qualification faces significant challenges. For already long period of time, the institutions of professional education system (especially universities, but also technical colleges and vocational schools) produce graduates who are not demanded on labour market because of skill mismatch (e.g. too many lawyers and managers and too few technicians and engineers) and an insufficient quality of education. So, availability of formal education does not mean employability of young professional school graduate. Available evidence (Figure 3.3b) suggests that youth is the most vulnerable category on the labour market with highest unemployment and informal employment rates. A dramatic improvement in quality and relevance of professional education together with improvements in general education (see section 4.1) should provide young people with much better chances on the labour market than they have today.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Targets:

- 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
- 8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

SDG 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Targets

- 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

- 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
- 9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets

SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Targets:

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets:

- 5.4 recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.a undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws
- 5.c adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Targets:

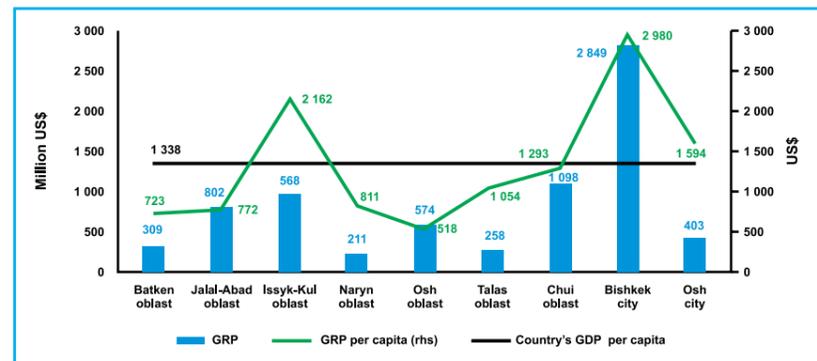
- 1.4 by 2030 ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership, and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services including microfinance
- 1.b create sound policy frameworks, at national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies to support accelerated investments in poverty eradication actions



3.4 Regional development disparities and challenges in the Kyrgyz Republic

The development of regions in Kyrgyzstan is uneven. Bishkek, the capital of the country, and Osh, the second large city, are better developed in terms of employment opportunities and energy, communications and social infrastructure available. Rural areas, especially in the southern part of the country (Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh oblasts) are much poorer.

Figure 3.4 Disparity in regional development, 2014



Source: NSC

As a result of these differences, the gap in Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita between the richest (Bishkek) and the poorest (Osh oblast) regions is almost 6 times (Figure 3.4). Bishkek produces almost 40% of the country's GDP.

The regional economic development inequality is accompanied by inequality in social development of different parts of the country. This can be seen from the differences in Human Development Index which varies from 0.634 (Naryn oblast) to 0.825 (Bishkek) with 0.700 as the national value of the Index.¹⁵⁴

The existence of this development gap leads to significant internal migration from rural areas and small towns to the two cities. Internal and external migration (see section 6.5) results in major outflow of especially young people from underdeveloped parts of the country; this could have impact on increase of regional differences. On the other hand, the migration and migrants' remittances allow sustaining livelihoods of their families and prevent them from slipping into extreme poverty. Simultaneously, internal migration creates a substantial pressure on urban infrastructure in Bishkek and Osh which has never been designed to serve that many people. This migration may be an important underlining factor behind the rise in urban poverty (see section 6.2).

The government's regional development policy (as formulated in the NSDS 2013-2017 and other documents) is aimed at job creation, support to agriculture, mining and other industries, and infrastructure expansion and rehabilitation in less developed parts of the country. In some cases, this policy appeared to be successful. For example, Talas oblast used to be one of the poorest parts of the country. Now it is one of the best economic performers among agricultural regions due to introduction of new cash crop (beans) and attraction of foreign investors who provided initial training for farmers and opportunity to export these beans to international markets. This change, of course, took time (15-20 years).

Mountainous terrain of the country, low density of the population in some of its parts and limited development of transport infrastructure inside the country, prevalence of small producers who can't afford high transportation costs result in insufficient market integration in the country. Price differences between regions are sometimes very high, e.g. in May 2016 the differences in milk and potato retail prices in different parts of the country were close to 2 times; the gap in wheat flour prices was above 50% (source: NSC, own calculations). Lack of access to markets is one of the impediments for growth in agricultural producers' incomes. Other types of infrastructure

¹⁵⁴ Kyrgyzstan's Draft Human Development Report 2016.

are of critical importance, too. Access to financial services, energy and water supply, sewage and waste management, quality education and health care in all parts of the country are key priorities. One of the ways to address existing infrastructure gaps is to promote public-private partnerships. There is already some legal background for implementation of such partnerships, but more work is needed to make them operational.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Targets:

- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
- 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

3.5 Migrations in the Kyrgyz Republic

Internal and external migration play a very important role in social and economic development of the country. Facing challenges in finding decent work at their places of origin, inhabitants of rural areas and small towns of Kyrgyzstan migrated mostly to the cities of Bishkek, Osh and Chui oblast in search for better jobs and access to higher quality services (education, health, utilities etc.). In 2000s, with fast economic recovery in the energy-exporting neighbouring countries people of Kyrgyzstan have been increasingly migrating for work in Russia and Kazakhstan. Due to relaxed registration requirement inside the country and visa-free regime and close/common historical and cultural background with Russia and Kazakhstan, labour migration is very much informal, so no official (and no good) data on the number of internal and external migrant workers exists. There is a consensus among experts that many hundred thousands of Kyrgyz citizens are involved in migration processes (compare with 2.5 million labour force in the country). Available indirect evidence suggests that Russia is the main destination for Kyrgyz migrants; 80-90% of them work in this country. Kazakhstan absorbs almost everybody else. There are Kyrgyz migrant workers in some other countries, but in much smaller quantities due to visa, language, cultural and other barriers.

Majority of migrant workers abroad are young men (although the percentage of women among Kyrgyz migrants is about 30% which is much more than among other Central Asian migrants and seems to be increasing) with general or basic secondary education. These migrants mostly come from the labour-abundant southern part of Kyrgyzstan. They mostly occupy relatively low paid jobs in services (retail, catering, cleaning, utilities etc.) and construction in Russia and other countries. There is also another component in the Kyrgyz labour migration which fits to the notion of "brain drain" – both young and experienced professionals who find well-paid jobs in receiving countries; their geography of migration is more broad as many of them know foreign languages. Their departure leaves some unfilled niches on domestic labour market; for example, many areas in Kyrgyzstan suffer from the lack of skilled health personnel who massively migrated to Kazakhstan and Russia.

External labour migration is the main source of foreign exchange for the country and, in this role, it is more important than exports, FDI or foreign aid (see Figure 3.1e). Migrants working in Russia and other countries remit their earnings back home to their families, and this money is a key driver of domestic demand in Kyrgyzstan; it is also a substantial support for poor migrant-sending households, especially in rural areas of southern Kyrgyzstan. Migrants' remittances in

Kyrgyzstan are at the level about or above 30% GDP; by this indicator Kyrgyzstan is the second large recipient of remittances in the world after Tajikistan.

Migration and remittances were growing fast till 2014. In 2014 Russia went into economic crisis; Kazakhstan has also started experiencing difficulties due to the decline in international energy prices and fall in export revenue. Around the same time Russia has also introduced new regulations which make arrival to and stay in Russia for migrant workers more difficult and expensive than before. The combination of economic downturn and increased administrative difficulties resulted in significant reduction of the number of migrants from Central Asia and their remittances. The decline in remittances is one of the main reasons for economic slowdown of the economy of Kyrgyzstan in 2014-2016.

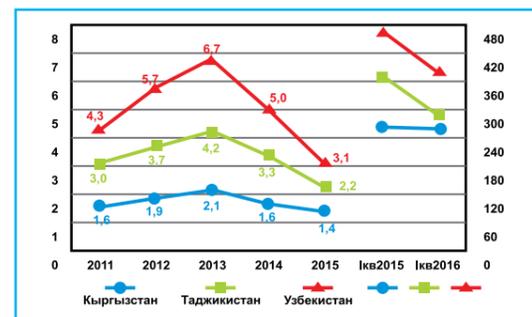
The accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU in 2015 (section 3.1) implied a different regime for Kyrgyz migrants in Russia who now enjoy legal status on the labour market close to that of Russian citizens. The accession also supported “amnesty” of almost one hundred thousand of Kyrgyz migrants who were blacklisted for entrance to Russia due to different types of violations of Russian migration legislation (still, more than 100,000 people from Kyrgyzstan remain in this list). The economic impact of the economic crisis and the EAEU accession may be assessed through comparative analysis of data on migration from and remittances to Central Asian economies provided by Russian authorities (Figures 3.5a and 3.5b).

Figure 3.5 Dynamics of labour migration and remittances in 2011-2016

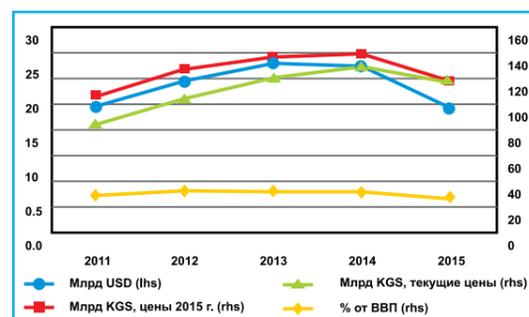
a) Number of migrants to Russia by sending country



b) Money transfers from Russia by individuals



c) Remittances to Kyrgyzstan



Sources: NBKR, Central Bank of Russia, Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation

Unlike citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the number of Kyrgyz migrants did not fall and continued to increase gradually. This increase may be attributed to the EAEU membership, which provides for Kyrgyz migrants with somewhat more privileged (in comparison to other Central Asians) situation on the Russian labour market. Remittances from Russia fell to all countries of the region, but remittances to Kyrgyzstan suffered the least – contraction in 2015 compared to 2013 (the peak year for remittances) by 34% in USD terms with 47% and 54% for Tajikistan and

Uzbekistan, respectively. Available data for the first quarter of 2016 (right part of the Figure 3.5b) showed that remittances to Kyrgyzstan have “recovered” and stopped falling.¹⁵⁵

Apart from economic effects, labour migration has numerous social implications. The need to send a part of family abroad is associated with complex intra-family dynamics and risks of loosening family ties; the children are often left with elderly grandparents or other relatives and receive insufficient care. From a women’s rights perspective, migration of husbands increases their vulnerability of being left behind with children and without sufficient financial means; some also mentioned an increased exposure to domestic violence by in-laws.

Migrants, especially those who stay outside Kyrgyzstan for a long period of time, become less integrated into the Kyrgyz society, remain outside of social security system at home. In order to strengthen their status in receiving countries, many people choose to change their citizenship.

Both the society and the government are realizing now that labour emigration is a long-term phenomenon and it is necessary to learn how to live with it. Government is now developing and implementing programmes to facilitate the migration process and reduce unnecessary transaction costs, strengthen legal status of the Kyrgyz migrants in receiving countries, provide for better matching of migrants with vacancies abroad, ensure better professional training for those who would like to migrate. Nevertheless, according to IOM studies, there is still a risk for both men and women of falling into the trap of traffickers and be exploited; women willing to migrate are considered at high risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic work. The Ministry of Interior of Kyrgyzstan reported a total of 237 investigations during the period 2002-2014 with 18 cases in 2014, which included forced labour and sex trafficking cases.¹⁵⁶

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Targets:

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Targets:

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

3.6 Food security, agriculture and rural development

Economic growth and reduction of extreme poverty during last several years allowed for substantial improvement in the food security situation in the country especially with regard to dietary energy adequacy (Figure 3.6). The country successfully achieved Millennium Development Goal 1 related to food security and met MDG target 1c. As discussed in section 3.2, extreme poverty based on line ensuring consumption of at least 2,100 Kcal/person/day is not an issue for the country anymore. While hunger is not on the development agenda of Kyrgyzstan, food insecurity (in terms of access, utilization and stability) and malnutrition remain a challenge and a further significant segment of the population remain at risk of falling into food insecurity in the event of shocks and stresses.

¹⁵⁵ NBKR’s data for first five months of 2016 on individuals’ remittances from Russia received through money transfer systems indicate already 5% growth compared to the same period of 2015.

¹⁵⁶ ILO Staff member brief. September 2016.

With regard to malnutrition, a considerable share of children under 5 (13%) is stunted. This is already an indication of a chronic malnutrition; furthermore, 3.4% of children under 5 are severely stunted.

In Jalal-Abad oblast, the share of stunted children goes as high as 21.3%, and in Naryn oblast it is 16.4%. A major issue in nutrition is the lack of balance in consumption of all necessary nutrients; diets of many people, especially in rural areas, are skewed towards hydrocarbons with insufficient consumption of proteins, fats and micro-nutrients. Iron-deficiency anaemia is a serious challenge with prevalence rates about 40% for women of reproductive age and children under five.

In 2015, the government of Kyrgyzstan adopted the Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2015-2017. This Programme is based on contemporary understanding of food security issues; it covers four pillars of food security: food availability, access to food, food utilization, and food safety. This is a welcome departure from the previously widespread understanding of food security as self-sufficiency. It is imperative for small open economy of Kyrgyzstan to find a balance between own production of foods, exports of those agricultural products in which Kyrgyzstan has comparative advantage and imports of foods production of which in Kyrgyzstan is not economical. It is also a key for the government to concentrate on nutrition issues including, for example, the issues of hot feeding for primary school students to upgrade currently implemented universal primary schools meals programme.

Figure 3.6 Key food security indicators



Source: National Food Security Atlas. Kyrgyz Republic 2015: Summary

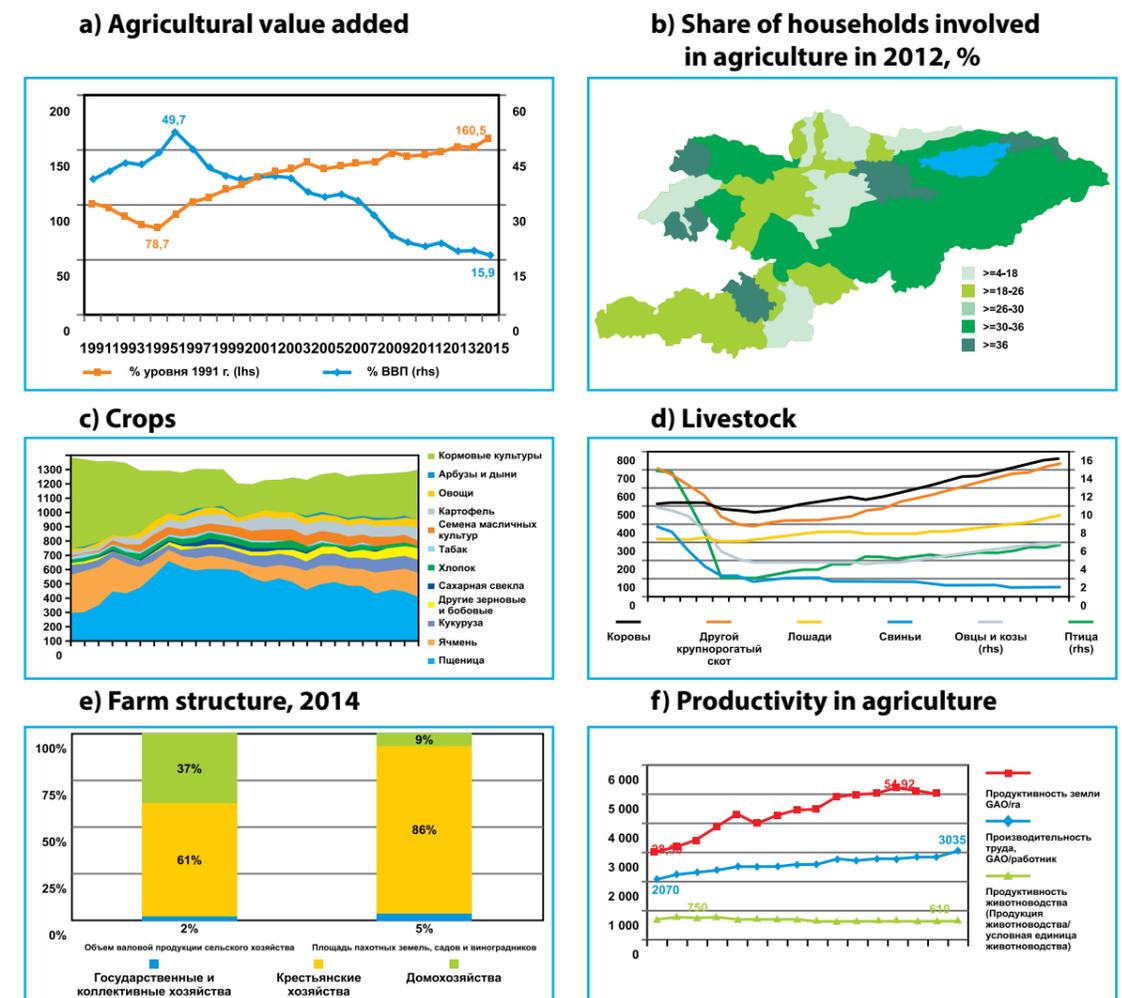
The issues of food availability and access to food are closely related with development of agricultural sector in Kyrgyzstan (Figure 3.7). Agriculture is one of the largest sectors of the economy and the largest employer (see section 3.3). Agricultural production is unevenly allocated throughout the country (Figure 3.7b) with some areas heavily dependent on agricultural activities. Cereals, fodder and potatoes, i.e. staple foods and animal feed, prevail among grown crops (Figure 3.7c). Beans, vegetables, fruits, cotton and some other cash crops occupy much less land, but are important as a source of export revenue for the country. Historically, Kyrgyzstan used to be tobacco growing country. Now, due to market forces and government policies supported by development partners, the sown area for tobacco is decreasing; according to the NSC, area under tobacco fell from 22.2 thousand hectares in 1993 to 0.6 thousand hectares in 2015. Crop production requires irrigated land (about three fourth of total arable land), so maintenance of irrigation systems is absolutely crucial for development of the Kyrgyz agriculture.

The number of cows and other cattle, sheep and goats, horses and poultry is growing in the country (Figure 3.7d). Livestock is the preferred way for rural (and some urban) households to make savings. The growth in number of animals allows for improvement in supply of meat, milk and eggs, resulting in better nutritional status of the population while many, especially poor households, still do not benefit from this diet change as necessary. At the same time, there are very significant environmental and economic challenges to sustainability of livestock production. By the government's estimates, up to 50% of all pastures are at some stage of degradation; for winter pastures located near rural settlements the degree of degradation goes as high as 70%.

Over-grazing is a big and still unresolved issue while the government attempts to introduce pasture committees and other forms of self-governance to address the issue of rational use of natural resources.

The agricultural sector's performance in recent years is far from being satisfactory. The share of agriculture in GDP is permanently falling and real growth rates of the sector are far from the level necessary for Kyrgyzstan; in 2011-2015 the average growth rate of agricultural gross value added was 2.3% per annum. Slow growth of agriculture may be related to the existing farm structure (Figure 3.7e). This farm structure is based on household production, individual entrepreneurs and a significant number of small farms (typically one household and 0.5-3 hectares of arable land, there were some 400,000 of them in 2015) which replaced in mid-1990s the previous Soviet-time structure based on just some 500 large farms. Egalitarian land reform implemented in 1990s provided virtually every rural household with some land plot; this was a major policy move which protected the country against hunger and eventually resulted in elimination of extreme poverty. However, with time it became clear that this structure is survival mechanism, but not a growth engine. Small farmers, who have low levels of productivity, aggregation, processing and marketing, and produce more than 90% of agricultural output, very often do not have access to technologies and knowledge, capital, markets etc., and represent a major challenge to development efforts in the country.¹⁵⁷ As a result, agricultural productivity is stagnating or declining (Figure 3.7f).

Figure 3.7 Indicators of agricultural development in Kyrgyzstan



Source: NSC, own calculations

157 Ministry of Agriculture (2013) Agro-Industrial Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic 2013 – 2020, Bishkek.

Labour productivity used to grow due to shedding abundant labour, but its growth stopped few years ago. Land productivity growth rates are modest (annual average growth rate of just above 2% in 2011-2015), and livestock productivity is declining – the growth of animal herd is faster than the growth of livestock output. The current model of agriculture, which had some advantages in the past, requires further reforms. For a long period of time the government is undertaking repeated attempts to facilitate creation of agricultural cooperatives, as possible tool to address the productivity issues. Success record in cooperation is very modest so far, so it may happen that the development of the sector would slowly go towards large private enterprises. This may improve productivity, but it may also be associated with different social development issues – increased migration of released labour to large cities and abroad, growing inequality etc. Sometimes, a kind of contractual farming may work as the example of bean production cluster in Talas oblast suggests – the cluster has become the main exporter of agricultural produce in the country. The oblast used to be one of the poorest regions of the country; now it has become one of the regions with lowest poverty rates.

The agricultural and agro-industrial development issues have direct social implications for rural areas. Insufficient incomes of rural people do not allow for proper development of infrastructure in rural areas including roads, energy and irrigation systems, education and health establishments. The government tries to support rural areas and, in fact, implements quite substantial redistribution programmes in favour of rural people (government-funded infrastructure, favourable taxation, pension systems, social assistance, low energy tariffs etc.). Still, the resources in hand of the government are not large, the rural development issues remain acute. This is an important underlining reason for massive labour migration inside and outside the country. This also has some gender implications, as with departure of men to look for jobs in other places/countries, women have increasingly become main source of labour in agriculture. Low incomes, poorly developed infrastructure and unsafe working conditions create additional burden for working women who most often carry also the responsibility for unpaid care work.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Targets:

- 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons
- 2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment
- 2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality
- 2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of

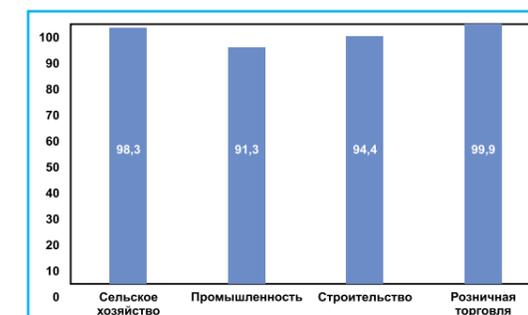
- benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed
- 2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries
- 2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

3.7 Private sector development

Private sector is now a backbone of the economy of Kyrgyzstan. More than 90% of total output in all key sectors of the economy is produced by private enterprises (Figure 3.8a). According to EBRD estimates, in Kyrgyzstan the share of private sector in GDP is equal to 75%. Kyrgyz private sector is mostly composed by micro-, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); large enterprises are very few and concentrated in selected sectors of economy only – mining, communications, some manufacturing. The Kyrgyz entrepreneurs are known in the region for their self-reliance and ability to take risks.

Figure 3.8 Private sector development indicators

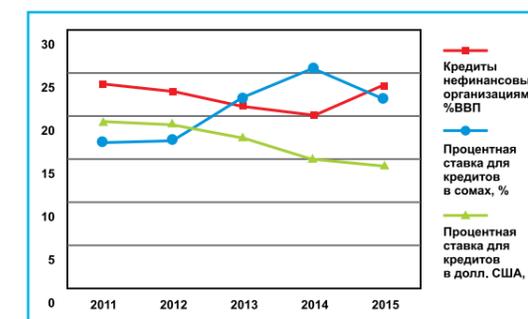
a) Share of private enterprises in economic sectors' output, 2015



b) International rankings of competitiveness and business climate



c) Indicators of access to finance



Source: NSC, World Bank, World Economic Forum, own calculations

Due to the role of private sector and MSMEs in the economy, business climate is a key for the country's economic development. In all its strategic documents starting with the NSDS 2013-2017, the government of Kyrgyzstan puts a strong emphasis on improvement of business climate through reduction of administrative burden and red tape, protection of businesses against possible



corrupt pressure of officials, easing taxation, improvement of access to infrastructure and finance etc. While this is not easy task and there are both achievements and setbacks on the way, the dynamics of international business climate and competitiveness indices (Figure 3.8b) does suggest some gradual improvement of the situation. The economy is progressing on the World Bank's Doing Business set of indicators. The Doing Business's Distance to Frontier is an aggregate measure of the country's standing in comparison to the best performers in the world; the larger the value the closer the country is to the best international practices. Kyrgyzstan is now ranked 67 among 189 countries. Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) ranking is another tool to benchmark the economy against best international examples. Kyrgyzstan used to have very low GCI values pushing it into the worst performing decile among all countries covered by the index. Now Kyrgyzstan is already in the second quartile – still low position, but much better than just few years ago.

An important indicator of business climate is the ability of economy to attract domestic and foreign investments. As data in section 6.1 suggest (Figure 3.1d), the level of investments in the economy is gradually growing, and the foreign direct investments stay approximately at the same level being expressed in % to GDP, i.e. they grow with the same pace as GDP. This general satisfactory performance should not mask, however, the serious issues with business climate for foreign investors who are often subject to aggressive pressure from lobby groups on community and central level and do not always receive necessary government's protection.

Apart from business climate, other issues in private sector development include lack of skilled labour (see more on this in section 6.8), insufficient access to infrastructure (e.g. reliable supply of electricity) and finance. Access to finance was gradually improving in 2011-2014 (Figure 3.8c): the loans from banks and other credit institutions to non-financial organizations exceeded 25% of GDP (historically highest value albeit still very low by international standards), interest rates were decreasing (still staying high in absolute terms). In 2015, because of KGS devaluation to USD (see section 3.1) financial sector experienced serious difficulties, so it reduced its lending to private sector.

One of the ways to respond to difficult environment and numerous exogenous shocks for the private sector of Kyrgyzstan is to stay informal. Informality allows for significant savings on transaction costs, great flexibility, almost no entry barriers to entrepreneurship and, as a result, significant vertical mobility. However, informality also is a barrier for those enterprises which would like to grow and enjoy economies of scale, export, improve technologies and management practices, use skilled labour. Effectively, informal enterprises are resilient, but have limited growth potential. The government may need to develop a strategy to “formalize” informal enterprises by providing positive incentives for being formal. Forced “formalization” may not be an option, because it may result in large employment losses as informal enterprises are major providers of employment in the country.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Targets:

- 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 % gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
- 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

3.8 Industrial development and energy sector

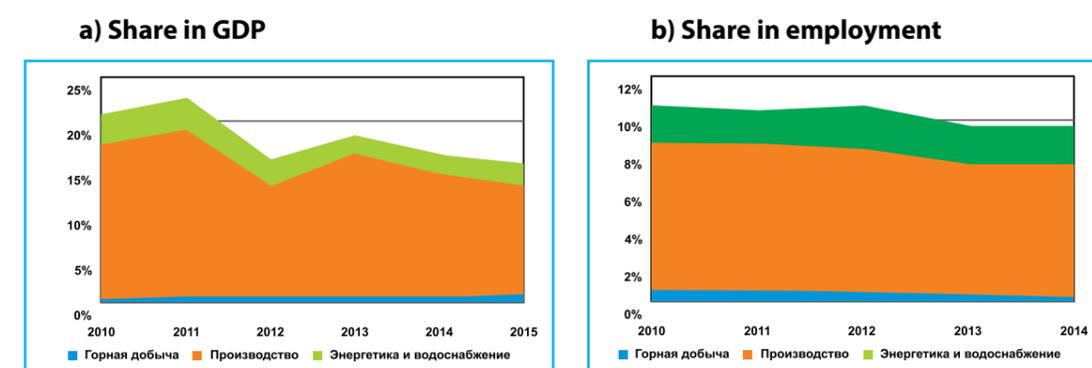
Industry is the second large sector of the economy of Kyrgyzstan (after retail and wholesale trade); it provides jobs for some 10% of total number of workers employed in the economy. Its major components include manufacturing (metallurgy, production of garments, foods, construction materials and some other subsectors), energy and water supply, and mining.¹⁵⁸

The role of industry in GDP production and in employment is gradually declining (Figures 3.9a and 3.9b). This negative trend is mostly due to manufacturing which is the largest part of industry. The decline in manufacturing's share in GDP is explained by some slowdown in gold production at Kumtor, while the fall in industrial employment is mostly explained by significant reduction in the number of workers in garment producing enterprises and in food industry. The country lacks industrial sustainable development strategy which may be a background factor for the industrial decline; development of such strategy seems to be an urgent task for the government. Developing of eco-friendly industrial and agro-industrial parks could be an important tool that contributes to inclusive and sustainable industrial development of the country.

The decline in garment and food industry which employs mostly female workers is, at least, partially related to the economic crisis affecting the region. This sector used to export a large share of its output to Russia and other neighbouring countries and compete with production of these countries' enterprises on domestic market. With RUR devaluation (see section 3.1) the Kyrgyz garments and foods (e.g. wheat flour) have lost their price competitiveness on both domestic and Russian markets with adverse implications for output and employment. These exogenous shocks overlap with persistent structural issues in the sector including lack of skilled labour, outdated technologies, lack of investments and economies of scale, high degree of informality (see section 3.7), dependence on imported inputs, issues in quality infrastructure. Food and agroprocessing industry has large potential for expansion and job creation; however, currently it is underdeveloped; just 7% of agricultural produce is processed inside the country (source: NSC for 2013, own calculations).

Despite of these medium term issues in manufacturing development, it remains one of the backbones of the economy and potential drivers of long-term economic development. This sector is one of the most demanding for skilled labor; its availability is critically important for the development of manufacturing.

Figure 6.9 The role of industry in the economy



Source: NSC

Currently, human capital becomes a key constraint for development; many studies refer to lack of skilled labor as a more serious issue in economic development than access to markets or access to finance. So, manufacturing development is closely linked to development of competitive education system (see section 4.1). One more important issue in manufacturing development

¹⁵⁸ The Kumtor gold mine (the largest enterprise of Kyrgyzstan) includes not only mining, but also processing facilities and is counted as part of metallurgy, not mining. That's why the share of mining looks small, and the share of manufacturing – so big. Kumtor provides for a half of industrial output in the country.

is its ability to meet existing technical requirements and standards which is an important pre-condition of being able to export the Kyrgyz manufactured products abroad. Quality infrastructure (standards, metrology, accreditation, testing labs, information and training systems etc.) is heavily underdeveloped. This issue is currently being addressed by the government with support of different international stakeholders, but it still remains much to accomplish especially on the private sector side. The Kyrgyz private sector should invest much into change in the technological processes, equipment, business practices and retraining of managers and personnel in strict abidance by existing technical requirements and standards.

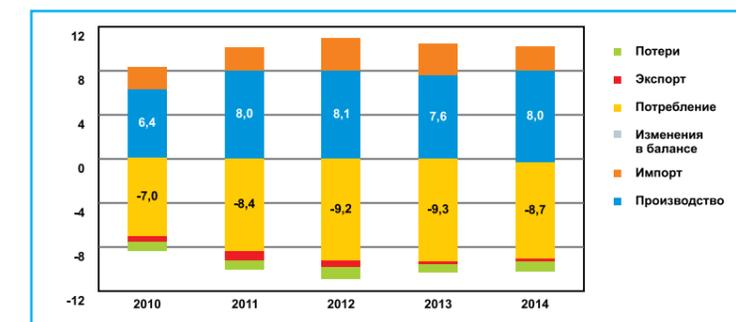
Building materials sector constitutes around 6 per cent of GDP. Activities of enterprises in the sector are mainly based on their own raw material resource base. In the previous period, there was a balance between the production of raw construction materials, including cement, bricks, stone casting and facing and local and regional demand. However, boom in the construction sector resulted that demand exceeds production levels, while other construction materials are imported. Since 2006, the building materials sector has experienced a certain degree of stabilization. Currently, the building materials sector of Kyrgyzstan faces several challenges in terms of inefficient management. Due to a lack of financing, the Government is unable to conduct periodic inspections and provide licensing services, leading to unsustainable use of resources and unavailability of reliable sources of construction materials. The local construction, manufacturing and, indirectly, agricultural sectors face the constraints of severe shortages of low-cost construction materials; lack of access to energy-efficient and environment-friendly material manufacturing technologies; shortage of adaptable technologies based on local resources of materials and manpower; unexploited potential for management of wastes/residues from agriculture and industry; lack of employment opportunities leading to poverty

Mining (except Kumtor) seems to play a limited role in terms of output and employment, but it is becoming a major contributor to the government budget. Mining is also an important employer in some remote areas of the country where the mines are located. Development of mining is impeded by unresolved issues between communities, government and mining companies. The communities in the mining areas are concerned about receiving their share of mining benefits as well as environmental implications of mining. These concerns very often make mining operations difficult or impossible. This diverts many potential investors from participation in mining projects in Kyrgyzstan. Government tries to steer relationships between companies and communities with mixed success. So, the communities, mining companies and the government do not get as much benefits out of plentiful mineral resources of the country as they could. The government is currently working on harmonization of stakeholders' interests in the mining sector towards creating conducive environment which would provide a fair share of benefits for communities and effective protection of investors' interests.

Energy system and its reliability is a critical component of infrastructure in Kyrgyzstan. The country's energy production, transmission and distribution capacity is stagnating and does not fully meet the needs of the economy (Figure 3.10). Kyrgyzstan has always been importing mineral fuels, but it used to be a net exporter of electricity; now it is a net importer. The losses in energy production and distribution are very significant and those shown on the figure may represent only a fraction of actual energy losses if one factors in consumers' wasteful habits. Energy sector of the economy faces numerous challenges related to heavy underinvestment into the sector in previous decades and the sector's mismanagement in the past. Improvements in the sector governance ensuring its operations' transparency and preventing misuse of the energy resources (especially hydropower and coal) are seen as a key for reforms in the sector. Only when the population sees some positive moves towards this transparency, it can accept another reform component which is badly needed – reform of energy tariffs which has been delayed for a very long time for political reasons but also because the government used to see the tariffs as a tool of its social protection policy. These tariffs are very low by international standards (e.g. for the population 1 kW-h costs just above USD0.01; tariffs for industrial and agricultural users are some 50% higher than those for the population) and do not provide any room for investments and

sustainable development of the sector. In 2014, the government adopted Medium-Term Tariff Policy for 2014-2017 which provides for a gradual increase in the tariff for the population to the level of slightly less than USD0.02 (at mid-2016 exchange rate) with proportional increases for other categories of users.

Figure 3.10 Energy balance of Kyrgyzstan



Source: NSC, own calculations

While tariffs are important, there are many other issues in the sector. Distribution networks are already outdated and worn out. Arguably, rehabilitation of the distribution systems and existing production facilities (Toktogul and other hydropower plants) are to be priority investment projects rather than mega investments into new generating capacity. Development of smaller hydropower plants could also be beneficial for longer-term sustainability of the energy system of the country.

Energy efficiency and introduction of energy-saving technologies and solutions is another important challenge. Low tariffs and lack of resources for investments deter enterprises' and population's switch to more energy-efficient production technologies and living styles. This also side-lines the use of other renewable energy sources (biogas, wind, solar, small hydropower etc.) which are abundant in Kyrgyzstan, but remain expensive options in comparison to the electricity produced at hydropower and coal energy plants. Partially, the spread of renewables may also be related to insufficient awareness of the population and businesses on the most cost-effective ways of using renewables; so advocacy efforts in this direction and implementation of demonstration projects may need to be continued and intensified.

There are gender-based differences in the benefits that may result from improvements in the energy sector. Due to power outages and insufficient supply, many women, especially in rural areas are not able to use home appliances and labour-saving devices, such as automatic (electric powered) washing machines, electric irons, vacuum cleaners and microwaves. Power interruptions and energy shortages at the household level increase the time burden on women and reduce time for educational pursuits, for income generating activities, for family and community activities and for leisure. Moreover, traditional fuels are more polluting, and because women are more likely to be home and tending such stoves for heating or cooking, they have more exposure to any harmful effects. However, energy projects do not usually focus, on women's needs or priorities, or roles, and thus little financing has been devoted to providing women with improved cooking options.¹⁵⁹

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Targets:

- 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- 7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
- 7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

¹⁵⁹ ADB, Country Gender Assessment, Kyrgyz Republic, July 2015

- 7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology
- 7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support

SDG9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Targets:

- 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
- 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
- 9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
- 9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities
- 9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending
- 9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
- 9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities

4 Social system in the Kyrgyz Republic



4.1 Education system

Education system of Kyrgyzstan includes pre-primary establishments, primary and secondary schools,¹⁶⁰ and institutions of initial, secondary and tertiary professional education. The constitution of the country guarantees basic secondary education (9 grades) for every citizen of the country and makes it compulsory. General (upper) secondary education is provided free of charge for everybody willing to receive it, but it is not mandatory. The education system includes 1.2 thousand pre-primary establishments, 2.2 thousand schools, more than 100 initial professional schools, 130 secondary professional education establishments and 52 universities (data for 2015, source: NSC). The number of students on all levels of education exceeds 1.5 million or 25% of the total population of the country. The country maintains close to universal access to primary and basic secondary education (see Figure 4.1a) although one would like to have much higher net enrolment rates, which are currently at the level of 90% for primary education and 80% for secondary education. The number of out-of-school children has fallen from 25 thousand in 2010 to 8 thousand in 2014 (source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics). Gross pre-primary enrolment rate is rather low at the level of about 25% (compare with 34% in 1990) and only 6% in rural areas; there is, however, some progress here in recent years as the rates in 2005 and 2010 were 13% and 19%, respectively. Pre-school education is free of charge (except private establishments), but it is not mandatory and not guaranteed to every child. Majority of children in the country is not involved in any type of early childhood educational program, and thus not being prepared for school, and facing limited of cognitive and social skills.¹⁶¹ Additionally, structures for children with physical and mental impairment seem to be insufficient and inadequate with a significant impact on the ability of mothers to work. As a result, the participation of women in the labour market is undermined with women unable to take a paid job and in several cases women with a good education leave their jobs to take care of their children.¹⁶² The Government is trying to re-establish pre-school services with multiple variants, part time, half days, hourly services, TV programmes for pre-schoolers and so on, but so far the number of places available is still highly insufficient compared to the demand.¹⁶³ The demand is partially satisfied by privately-run pre-school facilities which is, of course, a solution only for people from the upper part of income distribution.

Equal access to education is part of the strategic policy of Kyrgyzstan to achieve de facto gender equality. Despite the difficulties of the transition period and the economic crisis that had an impact also on Kyrgyzstan, the country has managed to preserve the achievements in the field of compulsory education. The enrolment rates for girls and boys are approximately equivalent at all levels from pre-primary to secondary. However, a 2015 review shows that enrolment in secondary education of girls in the period 2008-2012 decreased by 9.7% while enrolment of boys decreased by 7.3%.¹⁶⁴ Regrettably, official figures on number of girls and boys who fail to complete their schooling is unavailable because these statistics are not kept and after the ninth grade school is not mandatory.¹⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that there are considerably more female students at the university level than male ones, but as mentioned earlier this does not always translate in better paid jobs.

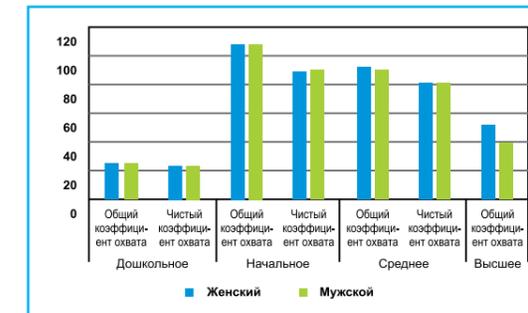
Enrolment rates in urban areas (especially, in Bishkek and Osh) are always higher than in rural areas; this is another side of the same issue of regional inequality in, perhaps, the most important and sensitive area of social life. It would be important to further investigate discrepancies on dropouts with in depth studies and also keep gender statistics of school dropouts also after the 9th grade and collect information on roots and underlining causes for discontinuing education for both boys and girls. Despite financial strains, in 2006, the Government reintroduced school meals with the establishment of national school meals programme for primary school children in grades 1-4 and has allocated 475 million KGS from state budget annually. There are evidences

160 Very often, the same school serves all students in the area from grade 1 to grade 11 (the last grade).
 161 FAO, Gender Equality in Rural Kyrgyzstan, 2016, p. 19
 162 Meeting with CSO on 17 may 2016, UN House. Asian Development Bank – Gender Analysis, summary
 163 Meeting with Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Bishkek 16 June 2016.
 164 National review, p.15
 165 Ibid, p.14

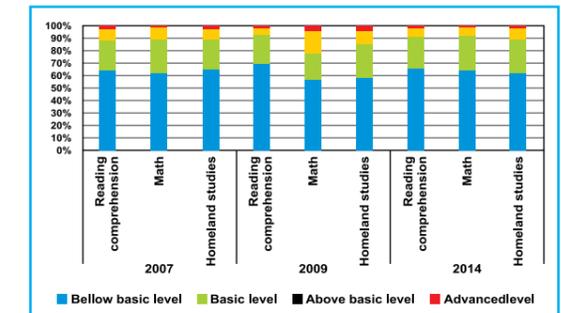
that suggest that this programme significantly contributed to children's attendance and retention especially those children from vulnerable backgrounds.

Figure 4.1 Education indicators

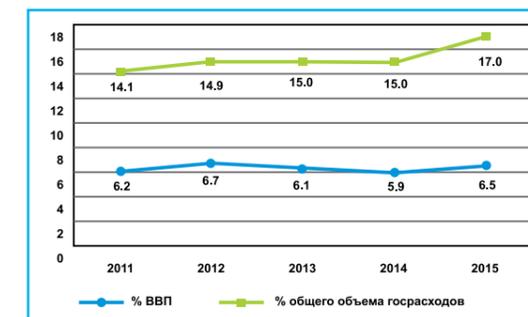
a) Enrolment ratios, 2014



b) Quality of education – Results of NSBA 2014



c) Government expenditure on education



Source: NSC, UNESCO Institute of Statistics, CT MoF, own calculations

Gender segregation in subjects in both technical and vocational education training (TVET) is significant and has an influence on the career prospect of both boys and girls and facilitates the horizontal segregation in the job market. Girls who continue their education are normally encouraged to pursue specialisation in low-paid sectors. Female students are concentrated in such fields of study as education, health care, services, dressmaking, and handicrafts. One of the objectives of the Government's 2012–2014 National Action Plan for Gender Equality was to reduce gender imbalances in the labour market by diversifying the types of jobs undertaken by women and men. This has not been achieved yet and one of the reasons is linked to the lack of a corresponding budget to fully implement these programmes.

This sectorial segregation will have an ultimate impact on their ability to enter in the job market and on their economic situation, but not only. Women economic empowerment can also have a significant impact on reducing women's vulnerability to violence.

The country invested much into development of modern system of testing and quality assessment in education. Kyrgyzstan established reputed nation-wide test which serves as an entry exam for all universities in the country. The test is administered independently from educational establishments and, apart from serving its direct purpose of university enrolment, it provides a snapshot of the situation with the quality of education. There are also some other education quality diagnostic tools in the country. Availability of these tools allow identifying, perhaps, the main issue in development of the education system – the low quality of education. All national and international education quality assessment exercises conducted during last 10-15 years indicate on very low and demonstrating no improvement quality of education.

One of the latest surveys of this kind—National Sample-Based Assessment for 4-graders—was conducted in 2014 (see Figure 4.1b); it tested knowledge and skills of schoolchildren in three key subjects: reading comprehension in national language, math, and homeland studies. According to this survey data, more than 60% of students performed below basic level, and only about 10% of students demonstrated performance above basic level. Comparison of results of this survey in 2007 and 2014 provide no evidence of any improvement in the education quality. The study also provides evidence of significant inequality in education performance: girls are doing much better than boys, children attending school in Bishkek outperform schoolchildren from rural areas, students from schools with Russian language of instruction have better results than students who attend schools with Kyrgyz or Uzbek instruction language. Performance in math is especially poor. The proportion and structure of underachievers in this study is similar to that provided by other quality assessment exercises (e.g. PISA 2006 and 2009 for 9-graders or the nation-wide test). Low quality of general education leaves children and young people unprepared for effective functioning in modern society and globalized world. This is a very serious challenge for the country's long-term development and, without any exaggeration, if it is not effectively addressed in the nearest future, this may undermine all other government's and society's efforts in the areas of governance, economic and social development.

Improvement in education quality requires a coordinated effort on the side of the government and society. It should include professional advancement of teachers and establishing for them quality-oriented compensation systems, development of updated curricula, textbooks etc. Government does try to address the challenges for education system; it adopted the Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020. The level of government spending on education is relatively high (Figure 4.1c). The government regularly spends 6-7% of GDP on education (higher than many countries in the region while far below the OECD countries' levels) which constitutes up to one-sixth of total GG expenditure and makes education the second large spending sector after social protection and social insurance. At the same time, this is not big money in absolute terms; Kyrgyzstan spends in per student terms much less than its neighbours Kazakhstan or Russia. This means that the main focus in education financing needs to be on efficiency assessed first and foremost from the education quality (rather than coverage) point of view.

State education in Kyrgyzstan is secular and is based on a uniform curriculum for both girls and boys. Progress has been made in terms of renewing the curriculum, but some gender stereotypes remain in schoolbooks.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of private schools based on religious teaching, reportedly every village has one, but not every village has a secular school.¹⁶⁷ Information on female madrassa is not available on the web, but clearly development of religious schools without the necessary secular education may contribute to perpetuate and reinforce gender discrimination and support men and women's fundamentalism. Regrettably, this does not seem to be a remote possibility as reports already highlighted the participation of both men and women in radical movements and women's departure to Syria to join ISIS.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Targets:

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

¹⁶⁶ National review.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with a gender expert and a MP, Bishkek 18 June 2016

- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1 end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.b enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment
- 5.c adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

4.2 Health care system

Health care system in Kyrgyzstan underwent very deep reforms in 1990s-2000s which affected the principles of health care organization and financing, introduced mandatory health insurance for the population and Fund for Compulsory Medical Insurance as a single payer for health services on the side of the government, implied prioritization of primary health care and concentration of resources on treatment of the most dangerous diseases. Reforms in the sector are consistently implemented through a series of government programmes: Manas (1996-2005), Manas Taalimi (2006-2010), and Den-Sooluk (2012-2016). The government has also adopted the "Health-2020" strategy in 2014. These programmes are supported by different international development organizations. Recently, however, the pace of reforms has slowed down; few reform targets of Den-Sooluk will not be achieved by the end of 2016. The programme may need to be extended for few years. Health of the population is to become a business of all government agencies and not only the Ministry of Health and Mandatory Health Insurance Fund.

Long-term approach, consistent and coordinated effort in development and implementation health care policy coupled with general improvement in living conditions of the population resulted in gradual improvements in health status of the population (Figure 4.2). During the period 2011-2015, life expectancy at birth increased by more than one year for both women and men with remaining 8 years gap between women and men. Infant mortality rate fell below 20 case per 1,000 live births; this allowed Kyrgyzstan to successfully achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4. Tuberculosis (TB) mortality rate fell below 10 per 100,000 population in 2014 (to be compared with more than 20 in 2000), so there is clear progress towards some targets of MDG6.

However, there are many health areas that continue to be a matter of concern. MDG 6 (HIV/AIDS) was not reached, though many efforts were taken by various actors. Maternal mortality remains one of the key development problems, for which the government was not able to meet



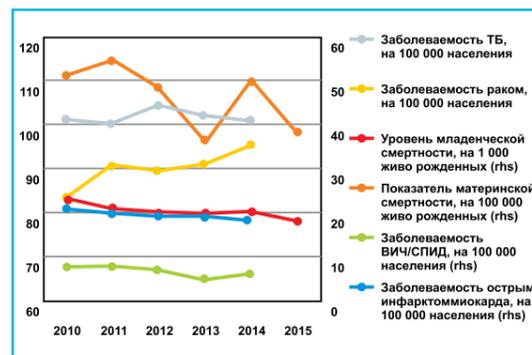
the millennium development goals (MDG 5)¹⁶⁸

Figure 4.2 Health care system indicators

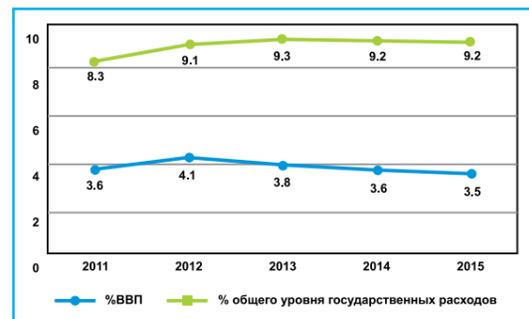
a) Life expectancy at birth by sex, years



b) Key mortality and incidence indicators



c) Government expenditure on health care



Source: NSC, own calculations

The majority of deaths were observed in regions with internal and external migrants who were not registered and thus not provided with the necessary support because of the lack of the so called "propiska" (resident registration). The majority of deaths are to be imputed to post partum haemorrhage (PPH), around 34,5% and sepsis, 15,5%.¹⁶⁹ There are plethora of problems that caused this situation: serious lack of adequate and accessible health facilities and medical equipment available to every pregnant woman to ensure a healthy pregnancy and identification of problems at an early stage twinned with important issues of accountability of medical personnel and social economic factors. Lack of available varied nutritious food (including micronutrient deficiencies) deriving from scarce financial means, but also low-level reproductive and nutrition knowledge and insufficient access to family-planning services are among the underlying factors for pregnancy problems. Prevention seems to be insufficient although a government Strategy on safe motherhood, reproductive health, combating HIV/AIDS, prevention of violence was adopted for the period 2006-2015 and efforts were made to implement it. Additionally, a Joint Order of the Ministry of Health and Government Order of 2013 that enabled pregnant women (together with other vulnerable categories) to be all registered with the medical facilities, regardless of their residence (propiska)¹⁷⁰ is poorly implemented. Medical personnel are afraid patients would disappear and if complications arise they may be held responsible.¹⁷¹

A holistic approach to development, which encompasses men and women's overall education on health and nutrition knowledge¹⁷², sustained by women's economic empowerment could substantially help to improve maternal nutrition and reduce maternal mortality and cancer related deaths.

¹⁶⁸ Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, CSOs and UN Agencies.

¹⁶⁹ According to the National Health Information Centre (NHIC)

¹⁷⁰ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p.22

¹⁷¹ Meeting Ombudsman Office, Bishkek 15-06-2016

¹⁷² It is important to note that specific education on nutrition and health issues should be given to pregnant women to empower them and have control and opinions over their own body.

As mentioned in this report, there is a sharp increase in early motherhood with 4.4 children born every 1,000 women in 2006 against 7.4 children born every 1000 women in 2014, in the mother' age group 15-17.¹⁷³ Reproductive rights of women and spacing of pregnancies appear to be serious issues especially among the rural population and younger women with important repercussions on the health of women and their own children and in perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Although UN Agencies have extensively promoted women's reproductive rights and the use of contraceptives, there seem to be an increased pressure for women to have children and be confined in the domestic walls. In 2017 the Ministry of Health budget for the provision of free contraception will come to an end and this may have an important impact on a further increase of unwanted pregnancies, but it will also increase the risk for HIV/AIDS infections etc.

Non-communicable diseases are pressing problem for the country: the women mortality of cancer is rather high with 67.7% in the age group 15-19 and for 72,95% of women in the age group 20-39. The most common forms of cancer among women are breast cancer, which is the second highest cause of mortality, whereas cervical cancer is the fourth most widespread form of cancer.¹⁷⁴ Underlying factors for high cancer mortality lie on lack of early diagnosis and prevention, unavailability of qualified medical staff, unsuitable facilities and equipment and negligence from both sides, patients and medical staff.

TB, HIV/AIDS and acute myocardial infarction incidence rates either stagnate, or decline very slowly; cancer incidence rate is on the rise. Viral hepatitis incidence rate peaked in 2012 (almost 400 per 100,000 population), but then fell back to the level 206/100,000 population in 2014. In general, non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular, cancer, diabetes etc.) have now become a priority together with TB, HIV/AIDS (especially sexually transmitted) and some other communicable diseases. Large part of the problem related to HIV/AIDS is insufficient awareness of youth about HIV; only 20% of women aged 15-24 have comprehensive knowledge about HIV (source: UNICEF). Contraceptive use prevalence rate has declined from 60% in 1997 to 36% in 2012 (source: WDI). It is necessary to implement government programmes in the areas of tobacco and harmful use of alcohol control, diabetes, tuberculosis service optimization, immunization, HIV/AIDS, mental health. According to WHO data, alcohol consumption is on decline with consumption levels well below regional average, while tobacco smoking is widespread with more than quarter of total population (and half of adult men) smoking every day.

These issues need urgent attention from the side of the Government to ensure that the SDGs 3 and target on 3.1 on maternal mortality, 3.7 on access to reproductive services and 3.8 on universal health coverage are achieved.

Food, diet and nutritional status are an important determination of non-communicable diseases. Preventive activities for healthy nutrition are poorly organized, and public awareness about nutrition is low. Health facilities at the primary level only provide a minimum package of services for nutrition: nutrition status assessment, counselling on changes in diet (mainly for patients with cardiovascular diseases or diabetes), and treatment of a lack of micronutrients (iodine, iron) for children and pregnant women (WHO NCD Country Assessment, 2014).

Kyrgyzstan actively participates in the implementation of the International Health Regulations aiming at preventing and responding to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide. Regular emergency response exercises are conducted by the Ministry of Emergency Situations aimed at testing available algorithms for information sharing, roles and responsibilities of individual national sectors. Comprehensive laboratory service is available at the local level. National points of entry, playing an important role, of the border of Eurasian Economic Union are currently being reconstructed and equipped with financial and technical support of the Russian Federation. Inter-sectoral collaboration agreements between national sectors present at the points of entry (border services, customs, veterinary) have been signed.

¹⁷³ Doklad Ombudsmena, p. 304 and NSC data collection, 2015

¹⁷⁴ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p.23



The government consistently provides a significant share of its resources for health care system. In 2012-2015, it spent on health programmes from 3.5 to 4% of GDP or between 9.1 and 9.3% of total general government expenditure (Figure 4.2c). In GDP percentage terms, public health expenditures in Kyrgyzstan are higher than in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries and are at the same level as in Belarus and Russian Federation (source: WHO's Health for All database). However, as in the case of education, the absolute level of this expenditure per capita is very low. Also, health budget is still too much dependent on foreign aid; a clear strategy to reduce this dependence without undermining any of the key spending programmes is to be developed.

There still remain significant barriers in access to health services for vulnerable groups; refugees and stateless persons are almost completely deprived of access to health services, as they must pay for medical treatment rates established for foreign nationals that are unaffordable for them. The health system is affected by outflow of skilled health personnel not only from rural and remote areas of the country, but even from cities who migrate to Kazakhstan, Russia and other countries driven by the differential in pay for health workers. There is insufficient inflow of young health professionals into the sector, especially outside big cities. Poor conditions of health care facilities (e.g. lack of heating in winter) divert many people from using them. The health services continue to be costly for patients. Patients' out-of-pocket payments include not only official co-payments for services which are not high, but very significant expenditures on medicines and, often, informal payments to health personnel. Some regulatory actions are needed to contain the growth of out-of-pocket expenditures as well as inappropriate access rules to and use of antibiotics which are associated with high risks of antibiotic resistance. The status of being insured does not prevent people from facing a very significant hike in out-of-pocket spending in case of serious health issues (e.g. operation). The access issues are especially sensitive in remote and rural areas of the country where patients need to travel long distances to access facilities with available skilled personnel, equipment, supply of medicines and reliable energy supply.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Targets:

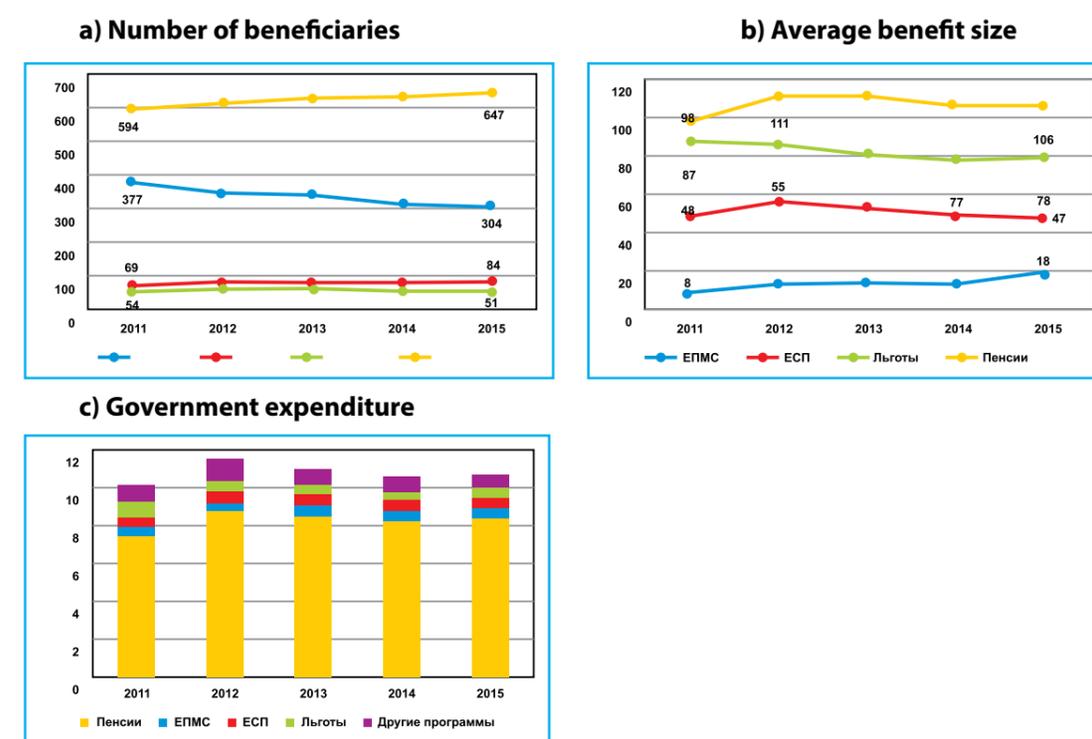
- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- 3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
- 3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate

- 3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States
- 3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

4.3 Social protection system

Kyrgyzstan has a social protection and social insurance system with large number of beneficiaries which consumes a substantial part of the government budget (Figure 4.3). Its key components include pensions,¹⁷⁵ monthly benefit for poor families with children (MBPF), monthly social benefit (MSB),¹⁷⁶ privileges for selected groups of the population.¹⁷⁷ There are also many small programmes funded from both central and local budgets. Total number of beneficiaries of all programmes is close to 20% of total population of the country.

Figure 4.3 Key social protection and social insurance programmes



Source: NSC, Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoLSD), CT MoF, own calculations

Pension programme is the largest in terms of the number beneficiaries and government expenditure. More than 10% of the population are pensioners; among people of retirement age, more than 90% receive pensions. The near universal pension coverage is a part of Soviet heritage; it is untypical for countries at Kyrgyzstan's current level of GDP per capita. Pensions serve as a major mechanism preventing elderly from slipping into poverty; studies consistently show that

¹⁷⁵ There are three types of pensions in Kyrgyzstan: old age pensions, disability pensions, and survivor pensions. Retirement age is 58 for women and 63 for men; legislation also provides some early retirement options.

¹⁷⁶ This is a benefit for people with disabilities who is not eligible for disability pensions (e.g. children with disabilities) and some other categories of the population.

¹⁷⁷ Eligible groups include veterans of the World War II, people with sight and hearing disabilities etc. Altogether, there are 25 different categories of privileges' beneficiaries. Initially, these privileges were provided in-kind (e.g. annual treatment at resorts and spas, free long-haul travel by rail). However, now majority of these privileges is monetized, i.e. people receive monetary compensations instead of in-kind privileges.

availability of pensioner(s) in a household reduces the household's risk to be poor. Still, pensions are not high; the average pension size has just recently exceeded the minimum consumption budget – official threshold established by the government. Replacement rate (ratio of average pension to average wage) stays below 40%, which is not much by international standards. The pension programme is very expensive; pension payments exceed 8% of GDP. The sustainability of pension system is under big question. The risks to the sustainability come not from demographic situation (as in many developed countries), but from informality and labour migration abroad (see sections 3.5 and 3.8) both resulting in non-participation in the pension system. Majority of current workers either do not contribute to the pension system, or make just symbolic contributions, so that the system becomes increasingly reliant on funding by general taxes. At the same time, formal enterprises pay high contributions to the Social Fund with overall rate of 27.25% of payroll of which 25 percentage points go to the pension fund. This is a substantial burden and a big disadvantage of formal enterprises in comparison to informal ones. The pension system of Kyrgyzstan is in bad need for reforms, which should be implemented gradually in order to ensure the system's financial sustainability, remove burden from formal enterprises, but avoid any risks for incomes of current pensioners.

Although significant amount of GDP is spent on the social sphere, social assistance schemes directly addressing poverty are limited in terms of both coverage and value. The fragmentation of social assistance schemes is another challenge for the Government. Further attention is also required for introduction of more conditional social protection transfers in order to reduce chronic poverty and food insecurity. (Public Expenditure Review (2014), World Bank).

MBPF is the only social protection programme explicitly targeted at poor. It is assessed by experts as being reasonably targeted (not too many inclusion and exclusion errors) and inexpensive from administration point of view. In the last several years the government worked on increase of the benefit size and managed to bring it from 8% to 18% of minimum consumption budget for children. Still, the absolute amount of the benefit is small. Due to fiscal constraints, the increase in benefit size was accompanied by reduction in the number of the beneficiaries. By the features of its design, MBPF is a programme for rural households only. Urban poor families are effectively left out of this government's social protection programme. Taking into account the rise in urban poverty (see section 3.2), this calls for either major revision of MBPF, or introduction of another programme for urban poor. MSB and privileges are not targeted at poor. These programmes are more generous than MBPF, so they consume a very considerable part of the government budget without providing comparable social effect in terms of poverty reduction. Taking this into account, the government froze these benefits in nominal terms in 2012-2013 which resulted in their gradual reduction in real terms.

The government is now prioritizing development of social services for different vulnerable categories of the population (families with children, children without parental care, children and adults with disabilities, elderly, refugees, stateless persons etc.), which would complement existing interventions such as the government run school meals programme regarded as an effective social protection measure. These services together with productive measures of social protection are currently underdeveloped; a lot of work and resources are necessary to train the necessary personnel, develop the services' standards, costing methodologies etc.

Social protection and social insurance is an area of joint activity of MoLSD, the Social Fund and local self-governments; some other agencies are also in charge of social-protection-related functions. There are some policy and implementation inconsistencies between different agencies, and streamlining of institutional mandates and more coordination among them is needed. In general, the country is facing a challenge of creating an integrated social protection system to provide consistent, effective and efficient income support and social services for the most needy.



Relevant SDGs:

SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Targets:

- 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets:

- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate



5 Environment and climate change

CHAPTER V



5.1 Environmental protection

Kyrgyzstan is generally characterized by mountainous, arid and semi arid climatic conditions, low forest cover and low productivity, water stress and scarcity, limited arable land, greater pastures, very high rural population and unstable socio- economic conditions. Only 30% of the territory of the country of 198,000 km² is habitual and 70% are high mountains. The main mountains, Pamir- Altay and Tian Shan (with the region's highest point – Pobeda Peak of 7439m) are still young and seismically very active¹⁷⁸. This seismic activity and the 7000 meters difference in high and low altitudes are among the main reasons of frequent natural disasters, the larger share of which happen in Southern Kyrgyzstan¹⁷⁹. On the other hand, high-mountain relief of Kyrgyzstan, located in the southern part of the temperate zone, creates favourable conditions for the existence of all major types of natural ecosystems, from desert and ending with alpine tundra.

The territory of Kyrgyzstan is characterized by high degree of biodiversity concentration not only on the ecosystem, but also at the species level¹⁸⁰. Land management is associated with degradation; the soil erosion and salinization in improperly irrigated farmland are evident. An estimated 60% of Kyrgyzstan's land is affected by topsoil loss, and 6% by salinization, both problems with more serious long-term than short-term effects. In 1994 the size of livestock herds averaged twice the carrying capacity of pasturage land, continuing the serious overgrazing problem and consequent soil erosion that began when the herds were at their peak in the late 1980s. Uncertain land tenure and overall financial insecurity have caused many private farmers to concentrate their capital in the traditional form—livestock—thus subjecting new land to the overgrazing problem.

The country is faced with plethora of problems in the area of environmental sustainability and protection. The exploitation of natural resources during the past 50 years has done severe damage to the ecosystems (forests pastures and arable lands). The rural poor population in Kyrgyzstan is highly dependent on natural resources, especially on land (pasture, agriculture) and water (irrigation and drinking) for their livelihood and is amongst the most affected by environmental degradation. It is estimated that some level of land degradation currently affects approximately 97.6% of arable land in the country. The remaining mountain forests are sparse and overgrazed, giving rise to an increased area of mountain deserts. Climate change and more frequent natural disasters worsen the situation.

Management of industrial waste is an issue in Kyrgyzstan. Some 92 mining sites that contain 250 million cubic meters of toxic and radioactive waste are located in Kyrgyzstan. The chronic exposure of people to highly toxic and/or carcinogenic heavy metals and other persistent pollutants results in long term health effects. There are 27 settlements in Kyrgyzstan where close to 100,000 people are in regular contact with persistent and highly toxic pollutants, primarily heavy metals such as uranium, lead, arsenic, cadmium, and mercury. In such settlements special project must be designed and implemented in order to provide long term solution. Presently the national and local governments lack funds and expertise to carry on such projects and need assistance. In addition, household waste management does not comply with sanitary and environmental requirements, as there is no adequate waste utilization¹⁸¹. Pollution of water, land and air from and poorly managed solid waste and sewage disposal has led to contamination of land and water resources.

Policy framework for environmental protection

The key environmental policy document is the Concept of Environmental Security for 2007–2020 (CES). This Strategy identifies key global, regional, and national environment issues and defines environmental priorities. These are: socioeconomic development considering potential

178 Stepanenko, I. (1997) Природно-климатические условия Кыргызстана, ЦАИК

179 Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES)

180 Forth National Biodiversity Report, Bishkek, 2008.

181 For example, Bishkek municipal landfill designed for 3.3 million cubic meters presently contains 24 million cubic meters of household waste

capacity of ecosystems, which constituted the first phase (2007–2010); pollution abatement, conservation, and restoration of natural environment, which constitutes the second phase (2010–2015); and the third phase (2015–2020) with focus on achievement and maintenance of results in the environmental protection.

Following the adoption of the CES, the Package of Measures to Ensure Environmental Security of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2011–2015 (PM EES) was prepared as plan for the second phase of CES implementation. It describes the government's priority areas such as improving environmental legislation, addressing climate change, conserving biodiversity, controlling air and water pollution, protecting forests, managing solid waste, reducing disaster risk, strengthening capacity for environmental monitoring and raising public awareness of environmental issues. Preparation of the third phase (2015–2020) is primarily focused on improving quality of the environment and achieving sustainable nature management.

UN undertook the second Environmental Performance Review of Kyrgyzstan, reflecting on 8 areas and measuring the progress made by the country in the management of its environment. This and expected new performance review should be the main tool to measure the progress of Kyrgyzstan in the area of environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources.

Natural disasters (mainly landslides) caused by slow on-set climate change affect migration dynamics to an important degree. Many people, living in areas to environmental disasters, face a dilemma on the one hand, residing in a place where they live under constant threats of destructive natural disasters, and on the other hand relocating to a place where they face "certain uncertainties" in terms of livelihood. Some migration-impacting phenomena occurring in Kyrgyzstan, such as landslides, may be "sudden" in their effects, but long-term in their causes. They are also "natural" in the sense that they do happen independently of human activity, but anthropogenic in the sense that human factors, such as overgrazing or irrational land use, significantly contribute to increase their frequency and intensity¹⁸².

Within the framework of the National Policy (NPD) Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), launched in 2008, progress was made in such areas as development of a national financing strategy for urban and rural water supply and sanitation, reform options for economic instruments for WRM, management of transboundary Chu river basin, application of modern water-saving irrigation technologies and setting the targets on water and health¹⁸³.

National institutions for environmental protection

The main environmental protection agency of the Kyrgyz government is the State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF) under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Unclear lines of responsibility between local and national authorities- SAEPF, result in overlap and conflicting functions. In addition, there are overlaps of functions between SAEPF and the second national agency, the Hydrometeorological Administration, which is the main monitoring agency for air, water, and soil quality.

Relevant SDGs

SDG 2 End hunger achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.3 by 2030 double the agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers, particularly women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

182 Chandonnet, A., Mamadalieva, Z., Orolbaeva, L., Sagyndykova, L., Tursunaliev, U., & Umetbaeva, D. (2016). Environment, climate change and migration in the Kyrgyz Republic. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: IOM.

183 <http://www.unece.org/env/water/npd/countrydialogues/kg.html>

- 2.4 by 2030 ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality

SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.a undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws

SDG 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

- 15.1 by 2020 ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
- 15.2 by 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and increase afforestation and reforestation by x% globally
- 15.3 by 2020, combat desertification, and restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world
- 15.b mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management, and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance sustainable forest management, including for conservation and reforestation
- 15.4 by 2030 ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, to enhance their capacity to provide benefits which are essential for sustainable development
- 15.5 take urgent and significant action to reduce degradation of natural habitat, halt the loss of biodiversity, and by 2020 protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species
- 15.6 ensure fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, and promote appropriate access to genetic resources
- 15.7 take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna, and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products
- 15.8 by 2020 introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems, and control or eradicate the priority species
- 15.9 by 2020, integrate ecosystems and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes and poverty reduction strategies, and accounts
- 15.a mobilize and significantly increase from all sources financial resources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems
- 15.b mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management, and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance sustainable forest management, including for conservation and reforestation



- 15.c enhance global support to efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.6 by 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management

5.2 Water supply and sanitation in the Kyrgyz Republic

The country has abundant water running through it, but its water supply system is weak. This is due to number of factors. The existing post-Soviet sharing agreements among the five Central Asian republics regulate access to water resources on the regional level. Management of water resources is rather inefficient: most significant part of utilized water resources goes for agricultural irrigation. However, the irrigation system is extremely wasteful of water because the distribution infrastructure is old and poorly maintained. Water resources are also used for hydropower generation that causes water distribution regime issues (i.e. higher demands on energy in winter period). . Distribution efficiency is estimated at 55 per cent, mainly due to the considerable seepage and leakage losses, The deterioration of higher-order irrigation systems, coupled with a shortage of finance and professional capabilities to adequately address the challenges and develop a new irrigation system, increasingly harmed the agricultural sector.

Most water supply and sanitation (WSS) infrastructure in the Kyrgyz Republic was built 40 to 50 years ago and it deteriorating. Specifically, it is estimated that over 70% of the nation's water supply network is in need of repair or replacement, being exposed to different external influences. The key issues are i) low water supply coverage of 60%–90% in cities and 50%–60% in rural areas; ii) non-potable water, with 2% of chemical and 10% of microbiological tests failing; iii) reduced hours of supply, with many cities providing water only 4–20 hours a day; iv) high water losses estimated to be at least 45% of supply; and v) low sewerage coverage of less than 50% in cities, and less than 25% in rural areas.¹⁸⁴

The quality of drinking water from this aging system is poorly monitored and often not sufficient and reported below the standards¹⁸⁵.The current management practice of the WSS is inefficient and ineffective. Specifically, the WSS services are poorly delivered due to (i) a financing gap, (ii) asset deterioration, (iii) ineffective organization of service provision, and (iv) weak sector governance¹⁸⁶. Still, some of the recent reports highlighted¹⁸⁷ that the Kyrgyz Republic has an adequate supply of high-quality water for future use if these resources are competently and efficiently managed.

Women in the Kyrgyz Republic spend approximately 68% of their time on housework, which includes fetching and treating water, tasks they are more likely than men to do¹⁸⁸. They therefore particularly benefit from WSS interventions. They are also more likely to deal with the health impacts on family members of substandard or nonexistent WSS services because caring for children, the elderly, and sick family members is usually their responsibility. Because they are the main users of water in the country's households, it is essential that their concerns be addressed and their views on WSS operations noted. Consumer groups should be established for this purpose, with women as active participants¹⁸⁹.

184 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-kgz-2013-2017-ssa-04.pdf>

185 Ombudsman's report on human rights and freedoms in 2015, cited from http://24.kg/obschestvo/32085_v_nekotoryih_regionah_kyrgyzystana_kachestvo_pitevoy_vodyi_ne_sootvetstvet_standartam/

186 Asian Development Bank "Sector assessment: Water supply and other municipal infrastructure and services"

187 Implementation Completion and results report (IDA-H2120 TF-56324) on a grant in the amount of SDR 13.2 million (US\$ 19.0 million equivalent) to the Kyrgyz Republic for a Water Management Improvement Project, 2014

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/06/30/000442464_20140630111201/Rendered/PDF/ICR29660P088670C0disclosed060260140.pdf

188 National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. 2011. Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2006–2010. Bishkek.

189 Country Partnership Strategy: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013–2017- GENDER ANALYSIS

In towns, wastewater collection provides about 70% of the water supply. The biological treatment equipment exists in bigger towns but it is estimated that 50% of such equipment is ineffective.

Pollution of water, land and air from and poorly managed solid waste and sewage disposal has led to contamination of land and water resources. In 2010 out of 6921,4 thousand tons of waste, 83% were reported as dangerous, and 73% of all waste is simply been dumped without any processing, most of the dangerous waste is collected at Issyk-Kul region i.e. in close proximity to water bodies (91,83%)¹⁹⁰. These could have negative impact on the livelihoods and the economy, and decrease developmental outcomes. High risks are associated with radioactive (tailings) and toxic waste dumping sites; this could have impact on trans-boundary relations and rise of tensions due to pollution.

The improvement of infrastructure concerning water supply and sanitation has also important implications on improving maternal mortality and address poor health outcomes. Therefore it is recommended that programmes find synergies to ensure that different SDGs targets are achieved.

However, the fundamental challenge for the future of the WSS is to carry out substantive reform of the management and governance of the WSS sector, with the focus to address and resolve technical, financial, and organizational problems. The estimate of the investment needed over 20 years to achieve and maintain the SDG 6 is nearly one billion USD¹⁹¹. As indicated in the ADB report, "the main strength in the sector is the legacy of engineering methods left over from the pre-independence period, including disaster management standards that are still applicable"; however, these methods require modernization. Economical opportunities exist to improve services from current low levels. The main risk is that customers and politicians will not support financial reforms¹⁹².

There is an ongoing disagreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on water distribution rights in these border areas. There are externally-mediated programs on water management and transboundary cooperation that are being implemented; however, further cooperation is needed to solve the issue and challenges. Such cooperation is imperative, especially given the growing need to prepare for a changing climate, and the attendant increases in water stress that are likely to result.

The two states also share a common ground on regional water-energy issues, as both are located upstream of the major river basins in the region. The main flow of the Aral Sea Basin is formed on the territories of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and flow downstream to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This creates the possibility of additional interstate water disputes, and enhances incentives for regional and international actors to encourage the development of cooperative solutions.

Department for Water Resources and Land Reclamation at the Kyrgyz Ministry for Agriculture and Land Reclamation is a governmental body, which ensures management, monitoring, and regulation of water resources and their use and irrigation and drainage infrastructure; performs executive and coordinating functions for implementation of the common public water policy.

Water resources management also significantly impacts migration of the population. Many rural residents claim that their access to safe and sufficient water for consumption and agriculture was a major problem affecting their livelihood, income and overall quality of life. The loss of water resources due to poor infrastructure amounts to more than 50 per cent in some oblasts. On top of that, climate change, causing glaciers to melt, is expected to dramatically increase the "water stress" in Kyrgyzstan in the future, even though the timeline remains a disputed topic among specialists. What is almost certain, however, is that in upcoming decades, the impact of water

190 <http://nature.gov.kg/index.php/environment/othody.html>

191 Asian Development Bank "Sector assessment: Water supply and other municipal infrastructure and services" and the World Bank snapshot

192 *ibidem*- Asian Development Bank

related problems on people's livelihood will most likely increase, potentially causing forced migration out of affected areas¹⁹³.

Relevant SDGs

SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.1 by 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 6.2 by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- 6.3 by 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater, and increasing recycling and safe reuse by x% globally
- 6.4 by 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity, and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- 6.5 by 2030 implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- 6.6 by 2020 protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- 6.a by 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water and sanitation related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- 6.b support and strengthen the participation of local communities for improving water and sanitation management

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.1 by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums
- 11.6 by 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management

SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

- 12.3 by 2030 halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains including post-harvest losses
- 12.4 by 2020 achieve environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle in accordance with agreed international frameworks and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment
- 12.5 by 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse

SDG 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

¹⁹³ Recommendations. (2016). In Environment, climate change and migration in the Kyrgyz Republic (pp. 100-101). Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: IOM.

- 15.1 by 2020 ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
- 15.8 by 2020 introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems, and control or eradicate the priority species

5.3 Climate change and resilience

The country's climate is influenced chiefly by the geo-morphology (mountains) and the geographical position: those factors create a distinctly continental climate that has significant local variations. The country is generally sunny, receiving as much as 2,900 hours of sunlight per year in some areas. The same conditions also affect temperatures, which can vary significantly from place to place. Particularly most affected are mountain areas with severe implications to water and food security, ecosystem, DRR and other areas¹⁹⁴.

Climate change is the greatest challenge and the most universal objective for the humanity. This global problem requires the immediate consistent actions by the world community. The Kyrgyz Republic belongs to the most vulnerable countries to climate change and recognized it as one of the national priorities; this is reflected in the «National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017» and the «Program of the Kyrgyz Republic on Transition to Sustainable Development for 2013-2017.»

Actions for adaptation to climate change are developed and included in the «Priorities for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Kyrgyz Republic till 2017». The Kyrgyz Republic has developed the sectorial plans and programs for adaptation in all vulnerable sectors.

The Climate Change Coordination Commission (CCCC), headed by the First Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, coordinates all the activities in the Kyrgyz Republic related to climate change. The CCCC is composed of all heads of key ministries and divisions, representatives of the civil, academic and business sectors.

Over the period from 1885 to 2010, temperature in the Kyrgyz Republic has really increased significantly. Moreover, the change rate is not linear, and has also increased significantly in recent decades. The growth rate of the mean annual temperature in the republic was 0.0104oC /year during the entire observation period; however, over the past 50 years (from 1960 to 2010), it has increased more than two-fold and was 0.0248° C/ year, and in the last 20 years (1990 - 2010) was already 0.0701oC / year¹⁹⁵. The total annual precipitation in the republic over the entire period of observation was slightly increasing (0.847 mm/year); however, in the last 50 years, it has decreased significantly (0.363 mm/year), while in the last 20 years, there is even a slight tendency to decrease (-1.868 mm/year). The duration of the heating period in 1991 - 2010 compared to the baseline period (1961 - 1999) at altitudes up to 1,000 m decreased by 9 days, from 152.7 to 143.5 days¹⁹⁶.

Analysis of the expected changes shows that in a scenario with the current trends, temperature may increase by more than 4° C by 2100 in all regions. It is interesting to note that according to the global climate models, the expected temperature change will presumably be the same for all months, in contrast to the observed trends. The duration of the heating period will also significantly reduce – by 16% by 2050 and by more than 30% by 2080¹⁹⁷.

It is expected that the annual precipitation will decrease in the future, but at a low rate (-0.0677 mm/year), which will fall by approximately 6 mm compared to the current level in 2100. In addition, some volatility in precipitation over time is expected, in contrast to the monotonically changing temperature.

¹⁹⁴ Climate Change Adaptation Outlook for Central Asia, UNEP, 2016

¹⁹⁵ Climate profile of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNDP, 2013

¹⁹⁶ ibid, UNDP, 2013

¹⁹⁷ ibid, UNDP, 2013

Climate change impacts are also associated with glacial melting and higher risks in terms of glacial lakes outflows (GLOFs) that in turn would clearly have impacts on the water regime and disasters.

Relevant SDGs

SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- 13.1 strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- 13.2 integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning
- 13.3 improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning
- 13.a implement the commitment undertaken by developed country Parties to the UNFCCC to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
- 13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change related planning and management, in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalized communities

SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.b by 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels

5.4 Disaster Risk Management

The Kyrgyz Republic experiences natural hazards and it is also situated in a seismically high-risk zone. Extremes in weather and climate and unsustainable natural resources management are causing floods, droughts, and soil erosion in the country. High altitude relief of the country (from 350 to 7439 meters above the sea level) and extremes in weather and climate and unsustainable natural resources management caused that the Kyrgyz Republic is geologically considered to be the most dangerous area of Central Asia. National forecast and response capabilities to address these problems are limited. The country is subject to more than 20 kinds of dangerous natural processes which cause natural disasters like earthquakes, landslides, floods, stone falls, avalanches, etc.

The most affected and vulnerable population are both the urban and rural poor, especially women and children. The mountainous geography of the Kyrgyz Republic contributes to isolation and limited access of local population to basic services and resources. The livelihoods of the rural poor in the Kyrgyz Republic mostly depend directly on the effective use of natural resources and ecosystem services, and their enjoyment of substantive human rights is most at risk from natural and man-made hazards, e.g., those related to climate change, such as changing rainfall patterns and more frequent extreme weather events, earthquakes. Urban dwellers are also at risk from natural disasters, their vulnerability further exacerbated by the growing population and urbanization, threatening the fulfilment of their human rights. Rural communities trying to grow food under difficult environmental conditions are exposed to environmental challenges. Namely, they are exposed to extreme seasonality (very cold winters, very hot dry summers); acute natural

shocks such as droughts and floods; impacts of environmental degradation (soil erosion and salinity for example). The most remote communities (located in high mountains areas) have no appropriate access and infrastructure (roads, electricity, hospitals-clinics etc.).

Disaster risks in the Kyrgyz Republic and implications

According to the recent data from the Ministry of Emergency Situations the main emergency situations in the country are floods– 30%, landslides – 16%, technogenic – 10%, earthquakes – 9%, meteorological – 9%. Intensive melting of glaciers and heavy snow-and rain-falls causes that many regions of the country are subject to flooding. The country has over 3,100 river flood basins and more than 200 lakes (out of 2000) that have the potential for causing floods. The country records more than 3000 earthquakes per year and more than 200 localities are categorized as seismically dangerous. More than a half of the territory of the republic is subject to avalanche danger and the duration of the avalanche season is 5-7 months. Every year avalanches cause frequent emergency situations on the mountain roads.

Landslides are another major environmental disaster common in Kyrgyzstan, with more than 5,000 active landslides in Kyrgyzstan.

The results show that Osh and Jalal-Abad regions are the most vulnerable to landslides, with the least vulnerable Talas region. Jalal-Abad region is also the most vulnerable to avalanches, with the least vulnerable Batken region. The most vulnerable to mudflows and floods is the Jalal-Abad region, and the least vulnerable is the Naryn region. Variability in the number of flooding with breakdown by regions has not been analyzed for lack of the baseline data. The Jalal-Abad region is also the most vulnerable to rainstorms, while the least vulnerable is Talas. The Issyk-Kul region is the most vulnerable to hurricane winds, while the least vulnerable are the Naryn and Batken regions. Vulnerability to hails and snowfalls has not been analyzed due to lack of the baseline data¹⁹⁸.

The extraction of uranium, heavy metals, and mercury, along with the accumulation of their wastes, are among the main man-made environmental disasters in the Kyrgyz Republic. They cause environmental pollution and constitute a serious existing and potential health danger. Namely, air pollution, toxic chemicals and unhealthy environments contribute to high NCD burden and worsen health outcomes. .

These threats are aggravated by the fact that the Kyrgyz Republic is situated at the upper portion of the region's water basins, therefore contaminated substances from its territory can reach to the other regions of Central Asia through numerous water flows. There are 5 main uranium tailing-fields in Kyrgyzstan: Mailuu-Suu, Kara-Balta, Ming-Kush, Kaji-Say and Ak-Tuz. The total of 92 waste sites, with more than 250 million m3 of waste, are established. However, these waste sites could be affected by natural disasters, with severe environmental implications in the Kyrgyz Republic and in the neighbouring countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan).

Legal and Policy platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction

In terms of legal framework, the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On civil protection» was approved in 2009 as the key reference that regulates this area. Law of the Kyrgyz Republic «On Civil Protection» defines the organizational and legal norms in the field of civil protection of the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in emergency situations in peacetime and wartime, and defines the powers of the authorized state body in the field of civil protection and other state bodies of executive power of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Kyrgyz National Platform for disaster risk reduction (DRR) was formally established in 2011¹⁹⁹, but not supported by legal documents. The platform is affiliated with the Ministry of Emergencies, and represents a multi-stakeholder national mechanism that serves as an advocate of disaster risk reduction at different levels. It provides coordination, analysis and advice on areas of **priority requiring** concerted action. The National Platform functions as coordination mechanism

¹⁹⁸ Climate profile of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNDP, 2013

¹⁹⁹ ?????????????????????????????????



to integrate DRR concept into the State policy, plans and development programs as the main component in accordance with priority actions of HFA. It should aim at assisting in establishment and development of comprehensive national DRR system as per the needs of each country.

Joint efforts are undertaken with the executive government authorities of the provinces, cities and districts as well as concerned ministries and agencies, to protect the national cultural sites and economic facilities from natural disasters and floods, to complete riverbank reinforcement works along Kyrgyz rivers, for preventing the negative impact of natural disasters; and to forecast the impact of natural disasters on the national economy and environmental stability. This also takes into consideration issues of environmental protection and disasters risks reduction in the development of all programmes and in building capacities for preparedness against natural disasters and the effective management of natural resources.

Women's participation in disaster risk reduction is very limited but with the support of the UN agencies the work is progressing towards the establishment of standard operating procedures (SOP) at the Ministry of Emergency that aim to have enhanced participation of women and protection of women and girls from various forms of GBV in case of man-made and natural disasters.

Disaster risks governance in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Ministry of Emergency Situations is the central institution responsible for policy development, working out measures for the prevention of emergencies, the protection of people and national property, and for increasing the stability of economic objects in the event of a disaster. The Ministry is the focal point institution for the three Rio Conventions and responsible for reporting on their national implementation to the respective secretariats. The Ministry carries out its work through a number of executive bodies, such as the inspectorates, state services, state enterprises, and research institutes at the national level. Another institution is the Inter Department Commission for Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations (IDC) and the Emergency Response Center is established under the IDC. The Prime Minister is a Chair of the Commission, with the Minister of Emergency being his deputy, and the Ministry serving as a Commission's Secretariat.

The Ministry for Agriculture and Land Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic is the central governmental executive authority that implements the national policy on agriculture, land and water resources, irrigation and land reclamation infrastructure and processing industry. Department for Water Resources and Land Reclamation at the Kyrgyz Ministry for Agriculture and Land Reclamation is a governmental body, which ensures management, monitoring, and regulation of water resources and their use and irrigation and drainage infrastructure; performs executive and coordinating functions for implementation of the common public water policy.

These institutions primarily (i.e. The Ministry of Emergency Situations; the Inter Department Commission for Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations (IDC) and the Emergency Response Center) and other responsible state agencies oversee the formulation, coordination, and implementation of a key set of Kyrgyzstan's disaster risk reduction policies.

Relevant SDGs

Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

- 1.5 by 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations, and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

Goal 2 End hunger achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.4 by 2030 ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality

Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.5 by 2030 significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of affected people and decrease by y% the economic losses relative to GDP caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with the focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
- 11.b by 2020, increase by x% the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, develop and implement in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework holistic disaster risk management at all levels

Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- 13.1 strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- 13.2 integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning
- 13.3 improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning



6 Lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations

CHAPTER VI



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Good governance

Establishment of democratic governance in the Kyrgyz Republic is associated with challenges and problems, as the country scored low on all World Governance Indicators.²⁰⁰ The corruption in the country measured by the Corruption Perception Index is steadily declining, as the country moved from 150 (out of 177) in 2013,²⁰¹ and 136 (out of 175) in 2014²⁰² to 128 (out of 168) in 2015²⁰³. However, corruption and political instability remain pressing and disturbing problems that negatively affect socio-economic development of the country. The Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) 2015–2016²⁰⁴ confirmed that the country is progressing as the Kyrgyz Republic was ranked 102 (out of 144 countries) compared with 108 in 2014. Still, the GCR highlighted that the corruption and policy instability are exactly the most problematic factors for doing business in the Kyrgyz Republic. Levels of public trust are low²⁰⁵, and citizens have an especially negative perception of economic governance in the energy and mining sectors and in the area of public financial management, particularly in public procurement.

The public sector effectiveness and efficiency, including transparency and accountability of public institutions and their operational methods remain key areas for improvement. The governance institutions are characterized with insufficient organizational, financial and technical capacities and obsolete operational basis. This situation is further exacerbated by weak policy making abilities and absence of citizens-centred services based on full respect of human rights and system of public oversight. Disconnect between planning for sectorial reforms and budgeting resulted in insufficient resources for necessary actions. Inter-ministerial, horizontal coordination and cooperation is in many cases rather weak and inefficient and some core functions within the Government are overlapping; this is even more evident at lower (regional and district) levels of government. There is gender and ethnic under-representation at the public service decision-making so it creates a condition for the gender and ethnic discriminative office environment, lack of transparency and gender-blind service provision.

The Kyrgyz Republic is faced with significant problems and challenges related to access to justice. Weak capacity of justice sector institutions result in slow implementation of the laws and policies; at the same time population has limited knowledge about their rights and entitlements. This has major impact to ensure access to justice especially for the most vulnerable groups; in the context of the KR the most deprived of access to justice are rural women, people with disabilities, minority children and youth, refugees and stateless persons facing similar challenges.

UN in the Kyrgyz Republic remains well positioned to support implementation of activities towards establishment of good and democratic governance. In this context, some of the recommendations for the future engagement are:

- ***UN is well positioned as competent and reliable at the same time neutral partner to the governance actors in the Kyrgyz Republic.***
- ***UN is widely perceived as the key support to carry out legal and policy reforms in the context of establishment of good governance. Priority remains to harmonize legal and policy frameworks with international standards and enhance capacities of the key national partners in the area of policymaking and implementation.***
- ***It remains highly relevant to strengthen the links between planning and budgeting (as UN is already doing with assessment of “Law costing”) and ensure adequate resources are allocated for implementation of strategies and policies. In addition, within the***

200 <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#countryReports>

201 <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>

202 <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>

203 <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/#map-container>

204 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/gcr/2015-2016/Global_Competitiveness_Report_2015-2016.pdf

205 Public trust surveys, 2006 and 2013

broader efforts to strengthen overall policy making capacities, it is recommended to work on capacity development across number of areas such as evidence-based and gender-responsive planning, policy implementation including gender sensitive budgeting for policy implementation, policy monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

- **Anti-corruption is a broad area in which UN assistance is highly required. Following the principles of the United Nations Convention on Anti-Corruption (UNCAC) the UN could address capacity needs in the sectors most exposed to corruption; one of the priority areas remain to be overall public finance management.**
- Kyrgyzstan made some initial steps towards e-governance and UN support could further build on this and aim towards introducing elements of e-governance in planning and decision-making processes. Recommended activities for UN could be to support national ICT for development platform.
- In addition, UN could work to support improvement of quality of data production, use and the analysis, while in addition promote open data initiative and partnerships to enhance female and male access to information, and their greater involvement in planning and decision-making processes. In addition, UN could assist with introduction of e-governance in delivery of public services.
- In order to **further support development of civil society**, there is a need to enhance their capacities across number of functional areas, with focus on capacities for effective engagement in policy making processes and participation on delivery of public services. Civil society organizations need to enhance their capacities to competently engage in policy dialogue and strategic planning in the governance related areas. The watchdog role of the CSOs for competent monitoring of governance processes, policies and strategies and active involvement in implementation of national priorities must be strengthened.
- Organizational strengthening of CSOs remains equally important (as development of technical capacities). Due to lack of predictable financing, majority of civil society organization have weakly defined organizational processes and functioning mechanisms. UN should explore opportunities to establish “grant scheme” system and technical assistance support for development and strengthening of civil society in the KR.

Human rights and access to justice

UN in the Kyrgyz Republic provided assistance to legal reform for establishment of sound policy and legal frameworks and support to national human rights institutions, human rights defenders and implementation of activities for improved human rights.

The country made some progress to better protect human rights in line with international standards. However, this progress has been accompanied by mounting frustration with the State’s lack of action on a number of issues including, for example, violations committed during and after the June 2010 violence. The Constitution sends out a clear signal that any and all forms of discrimination are unacceptable in the contemporary Kyrgyz society. Still, recent developments in the country rising concerns that the democratic space is progressively shrinking, with a tightening control over civil society and an increasing “securitization” of inter-ethnic and freedom of religion issues. The situation in Batken oblast (province) remains quiet but fragile. The spillover effect and the impact of the situation in Syria and Iraq is becoming increasingly evident, as the number of volunteer-fighters from Kyrgyz Republic is on rise. There are some worrying trends, such as growing number of instances of targeting and intimidation of defence lawyers by the members of security forces. This may have rather negative consequences on the exercise of peaceful assembly and association rights. Furthermore, the negative impact could be for civil society organizations and human rights defenders and could prevent individuals from expressing dissenting views.

Access to justice is affected by the weak capacity of justice sector institutions; procedural guarantees in all stages are rarely followed which results in rule of law/ human rights violations. In relation to children, problems and challenges include lack of capacity of the justice and law enforcement sectors in working with children and lack of specialized services and facilities. The population is often not aware of their rights, entitlements while the accountability, and mechanisms to monitor access to justice are weak. In the country, but especially in rural areas there is a pressing need to deal with early marriage, bride kidnapping, domestic violence and other women’s rights issues. Cases of VAW are underreported being considered a private matter, and taken mainly to Aksakal Courts not competent in dealing with them.²⁰⁶

Therefore, some of the core recommendations for the future involvement of UN agencies are:

- UN should remain active in the area of **judicial reform and strengthen partnership between key governance actors for the establishment of an effective judiciary** based on independence, transparency, responsibility, and efficiency.
- Considering advantages of the UN in the KR, support should be provided to the **reform of security bodies, with a major focus on the transfer from the military to the democratic civil approach to providing services to the population**, based on social partnership principles. For example, it is recommended to provide training on the UN Basic Principles on use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. In parallel, support of UN should aim to establish institutional oversight mechanisms that will monitor use of power of security forces and prevent potential violation of international human rights law norms and standards
- UN should continue its support to the national stakeholders to **implement UPR recommendations, at the same time assisting to ensure greater compliance of current laws and bylaws with internationally recognized human rights and standards.**
- UN should support the country to create the knowledge, skills and values for a **stronger human rights and gender equality culture and adopt a holistic approach to ensure equal access to justice and protection of human rights for both men and women.** Efforts have to be made to monitor the work of Aksakal courts to ensure they do not deal with issues of VAW for which they are not competent to.
- It is recommended that UN support national partners to provide comprehensive and coordinated response and **prevention to all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG)**; some of the areas where support is recommended are: expanding on the work of the National Statistic Committee to collect evidence based data on all forms of VAWG, supporting the implementation of the national legislation and policy framework through enhanced accountability of all duty bearers, providing access to services and facilities and enhancing their quality, including justice and social protection system, peers to peers work at the local levels in schools and via sport activities and national wide awareness raising and advocacy campaign on changing attitude in favour for zero tolerance to VAWG.
- Establishment of a **vibrant civil society remains priority for the country.** In the context of human rights, part of the UN efforts to support civil society should include assistance to the NGOs in preparing and releasing alternative, “shadow” reports on implementation of Kyrgyzstan’s commitments on human rights and migration, non-discrimination of migrants, while at the same time working with the Government on implementation of recommendations
- UN should explore opportunities to facilitate establishment of a **juvenile justice system** that is in line with international standards and promote diversion and alternative sentences, while at the same time implementing activities for prevention of delinquency among the youth. Under this framework UN could support capacity development of the key stakeholders in

²⁰⁶ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan. 6 march 2015, p. 4



the justice and law enforcement sectors to work with children, including children in conflict with the law, child victims and child witnesses of crime.

Peacebuilding process

The Peacebuilding Needs and Priorities Assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic (supported by the UNCT and carried out in 2013) highlighted a series of still existing underlying factors that need to be addressed to reduce the likelihood of resumed violence in the future. Local communities in the Kyrgyz Republic, especially in the districts affected by the 2010 conflict, remained deeply divided along ethnic and regional lines, with lingering social division, mistrust, and segregation. Human insecurity that can quickly amplify other tensions amongst local populations remains common; this is even more emphasized by poor management of natural resources, lingering poverty and food insecurity. Economic struggle is motivating external and internal migration, which is a destabilizing force that leads to local social disintegration. In addition, urbanization makes some local populations more susceptible to conflict as social cohesion deteriorates.

Weak governance, inadequate legislation, partial implementation of laws and policies, and a failure to ensure the rule of law with sub-sections of the population and with some government officials has intensified local tensions. This is further affected by inconsistent implementation of national and international human rights law that creates feeling among the local populations that their rights and dignities are not adequately protected, creating feeling of mistrust and lack of human rights protection. Tense and unresolved regional conflict dynamics, such as border demarcation disputes, are motivating cross-border tension and violence and hinder healthy interethnic relations in some areas of Kyrgyzstan.

From a gender perspective, a good conflict analysis and post –crisis strategy should look at all powers relations, including gender norms and beliefs. Reinforced notion of masculinity, manhood, and patriarchal norms can be enabling factors for armed conflict and violence. However, the post conflict analysis and peacebuilding process has focused more on the impact of conflict on women, but very little on gender norms as a possible trigger of the conflict to be addressed by working with men and women. There has been an emphasis on cases of sexual and gender based violence during the conflict, but these were not adequately addressed within the development of a post-crisis strategy, except for the development of the NAP on UNSCR 1325. Sources state that as a result of the rapes committed and subsequent (perceived or real) lack of safety and security for women and girls the number of early marriages is dramatically increased in the southern regions during the last five years.

UN in the Kyrgyz Republic provided significant support to sustainable peace-building in the country; the most important contribution was made within the framework of the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). UNCT has adopted holistic approach to peace building in Kyrgyzstan, working on eliminating root-causes of insecurity and conflict through establishment of a sound policy and legal frameworks, developing capacities and the national and sub-national levels for implementation of these policies and laws and supporting vulnerable and excluded groups that are affected by conflicts.

In this context, it is recommended that UN work on the following priorities:

- ***Expand on results of the joint Peacebuilding Fund with focus on addressing ethnic and gender stereotypes and religious extremisms particularly among young people with different ethnicities and from different regions of the Kyrgyz Republic.*** Some of the possible activities for consideration could be ***intercultural exchange among schools and organization of joint and thematic camps for youth from different regions of the Kyrgyz Republic; organization of cultural activities*** (e.g. theater fests; music festivals; painters colonies; writers' gatherings, etc.) with underlying messages that promote diversity and tolerance. While developing new programs and activities, it is recommended to strengthen gender-responsive youth empowerment programming and include behavior and attitude changes against

- gender stereotyped roles and traditions that are harmful to both boys and girls and gender discrimination that are at the basis of violence against women, and include conflict resolution as one of key priority of the UN youth programming.
- Work on these perceptions of felt/perceived insecurity with both men and women and conduct a comprehensive work with men and boys, which valorise a positive model of masculinity, non violence, equality, respect and tolerance.
- Women may also play a vital role in perpetuating gender norms that incite men to violence in order to “protect” their women, thus peacebuilding programmes should pay attention to promote non-violent masculinity and femininity within the society. It would be crucial to ensure that the role of women peace-building committees is not marginalised, but mainstreamed with the overall peace-building work.
- ***Creating jobs and employment for young women and men (with a particular focus on the post-conflict and conflict-prone regions) remains a priority*** and it is recommended to provide support that will improve competences and skills of youth. It is recommended to assist to local institutions to actively support employment of youth.
- ***Natural resource management, employment creation and rebuilding livelihoods are critical components of peacebuilding and economic revitalization.*** Therefore, it is recommended to undertake environmental protection, public works and infrastructure works that create job opportunities but also restore or create the natural and physical assets that contribute to peace building within local communities.
- Continue its ***support to the national partners to work on reconciliation, building trust between communities and assist with strengthening of the justice sector and law enforcement system and governance institutions to become more responsive to the needs of communities.***
- Technical assistance and operational support *to review the legal and policy frameworks related to peacebuilding in line with international standards*, and strengthening of mechanisms and institutions for full implementation of laws and policies remains a top priority for the country.
- Considering well-established and recognized results and added value of the UN within the entire region, UN should intensify efforts to promote and strengthen cross-border cooperation among countries in this region, namely Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Such cooperation can contribute significantly to efforts to prevent renewed violence and further escalation of the conflict, and deal with the underlying causes of tensions. In addition, efforts on peace building at border areas can be supported by stimulation and non-criminalization of seasonal border migration, «mardicorship», allowing Uzbek and Tajik citizens from bordering rural areas to be engaged in the household support work, farming and others in the Kyrgyz Republic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN SUPPORT OF GENDER EQUALITY

The UN while supporting the Government must apply a twin-track approach that ensures gender is mainstreamed in all areas of the UN work, but it is also given a specific consideration to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and have strong foundation for a sustainable development and a democratic country.

The UN has a comparative advantage for a multidimensional approach to the issues listed above:

- All UN Agencies have a clear mandate to mainstream gender issues into their work with several of them having specific gender-related outputs in their Annual Work Plan (AWP). According to the accomplished work and interviews conducted, there are more than ten UN Agencies that are committed and ready to work jointly on a comprehensive gender outcome to achieve gender equality and women's



empowerment. Their **coherent input and technical support for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment can put the foundation for the realisation of the sustainable development goals.**

- The UN is the primary body in charge of supporting the Government of the host country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN Agencies have established over the years a relation of trust and cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic that enables full access to the various State bodies, both at the national and local level.
- The UN with its gender thematic group has an important coordination role at the country level on issues pertaining to gender and women's rights. In close cooperation with the government, civil society and other international and national actors much has been accomplished and is under way, including the development and (expected) imminent adoption of the new Domestic Violence Law and the CEDAW National Action Plan. The GTG work was and will be determinant in the implementation of existing legal and policy instruments that require substantial and joint support to achieve the goals therein.
- Executive and legislative branches of the Government, civil society actors and members of the extended GTG interviewed have recognised UN expertise and knowledge on transformative approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and have expressed readiness to embark on a more substantial endeavour that can bring gender transformative changes, and make significant advances in GEWE and lay a strong foundation for the realisation of all SDGs.

Only if the UN together with the Government of Kyrgyzstan set clear targets for SDG 5 and all women are freed from violence and given equal opportunities to contribute to the development of their country, poverty cases will reduce significantly, family health will improve and children will have a better upbringing and by 2030 the country will be able to meet several SDGs targets.

It is crucial to consider that a number of other SDGs complement and reinforce SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 5 is the basis for the achievement of other SDGs, such as SDG1 to end poverty everywhere which requires gender sensitive strategies and empowerment of women; SDG 2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition calls for opening up opportunities for women and vice-versa only empowered women can contribute with their work to improve family nutrition; SDG 3 to improve health and wellbeing of women particularly; SDG 16 to promote inclusive and good governance recognize the important role women play for the achievement of a democratic and peaceful society and so on.

Therefore truly and sustainable development cannot happen without gender equality and women's empowerment. **Women represent half of the population and are a vital part of the economic, social and political life of the Kyrgyz Republic, but their potential and utility is not exploited fully due to VAW, gender discrimination and stereotypes.** Failure to have a comprehensive approach to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) will substantially limit the achievement of all others SDGs with an ultimate negative impact on the overall development and stability process of the country.

Strategic entry points for the UN to work on GEWE can include, but are not limited to:

- **Invest in the education of girls and address gender inequalities in the education system, including gender segregation of school subjects.** Promoting women and girls in non-traditional profession will not only contribute to improving their economic opportunities, but also challenge current stereotypes and the division of roles between women and men in the society. Investment in adolescent girls' education will lead to stronger, healthier and more prosperous families who are the basis for socio-economic development.
- Support concrete women economic empowerment and participation through investment in social services, care economy and pre-school education and through

- effective access to land, property, inheritance and credit. Investment of the government in social infrastructures is central for reducing the burden of unpaid work, create employment and reduce poverty.
- **Improve women and girls' access to quality health and family planning services** as a powerful tool to support women's empowerment, participation in the economic, public and social life and to enable full contribution to the development of the country.
- **Support development and implementation of robust legal frameworks and administrative arrangements** to facilitate de facto women's participation in decision-making through policy and administrative actions and expanding the pool of capable women to run for elections, including those from particular excluded groups, such as ethnic and language minorities, etc. Adopt bylaws to ensure gender quotas are maintained also after the elections.
- **Functional education on GEWE** that can bring transformative societal changes by targeting men and women, boys and girls. Areas to be covered may include reproductive health and responsible parenting, conflict management and diversity, violence against women, gender equality, early marriage, bride kidnapping etc.
- **Address social acceptance and impunity for VAWG, gender based discrimination and gender-based violence.** Combatting violence against women as a key element for a stability and peace strategy that implies human security for all, both at home and outside. Engage women, men and youth to design and implement education campaigns inspired to values of tolerance, respect and diversity. New innovative approaches are needed where national EAW policies and programmes are created jointly with survivors who are regarded as key experts.
- **Communication for behaviour change and advocacy for inclusive development and women's empowerment at the national and local level** through promotion of women's participation in electoral processes, public life and the economy. It includes multidimensional approach with interventions that include women, their community and the society to create true empowerment. It means support women to be real agents of positive changes through the provision of education, adequate economic opportunities, training and long life learning.
- **Evidence based policy making and programming:** It is recommended to further develop and strengthen models for transformative changes that can ultimately address root causes of gender inequality and underlying factors impeding de facto equality and women's full agency. This also requires more gender analysis and research. For instance, there is a lack of detailed information regarding rape and sexual violence in Kyrgyzstan (CEDAW report, 2008, p.4)
- **Work with youth on educational and awareness programmes and have them fully engaged in supporting** the development of a new generation free from gender biases and GBV and actively involved towards the achievement of a democratic, tolerant and peaceful country.
- **Bridge the gap between de jure and de facto equality: the UN can** support the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen its institutions and tackle the implementation gap in relevant policies and at all levels (Law on Gender Equality, Law on Domestic Violence, Law on early marriage, Law on Bride kidnapping, Family Code, Law on Property, NAP on UNSCR 1325). Provide extensive guidance and expertise for the further development of gender sensitive indicators and statistics that can be used to monitor the application of the legal and policy framework and increase accountability.
- **Improve women's access to justice:** Provide extensive advice, capacity building and support to ensure that the justice sector reform takes into consideration the reality of gender based violence, inherent gender biases and other challenges encountered by women. Continue support a gender sensitive reform of law enforcement system that



embraces the principle of zero tolerance towards gender-based violence, including vetting of law enforcement officers (LEO), tackling weak corrupted system and helping introduce accountability mechanisms. Use this opportunity to help address gender stereotypes and widespread discrimination on the part of law enforcement agencies (LEA) towards women, the LGBT community and those who are HIV/AIDS positive or suffering from AIDS.

- **Informing the public finance reform process** so that it pays necessary attention to the interests of women and girls through gender-budgeting initiatives. Systemic development of gender responsive budgeting in all governmental bodies is a crucial step to ensure a more efficient and equal use of public resources.
- **An integrated system for data collection is not in place and the SDG agenda provides for a raison d'être for building a system that has gender sensitive indicators across all thematic areas as well as its monitoring sub-system.** Data thus derived should be comparable worldwide and the system should be developed in line with international standards.²⁰⁷
- **The upcoming UNDAF should serve to help build the capacity of the government on data collection, data analysis and development of indicators** with the ultimate goal of improving policy making and the life of people.²⁰⁸

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT OF ECONOMIC SITUATION

In the medium term (i.e. during the next UNDAF cycle), the country is going to face macroeconomic challenges related to general slowdown of economic growth in the region of Eurasia and Central Asia which would have implications for such key drivers of the Kyrgyz economy as foreign trade, remittances, FDI. The economy may continue experiencing KGS devaluation pressure with possible adverse effects for inflation and financial sector sustainability. Due to these macroeconomic developments, the fiscal situation in the country is going to be difficult and the government may need to consider substantial budget cuts.

Recommendations for the UN system:

- Together with the IMF, World Bank and other development partners, **advocate for and provide analytical support to implementation of the government's prudent macroeconomic policy** capable to ensure the Kyrgyz economy's resilience to external shocks and to maintain at least historical economic growth rates above 4% per annum;
- Support the government in implementation of fiscal adjustment ensuring that **no spending programmes critically important for sustainable development of the country suffer from inappropriate cuts;**
- Provide technical assistance to the government in **achieving significant improvements in effectiveness and efficiency of the public finance management system**, especially on the sector and local levels.
- Support the government in development of new export products and export diversification.
- Support concrete women economic participation through investment in social services, care economy and pre-school education and through effective access to land, property, inheritance and credit. Investment of the government in social infrastructures is central for reducing the burden of unpaid work, create employment and reduce poverty.

The country achieved significant progress in elimination of extreme poverty and some progress in reduction of general rural poverty. However, urban poverty is on the rise, and income inequality (as well as other forms of inequality) remain high. The government may need to replace

²⁰⁷ Meeting with the National Statistics Committee (NSC) staff, Bishkek 23 May 2016

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

the currently used extreme poverty line with another type of social floor which would allow for effective targeting of policy interventions.

Recommendations for the UN system:

Support the government in development and legislative and policy implementation of minimum social protection floor concept which should provide a basis for integrated social assistance for the most needy;

- Work with the government on identification, piloting and scaling up effective **policies aimed at reduction of urban and rural poverty and inequality** focusing on non-monetary poverty dimensions (access to clean water and decent living conditions, access to food, social services etc.).
- It is further recommended that data be collected to enable a gendered poverty analysis. In fact, lack of sex-disaggregated figures (headcount index etc.) does not permit to conclude that extreme poverty has been eliminated for women as well as for men. It would be also extremely important to examine the gender implications of poverty by conducting a multi-factor analysis accounting for all usual poverty correlates (rural/urban, number of children, education status etc.) and, on gender structure of the household.
- The economy still provides insufficient demand for labour; this results in unemployment and low labour force participation (especially for women), low wages for those who have jobs, pervasive informality on labour market, and massive emigration of the Kyrgyz workers often associated with involvement of their children at home in various forms of child labour including the worst forms. This situation may persist due to continuous release of labour from agricultural sector, changing domestic labour market demand, remaining big differential in the level of economic development of the migrant-receiving countries and the economy of Kyrgyzstan.

Recommendations for the UN system:

- Support the government in development and **implementation of policies aimed at increase in the number of jobs and labour productivity, improvement of working conditions and elimination of any of the worst forms of child labour;**
- Undertake a comprehensive policy approach to the nexus of employment/migration/rural development/social issues and undertake an in-depth institutional analysis of the root causes of inefficiencies of the public institutions in the area of employment and social protection;
- Work with the government on **development of coherent long-term policy towards labour emigration** aimed at maximization of economic benefits and minimization of social costs of these migration flows.

One of the forms of inequality in Kyrgyzstan is uneven economic and social development of regions in the country. This leads to massive internal migration from rural areas and small towns to big cities with adverse consequences for all parts of the country. Many areas of the country are in acute need for institutional and fiscal strengthening and support for economic development.

Recommendations for the UN system:

- Continue **supporting the central government in development and consistent implementation of its decentralization policies and capacity building of local self-governments in implementation of economic and social development programmes**, investment attraction, fiscal decentralization.

Agriculture remains one of the key sectors of the economy and main employer for people in rural areas. It suffers from low productivity, fragmentation, insufficient investments into human and physical capital, poor access to input and output markets, and environmental degradation of pastures and some arable land. The prevailing semi-subsistence farming patterns ensure very basic food security, and results in low and unstable incomes from agricultural activity and



monotonous diets of many rural people. Different types of malnutrition are widespread among both rural and urban population with iron-deficiency anemia affecting more than one third of all women of reproductive age and children under five.

- Provide the government with **technical assistance and capacity building in the area of policy development in agriculture and introduction of new agricultural practices, development of value chains, ability to comply with phytosanitary and veterinary requirements** which increase the sector's competitiveness and resilience to external shocks and climate change;
- Provide **support to small holders** to improve agricultural productivity, access to inputs, services and markets, including enhanced knowledge and skills to improve food security and incomes;
- **Advocate for and support the government' policy of transition to more nutritious food patterns** among the population with a focus on feeding of women and children.

Industry (manufacturing, mining, and energy) is another key sector of the economy which demonstrate modest growth due to significant challenges related to inappropriate governance in the past (esp. energy), under-investment and insecure climate for FDI despite of some recent improvements in international business climate and competitiveness rankings. Many of the industry issues are common for all private sector enterprises in the country: informality which allows for saving on transaction costs but does not provide for sustainable long-term development, lack of skilled labor, insufficient development of infrastructure and finance, regulatory and corruption burden.

Construction and building materials sector of Kyrgyzstan faces several challenges in terms of inefficient management. Due to a lack of financing, the Government is unable to conduct periodic inspections and provide licensing services, leading to unsustainable use of resources and unavailability of reliable sources of construction materials. The local construction, manufacturing and, indirectly, agricultural sectors face the constraints of severe shortages of low-cost construction materials; lack of access to energy-efficient and environment-friendly material manufacturing technologies; shortage of adaptable technologies based on local resources of materials and manpower; unexploited potential for management of wastes/residues from agriculture and industry; lack of employment opportunities leading to poverty.

The textile and garment industry faces various challenges, including limited production of fabrics and other supplies required for garment industry, increasing dependence on imported products, as well as lack of qualified workforce, outdated technology and equipment installed at the enterprises and increasing competitiveness in the local and regional markets. Furthermore, garment industry is of high degree of fragmentation and informality (most of enterprises have fewer than 20 employees) that limits the opportunities for expansion, access to technology and financial resources. Export activity also difficult and reduces the opportunity for larger orders, thus, putting small businesses on less favourable terms in negotiations with suppliers, customers and intermediaries.

343. Recommendations for the UN system:

- **Provide the government and private sector with technical assistance and capacity building** in the area of technological processes, equipment, business practices and retraining of managers and personnel in strict abidance by existing technical requirements and standards.
- **Support and provide technical assistance and capacity building for development of inclusive and sustainable development of the construction industry thereby facilitating** better access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, as well as creation of jobs in construction and associated industries.
- **Facilitate further development of the textile and garment industry** through assistance to establishment of qualified workforce, transfer of technologies and

- know how and support to upgrading of textile and garment value chains to improve competitiveness of local producers at the national, regional and international markets.
- Support the government in **formulating and implementation of long-term vision for development of private sector which providing for gradual "formalization" of the economy** without losing jobs and with accompanying growth in labour productivity;
- Suggest ways to the stakeholders for **facilitating the interaction between the government, local communities and domestic and foreign private enterprises** in order to maximize mutual benefits and avoid potential conflict situations in mining and other sectors of the economy;
- Maintain the dialogue with the government and society in order to ensure that **socially important parts of industry and private sector (e.g. garment industry and retail which are major employers for women) are supported and protected** to the extent possible;
- Continue ongoing support of the government in **improvement of business and investment climate and competitiveness** of the Kyrgyz economy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

The country manages to retain some of its key achievements in the education sector such as near universal enrolment of children to primary and basic secondary schools. Despite of recent progress in increasing pre-school enrolment, much more needs to be done in this area. A major area of concern is education quality at all education cycles which remains low by any indication regardless of substantial public expenditure on education. The need to improve education quality may be seen as the single most important long-term development challenge for the country. One of the facets of this issue at the level of professional education is the mismatch in skills and competencies between those required by the labour market and those supplied by technical schools, colleges and especially universities.

Recommendations for the UN system:

- Support the government in **prioritization, adoption and implementation of urgent measures on education quality improvement**;
- Continue efforts aimed at **increase in pre-school enrolment rates and maintenance of universal basic secondary enrolment**;
- Support and advocate for **openness and inclusivity of the education system providing equal access to education** for children and adults with disabilities, minority representatives etc.
- Support the Government to further enhance and sustain the national school meals programme.

Health status of the population is gradually improving, but there are many areas for improvement in health sector: still high TB and HIV/AIDS incidence, maternal care, family planning, unhealthy life styles resulting high incidence of cardiovascular diseases, cancer and some other non-communicable diseases. Access to health services remains a big issue especially for poor and people living in rural and remote parts of the country.

Recommendations for the UN system:

- Work with the government to further develop the health system and **prioritize maternal care, neonatal care, family planning and and reduce burden of communicable diseases and premature mortality (age 30-70) due to non-communicable diseases**;



- Work with the government to develop a school health policy and program as a mechanism for prevention of non-communicable diseases;
- Help the government to address the **aggravating issue of access to and unaffordability of health services.**
- A holistic approach to development, which encompasses women's overall education on health and nutrition knowledge, sustained by economic empowerment could substantially help to improve maternal nutrition and reduce maternal mortality and cancer related deaths. This should be coupled with quality health services for women in reproductive age, pregnant women and new-borns and increased access to family planning services to young girls and women.

The achievement of SDG 3 on health and well-being requires to simultaneously work on the achievement of other SDGs on poverty, food security and education. Achievement of these SDGs is also instrumental to the achievement of gender equality, SDG 5.

The country maintains extensive and expensive social insurance and social protection system which may not be sustainable in the long run. At the same time, some components of this system are heavily under-developed (social services). There are some vulnerable groups of the population who effectively remain out of the social assistance system (urban poor). Different segments of the social protection system are not well connected, so that the system's integration seems to be a high priority.

Recommendations for the UN system:

- Together with other development partners **support the government in reforming its pension system** which is at risk of losing sustainability;
- **Assist the government in developing modern social services for vulnerable groups of the population** based on the best international experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

UN was working in close partnership with the Government and made contribution to improved environmental practices; at the same time, UN was implementing activities to minimize impact of climate change and to ensure sustainable management of natural resources. This support was at the strategic and policy level, development of organizational and institutional capacities within the environmental protection system and improving situation at the local level.

The Concept of Environmental Security for 2007–2020 (CES) is a major environmental policy document for the country that identifies key global, regional, and national environment issues. The environmental priorities of the CES are socioeconomic development considering potential capacity of ecosystems, which constituted the first phase (2007–2010); pollution abatement, conservation, and restoration of natural environment, which constitutes the second phase (2010–2015); and the third phase (2015–2020)—improving quality of the environment and achieving ecosystem-based management.

However, the country is faced with plethora of problems in this sector. The exploitation of natural resources during the past 50 years has done severe damage to the ecosystems (forests pastures and arable lands). The rural poor population in Kyrgyzstan is highly dependent on natural resources, especially on land (pasture, agriculture) and water (irrigation and drinking) for their livelihood and is amongst the most affected by environmental degradation. It is estimated that some level of land degradation currently affects approximately 97.6% of arable land in the country. The remaining mountain forests are sparse and overgrazed, giving rise to an increased area of mountain deserts. Climate change and more frequent natural disasters worsen the situation. Management of industrial waste is an issue in Kyrgyzstan. Some 92 mining sites that contain 250 million cubic meters of toxic and radioactive waste are located in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, household waste management does not comply with sanitary and environmental

requirements, as there is no adequate waste utilization²⁰⁹. Pollution of water, land and air from and poorly managed solid waste and sewage disposal has led to contamination of land and water resources.

UN undertook the second Environmental Performance Review of Kyrgyzstan, reflecting on 8 areas and measuring the progress made by the country in the management of its environment. This and expected new performance review should be the main tool to measure the progress of Kyrgyzstan in the area of environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources.

In this context, it is recommended for UN to work on the following priorities:

- It is recommended that UN continue with assistance to sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity, valuation and rehabilitation of ecosystem services and to promotion of protected and indigenous areas. UN is well positioned to ensure broad participation of the key partners and institutions relevant to environmental protection, energy and the use of natural resources. Equal participation of both men and women and specific gender aspects of sustainable natural resource management should be considered as an essential part of programming since women have a limited access to decision-making, information and technologies in this area.
- **UN should support the county to expand and rationalize the protected area system.** In parallel, work should focus on **development of new strategies and services for coordinated environmental management** including water resources, land and biodiversity management. Other priority activities could be: strengthening environmental monitoring; development of new services and practices **to enhance the management of cultural (tangible and intangible) and natural assets;** technical assistance to integrate environmental policies, plans and activities into sectorial priorities and programmes to halt progressive environmental degradation and its negative effects on the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable; implementation of activities and programs to manage and minimize health impacts of environmental risks.
- **Water governance and watershed management** has been neglected and landslides and floods are becoming more frequent and severe. UN should provide policy advice and research to support evidence based reform in the water sector, with the focus to improve coordination and establish more synchronized policies and practices in the water management at the national and sub-national levels. Considering the specific position of the UN in the region, it is recommended that UN continue **to facilitate dialogue on Trans-boundary water related issues** through development of the legal framework based on key international legal principles and the interests of all Central Asian states.
- UN should use its professional capacity to **provide assistance to the sustainable management of forest resources in the Kyrgyz Republic,** because they are of high ecological and economic importance. This includes the improvement of forest legislation, modern management of forest enterprises, reforestation and rehabilitation of forest resources and the effective use of timber and non-timber forest products.
- UN should work to provide **technical and operational support to partners at the national and local levels to enhance their capacities for sustainable management of energy resources.** In parallel, work should proceed on promotion of cost-efficient management schemes for equitable and inclusive energy supply in both urban and rural areas of the country. Priority should be given to decentralized technical solutions in order to reduce distribution losses.

²⁰⁹ For example, Bishkek municipal landfill designed for 3.3 million cubic meters presently contains 24 million cubic meters of household waste



- Another opportunity for UN's involvement in the future is support to the key national stakeholders to identify and implement opportunities to enable growth of green economy and development of 'green jobs' linked to energy efficiency, renewable energy, environmental management, and cultural heritage.

Disaster Risk Management

The Kyrgyz Republic is exposed to various disasters, with the raising trend in the last years; this is affecting the development capacity of the country and local communities negatively. There are more than 14 000 disaster-prone areas throughout the country; more than 200 emergency situations are being reported each year, displacing 1000 people in average. High altitude relief of the country and extremes in weather and climate and unsustainable natural resources management are causing floods, droughts, and soil erosion; these impacts are expected to worsen in the future.

UN Country Team in Kyrgyzstan is recognized as one of the key partners of the Government in addressing disaster risk management; it is recommended that UN continue its work in increasing preparedness for natural and man made disasters, minimize adverse development impacts and accelerate rebuilding in the post-disaster period. While UN plays one of the key roles in addressing disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, it is also considered as one of the cornerstones for effective and timely coordination of for overall disaster risk management cycle.

Within this framework, it is recommended that UN provide assistance in the following areas:

- It is highly recommended that UN support the stakeholders in Kyrgyz Republic **to perform comprehensive disaster risk assessment, so to make the development risk-informed, societies and institutions resilient. This should include risk analysis of the geophysical, climate and other hazards, including those that are low intensity but high frequency;** the assessment should differentiate vulnerabilities by gender, social and economic groups such as women, girls, men, boys, single female-headed households, disabled and populations located in the poorest regions. In addition, part of this exercise should include an inclusive assessment of policies, long-term planning and investment frameworks from the disaster risk-sensitive position, which also take into consideration a gender perspective. Based on these assessment, UN should help national stakeholders to develop adequate DRR approach, consider disaster risk reduction at the center of national sustainable development strategies as an important factor in building resilience, poverty eradication, address differentiated social, economic and environmental impacts; and preparedness for disaster management and recovery at the sub-national and national levels, including innovation to manage risks through insurance, GIS technologies, remote sensing techniques and resilient infrastructure. Hence, national ownership of DRR and preparedness planning together with other stakeholders including the private sector, can help ensure that emergency interventions will be integrated into longer-term development objectives of the country. **Overall, this requires assisting the Government in shifting the focus of existing national DRR policies and practices from Post-Disaster Management to Risk Management.**
- **UN should continue its work on strengthening of the national institutions to implement DRR policies and measures. This includes post-disaster response and planning for recovery and preparation of recovery and reconstruction plans and programmes that are inclusive of and accountable to the most vulnerable and affected groups and include gender considerations.**
- At the local level, **UN could provide support for preparation of rural development strategies including safety-net mechanisms and that will integrate livelihood enhancement/ diversification programmes.** These mechanisms could also be scaled-up in times of emergencies



- It is a national priority to strengthen DRR preparedness and the resilience of people in the Kyrgyz Republic. Increasing knowledge and raising awareness among the policy makers, stakeholders and population on different aspects of DRR, including strong resilience and contribution of women and men to reduce other's women's vulnerability during disasters and in post-disaster period remains an area in which UN could focus its activities.



7 Annex 1 Gender position paper in contribution to the Common Country Analysis

CHAPTER VII



1. Context, Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Objectives and methodology

The objective is to deliver a position paper to UN Women Office in Kyrgyzstan, which will provide contextual information related to women's rights and gender equality issues and relevant priorities identified in the country to be used as a guidance for the development of the UNDAF for the period 2018-2022.

The methodology has been divided into five main tasks: 1) review relevant reports, articles and researches with regard to the implementation of the women's rights agenda, particularly national policies and civil society actions including collaborative actions with the government; 2) analyse issues and their causes; 3) identify civil society and government initiatives / collaborative actions and challenges; 4) analysis of progress, gaps and opportunities for the next UNDAF cycle; 5) provide recommendations for possible areas of interventions in the next UNDAF cycle.

The desk review was complemented by two field missions of eight and seven days and a selected number of stakeholders' interviews organised by the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UN RCO) and UN Women that have helped to substantiate findings, but also to identify new issues and opportunities. This paper presents also several limitations given the tight deadlines and the limited number of days in the country and the impossibility to conduct a comprehensive field research to meet the multiple stakeholders working in the capital and in the regions involved on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) issues.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all informants listed in the Agenda (see annex) for their availability to be interviewed and share relevant reports and information and the UN staff members that have provided organisational and logistic support and demonstrated their availability to provide clarifications on substantive issues. A special thank to Gerald Gunther, UN Women Representative for his review of the first draft and comments provided that have helped me finalise the present report.

2. Overview of the country and women's right situation in the Kyrgyz Republic

Kyrgyzstan is a parliamentary republic, consisting of eight regions (oblast) administered by appointed governors. The capital, Bishkek and the second largest city, Osh are administratively independent cities (shaar) with a status equal to a region. The regions, and independent cities, are as follows: City of Bishkek, Batken, Chuy, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, Osh, Talas, Issyk-Kul, City of Osh.²¹⁰

Kyrgyzstan is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country with a majority of ethnic Kyrgyz, followed by significant minorities of Uzbeks, Russian, Tajik and multiple other smaller minorities. The proportion of ethnic Kyrgyz since independence has increased from just above half to almost three in four. The state language is Kyrgyz with Russian designated as 'official language', spoken today mainly among long-resident citizens in the cities of the north. A large number of citizens, one in three of the working age population is in migration, mainly in Russia.

From its independence in December 1991 to our days, the country has endured ethnic tensions, revolts, economic troubles, governments and political party conflicts, all accompanying a process of overall democratization and alignment with international human rights standards. Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CSI), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Turkic Council, the TURSOY community, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN).

Since its independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has worked towards the improvement of the national legal framework governing women's rights and gender equality, in accordance with the international legal framework and commitments therein. In 1997 the Kyrgyz Republic acceded to the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and immediately after the Fourth UN World Conference for Women held in Beijing in 1995, Parliament ratified the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA), which recommended that mechanisms should be put in place to meet defined goals. Additionally, in 2002 the Kyrgyz Republic ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol allowing for individual complaints and inquiries procedures.²¹¹

All Constitutions since independence including the current Constitution of 2010 recognise the equal status of men and women. Article 16(4) states that: *"In the Kyrgyz Republic men and women shall have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for their realization"*.²¹² The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women governs the implementation of these constitutional guarantees. Moreover, victims of discrimination may file a complaint with the Ombudsman, whose office has also a dedicated gender department.

In early 2010 the country witnessed a period of instability and inter-communal violence, which is remembered as the "Osh events". In June 2010, voters approved a new Constitution that gave significant new powers to Parliament. In the aftermath of the political and ethnic violence women's political leadership and participation in confidence building and conflict prevention was promoted at all levels. Women occupied high-level posts and the country had the first, albeit unelected, female president of the Republic and in Central Asia, Ms. Roza Otunbaeva.

Thanks to the advocacy work of women's rights activists and the technical and financial support of international organisation, including the UN, the government of Kyrgyzstan adopted gender legislation and policies that are quite progressive and developed institutional mechanisms of gender equality that constitutes the national gender machinery.

The development of a gender policy was accompanied by an improvement regarding the availability of statistical data on the situation of women. In 2011 the National Statistics Committee in its publication 'Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic', expanded the chapter on crime

210 UNCT Report and Kyrgyzstan, Wikipedia at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrgyzstan>

211 Ratification status for Kyrgyzstan. At UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) Website. http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=93&Lang=EN

212 Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (Unofficial translation), Legislation online, Kyrgyz Constitution - adopted by referendum 27 Jun2010_f_EN-3.pdf at www.legislationline.org/documents/id/5045

against women and domestic violence. Twenty-three new indicators were included, reflecting the combined data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Judicial Division of the Supreme Court and the Association of Crisis Centres.²¹³

Nonetheless, an assessment such as the Gender Inequality Index of the United Nations Development Programme (2014) ranks Kyrgyzstan 67 out of 146 countries. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (2014) places Kyrgyzstan 67 out of 142, and in 2015 Kyrgyzstan scored 0,693 with a clear worsening compared to the previous year, ranking 76 out of 145 countries. The Kyrgyz Republic scores high on education due to near gender parity in enrolment and literacy rates, but consistently low for the economic and political empowerment of women, thus bringing down its overall score.

There is indeed a **significant discrepancy between the gender equality principles contained in the legal and policy framework and gendered social norms applied to everyday life**, both in rural and urban areas, though with differences and nuances based on the social and cultural level of the people.

Women's human insecurity

Although the security situation is reportedly stable in Kyrgyzstan, when it comes to women's human security both at home and outside their homes, we can observe that several intersecting socio-economic and cultural factors constitute real threats to women's human security in the wider sense.

Since independence the space of women in public life has shrunk, employment opportunities have declined and it has become increasingly more difficult for women to gain a livelihood or to fully participate in decision-making at the local and at the national level. Family responsibilities have further pushed women towards the informal sector and in part-time work in order to combine all responsibilities with a consequent increase of human insecurity related to lack of economic independence and social protection. Cultural stereotypes limit women's potential as entrepreneurs and a persistent patriarchal attitude and mind-set countrywide continue to favour men and their supremacy and accept women's rights abuses and discrimination as an ineluctable fate, despite the constitutional guarantees of fundamental human rights and gender equality.

Moreover, women, regardless of their social role and status in the family, are under male custodianship: the father or eldest male family member until marriage, the husband during marriage and the father or eldest male in case of divorce. However, the husband often defers to his mother who directly controls the daughter in law. This family code is known as *"Amanat"*, encapsulating women's social roles within the home and in the community.²¹⁴ This most often makes it difficult, if not impossible to achieve de facto equality and promote women's full agency and broader human security.

The June 2010 events have added further uncertainty and insecurity to women's rights condition as violent civil unrest was reportedly accompanied by allegations of violence against women that in the prevailing political environment at the time were not followed up on.

The country was ill prepared to manage the situation of inter-ethnic tension and even less the gendered aspects of it. Recognising this gap, Government and civil society facilitated by UN Women with assistance also from OSCE developed a first National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which was adopted in 2013 for the period 2013-2015. A second NAP facilitated by UNDP was adopted for the period 2016-2017.

213 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Consideration of Report submitted by State parties under article 18 of the Convention, Fourth periodic report, Kyrgyzstan, 1 May 2013, p.7.

214 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016



The confidence-building programme implemented in Kyrgyzstan has been successful, but the impact of the civil unrest on women needs more attention especially when it comes to **real or perceived human insecurity**. There is widespread violence and **de facto discrimination against women** and in some rural areas women's mobility is restricted. Early marriages are on the increase for a number of economic and social reasons.

Experts observe a surge in patriarchal attitudes and Islamic precepts that want women to follow 'traditional' gender roles, which ultimately strengthen gender segregation and reinforce gender-based vertical and horizontal discrimination within different sphere of life, including home, education and work. Proselytism of religious radicals seriously affect the realization of women's rights and their free agency and threaten the gains made in the last twenty years, further reducing the democratic space now available to women. Evidence from other countries shows that whenever there is a situation of unrest and proclaimed extremism, patriarchal values serve to reinforce extremism and vice-versa, while stability, participation and peace brings more space and freedom for women.

In parallel, **traditional forms of gender-based violence like domestic violence are omnipresent, while early marriage and bride kidnapping** which never entirely disappeared, but are proclaimed illegal and were much kept under control during the Soviet period, **have strongly re-emerged and become more notorious**, allegedly as part of a "*Kyrgyz (or Uzbek) tradition to be preserved*". A recent countrywide survey on gender knowledge, perceptions and attitude conducted by UN Women highlighted that for a significant proportion of respondents early marriage is a way to preserve women's honour, ensure chastity and virginity of the bride before the marriage and it also allows teaching a girls since the outset what her place and duties are in the household.²¹⁵

Overall, the analysis highlighted **continuous of violence against women** both unrelated to the conflict in peaceful times as well as **in the pre-conflict, conflict and post conflict phase, especially at home with domestic violence and early marriages and by close relatives**. Conflict exacerbates violence and carries it into the post conflict period when women's rights are further limited in the name of "*protection*".

Gender is deeply hierarchical and these forms of VAW find their roots in patriarchal norms and predominance of men over women in order to assert control. They can only be addressed by a behaviour change campaign, working both with disempowered women and also utilising male involvement strategies that look at inter-connections between gender, power, age and violence.

Government's Commitments

The adoption of a national strategy on achieving gender parity by 2020 shows the Government's awareness and efforts regarding the importance of having a comprehensive and long-term approach aimed at achieving gender equality.

The **key areas of the Strategy and its Action Plan for the period 2015-2017** are the following and are in line with the sustainable development goals:

- **I. Women's Economic Empowerment**, covering sub-areas of labour conditions and family obligations; employment and access to financial institutions, evaluation of women's input into social development.
- **II. Development of the system of functional education**, which covers sub-areas of parenting illiteracy, reproductive health, conflict management and diversity, gender equality, early marriage, bride-kidnapping etc.
- **III. Eradication of Discrimination and expansion of access to justice**, focusing on strengthening legal and institutional mechanisms of access to justice for gender based discrimination; development of a system to assist victims of GBV and discrimination; culture of zero tolerance towards discrimination and GBV;

²¹⁵ UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016

- **IV. Promotion of gender parity in decision-making and expansion of the women's political participation**, with a focus on gender-sensitive principles and human resources policy at the state and municipal level and women's political participation and leadership.
- **V. Regulatory policy**, covering the improvement of national institution mechanism on gender equality and enforcement practices for the implementation of gender policy; standardization of national gender statistics and harmonizing of indicators with international obligations.

The full implementation of this strategy and its plan(s) requires a coordinated and holistic effort of all stakeholders, including government bodies, UN Agencies, other development partners and civil society actors.

Special attention has to be paid to the implementation gap and its underlying causes:

- 1) Institutions operate under entrenched gender norms and practices. Even when a woman is recruited or elected, this does not mean that she is included and given a voice.
- 2) Insufficient understanding and lack of gender awareness and expertise among civil servants, politicians and staff working in governmental bodies at all levels; lack of commitment to gender equality, especially if at the cost of retaining control and networks.
- 3) Inadequate budget to support gender related structures and mechanisms, which render the ad hoc efforts made by international actors unsustainable.
- 4) Strong gender bias and hierarchy coupled with widespread corruption among law enforcement bodies leads to de facto limited access to justice for women.
- 5) Socio-cultural and religious factors that dictate women and men's role in the society without any appreciation of the real needs of individuals and respect of their human rights. Often women are disempowered accepting discrimination as 'normal' and even try to justify violence meted out to them. Men are also submitted to community pressure and social expectations.

The NAP requires a review, as most of the indicators are activity indicators, while impact indicators to measure real changes are missing. Regular reporting and monitoring mechanisms and baseline data to track progress and challenges in the different bodies must be included.

Key thematic Issues

A number of key issues were identified through desk review and priorities set following ad hoc interviews with relevant stakeholders, such as civil society actors, Government officials, and UN Agencies' staff. Unfortunately, due to the limited time allocated for the in country visit, it was impossible to meet with key beneficiaries and counterparts of the UN Agencies programmes in the field.

Nevertheless, meetings with various stakeholders at the national level have underlined common views over a certain number of key issues to be addressed, such as maternal mortality, domestic violence, bride kidnapping, early marriage and girls' school dropout, women's participation in political and public life, and women economic empowerment.

Women's health, wellbeing and maternal mortality

Across the board there is an overall agreement that maternal mortality is an issue to be addressed and for which the government was not able to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).²¹⁶

According to the latest official statistics the rate of maternal mortality in the country was 50,1 in 2014, with an important increase compared to the year before when it was 36,0 (every 100,000 births)²¹⁷. There are big differences between the capital Bishkek and the regions with Bishkek's rate of 16.4 and Batken and Naryn Oblast at 108.7 and 135.7 respectively.

²¹⁶ Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, CSOs and UN Agencies.
²¹⁷ National Statistics Committee, Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek 2015, p. 26 (Russian version). Further "NSC, Women and Men, 2015".



The majority of deaths involved internal and external migrants who were not registered and did thus not access ante-natal check-ups or hospital deliveries, also because of the lack of the so called “propiska” (resident registration) that they did not apply for. According to the National Health Information Centre (NHIC) the majority of deaths are to be imputed to post-partum haemorrhage (PPH), at 34,5% and sepsis at 15,5%. The development of PPH is facilitated by the presence of anaemia in pregnancy due to imbalanced and non-nutritious diet of pregnant women.

These deaths underline **important inter-linkages between reproductive health issues and nutrition, availability of varied food countrywide, and economic development** that can ensure food processing and food storage to guarantee wide-ranging food in winter seasons, food hygiene, water and sanitation.

Lack of varied nutritious food deriving from scarce financial means, but also low-level reproductive and nutrition knowledge are among the underlying factors for pregnancy problems that may result in serious complications, including death, as women look for medical assistance only when in extreme conditions.

Efforts are being made, but **prevention seems to be insufficient** although a government strategy on safe motherhood, reproductive health, combating HIV/AIDS, prevention of violence was adopted for the period 2006-2015. Additionally, a Joint Order of the Ministry of Health and Government Order of 2013 provide for domestic workers, pregnant women, children under five years old and other vulnerable categories to be all registered with medical facilities, regardless of their residence certification (propiska).²¹⁸ This Order represents an important step in curbing maternal deaths of women who would otherwise be left unattended due to lack of registration as it happened in the past. However, many people have not registered with medical facilities and in practice it seems that medical personnel are not ready to attend women who are not registered, as they are afraid patients would disappear and if complications arise they may be held responsible.²¹⁹

The data above shows that apart from the serious lack of access to health facilities and sometime scarcity of medical equipment available to every pregnant woman to ensure a healthy pregnancy and identification of problems at an early stage, there are also important issues of **accountability of medical personnel and social economic factors** to be taken into account and addressed with urgency.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 1. End poverty- target 1.b- gender sensitive development strategies

SDG 2. Hunger and Food Security- Targets 2.2 to end all forms of malnutrition and 2.3 double the agriculture productivity and income of small scale producers, in particular women.

SDG 3. Health and well-being - Target 3.1. reduce maternal mortality. Target 3.7 universal access to sexual and reproductive health care

SDG 4. Inclusive and equitable quality education

Most of the actors also mentioned that another priority should be the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In this respect, women’s cancer related mortality is extremely high in the Kyrgyz Republic representing the cause of mortality for 67.7% of women in the age group 15-19 and for 73% of women in the age group 20-39. The most common forms of cancer among women are breast cancer, which is the second highest cause of mortality, and cervical cancer, which is the fourth most widespread form of cancer.²²⁰

Underlying factors for high cancer mortality relate to lack of early diagnosis and prevention, unavailability of qualified medical staff, unsuitable facilities and equipment and negligence from both sides, patients and medical staff.

218 National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p.22

219 Meeting Ombudsman Office, Bishkek 15-06-2016

220 National Review, p.23

The health programme “Den Sooluk” for the period 2012-2016 made it possible to confirm targets in line with the Millennium Development Goals. However, both maternal mortality and growth of cervical and breast cancer seems to be a pressing problem for the near future requiring dedicated efforts and budget.

A holistic approach to development, which encompasses women’s overall education on health and nutrition knowledge, sustained by economic empowerment could substantially help to improve maternal nutrition and reduce maternal mortality and cancer related deaths. As illustrated in the table above, the achievement of SDG 3 on health and well-being requires to simultaneously work on the achievement of other SDGs on poverty, food security and education. Achievement of these SDGs is instrumental to the achievement of gender equality, SDG 5.

Violence against women and girls and widespread impunity

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a form of gender-based violence (GBV). Often the terms are used interchangeably as most GBV is inflicted by men on women and girls. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that the concept highlights the fact that **violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men**. Additionally, in some countries like in Kyrgyzstan it is expressed also with supremacy of elderly women over young girls to make them abide by socially dictated patriarchal rules. Art 1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women reads: “the term “violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Among the forms of VAWG more widespread in Kyrgyzstan we encounter domestic violence, bride kidnapping, early marriage, trafficking and exploitation of sex workers.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence was mentioned by almost all stakeholders interviewed as a prominent problem in Kyrgyzstan and one of the most widespread forms of violence against women and girls that needs urgent measures and an accountability mechanism beyond the adoption of laws and policies.²²¹

Statistics show that men, women and children are affected by domestic violence, but figures demonstrate that the overwhelming majority who suffer are indeed women. The age group of women most exposed to violence is between 21-30 and 31-40 with some differences and with a 50% decrease in the age group 41-50. There is also a widespread violence affecting married girls below the age of 21. These figures reflect the socially constructed gender roles that want young women to take on traditional subservient roles and failure to not follow these rules may entail punishment (including physical, psychological and other forms). While more mature and elder women acquire respect and authority, but still adhere to patriarchal models and too often contribute to perpetuate gender discrimination, abuses and overall submission of younger women to men and to older women.

Statistics show that 73.5 % of female victims do not work and are economically dependent on their husband or on other abusers. This makes the possibility of escape the violent situation much more difficult, especially in the absence of education, skills and prior paid work experience.

The 2012 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in Kyrgyzstan showed that 23% of all women²²² aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence at least twice since age 15 with one in seven women having experienced it at least twice during the last twelve months. Among women survivors of physical and sexual abuse only two out of five sought help after experiencing violence.²²³

221 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Policy and Development, Ombudsman, CSOs, UN Agencies, USAID

222 For the purpose of this paper, the term women will encompass women and girls.

223 National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 29



The adoption of the Domestic Violence Law in 2003 has surely represented an important step in bringing the issue to the government agenda and has provided a legal framework for the work of crisis centres. However, the Law, in the absence of strong implementation and enforcement has not proved to be as effective as hoped and according to the CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations²²⁴ most of the cases remain underreported and the protection of survivors and inadequacy of prosecution for perpetrators remain two major challenges in implementing the legal framework. While the Ministry of Social Development, which hosts the Gender Machinery is working hard on facilitating implementation of the law, justice sector performance on implementation leaves much to be desired.

According to the National Statistics Committee (NSC), which gathers figures from various sources, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Crisis Centres, the number of reported and officially registered cases is growing. Overall 10 thousand women turn every year for help to crisis centre, internal affairs bodies, and courts of elders on issues of domestic violence.²²⁵ It should be noted that while Courts of Elders (Aksakal Courts) are not competent with dealing with criminal cases, they can act to prevent them and may refer cases to competent state authorities. Still there is a wide discrepancy between the overall number of survivors that report instances of domestic violence and the actual number of registered cases. The MIA registered 2,339 cases in 2013 (2,269 against women and 70 against men) and 2,629 cases in 2014 (2,521 against women and 98 against men).²²⁶ Additionally, although the number of reporting increased, it remains still very low compared to the estimates of the 2012 Survey.²²⁷

Both the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women after her visit to Kyrgyzstan in 2009 and the CEDAW Committee in their Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report in March 2015 called on the Government to address the high number of cases of violence against women, and expressed concerns over underreporting compared to estimates of cases as well as over the extremely low number of convictions versus reported cases.²²⁸

The low level of reporting and limited request for help has several leading and underlying causes, starting from deeply ingrained gender models that want women to be patient and subservient and attach an enormous stigma to those who dare to contravene socially accepted rules. Further, in the absence of overall effective action of law enforcement and the justice system there is little incentive to report. In a patriarchal society and thus also in Kyrgyzstan domestic violence is considered and treated as a private matter that should remain as such. Lack of support, social pressure, the families blaming the victim, along with isolation deriving from the patrilocal tradition that expects the bride to follow the groom and often entails relocation, are all compounding and deterring factors that allow for the violence to continue for several years and even for the entire life.

Victims/Survivors endure violence for several years before reporting and even when they do so results are seldom satisfactory. Survivors are confronted with other barriers, such as lack of access to the justice sector especially for young girls and women living in rural areas where relevant services are absent (see section below on access to justice). Some studies also emphasize that additional underlying factors are the low confidence and fear with respect to law enforcement²²⁹ and also the active role played by police officers as “mediators” trying to save the family and its ‘reputation’ instead of ensuring real justice for survivors.²³⁰

Furthermore, under the Criminal Code, a perpetrator who commits a minor offense is exempt from criminal liability if s/he reconciles with the victim. This provides additional incentive for abusers or their family members to press for reconciliation and as a result, survivors often

224 UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan. 6 march 2015, p.4 Further “CEDAW Concluding observations”

225 NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p. 105 (Russian version).

226 NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p. 105 (Russian version)

227 National Demographic and Health survey mentioned earlier.

228 CEDAW Concluding observations, 2015, p.4

229 Equality before the Law: Access to Justice “problems of documenting rural women of Kyrgyzstan”, Adilet legal Clinic, 2012.

230 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016

withdraw the complaint. Local committees that seem to have worked well on domestic violence issues are now inoperative due the project ending and lack of institutionalisation. CSOs with support from the UN and OSCE have worked to develop a new Law that can eventually address domestic violence.

Lastly, it is undeniable that among the leading factors for perpetuating domestic violence, there is an **overall real and perceived impunity and culture of silence**. As mentioned above, the society overall, family and elder women in the husband and wife’s family play an important role as in several cases they tend to minimise the violence and consider it as a normal element of couples’ life to be endured by women.

A recent Human Rights Watch’s report confirms that among the factors contributing to low reporting and the perpetuation of domestic violence there are strong social pressure to keep the issue within the family walls, lack of support from in laws and survivor’s family, distrust in the police, isolation and lack of financial means. The interviews conducted also reiterated weak law enforcement and judicial response as one of the causes of the low level reporting. Some survivors also mentioned that police officers would deter them or pressure to withdraw the complaints.²³¹

Abuses against women does not end when the survivor leaves the abuser, in fact, not only does psychological trauma and physical injury remain, but often women are left without financial means to sustain themselves and their children. According to the Ombudsman, the highest number of gender related complaints are cases of alimony. Most often women who leave an abusive husband find themselves without any financial support. Court decisions are often disregarded and when religious marriage only occurred, paternity has to be proven, which is difficult to arrange. In some cases women do not even have the right to receive a financial support as they have only contracted a religious marriage, which does leave them deprived of any rights.

An analysis of the various reports and causal factors shows a linkage between the increase of domestic violence and other forms of VAWG such as early marriages, unregistered marriage and bride kidnapping. All these forms of gender-based violence and women’s rights abuses make women and girls more vulnerable to domestic violence and in some extreme cases can be conducive to suicide.

Bride kidnapping and early marriage

Bride kidnapping, affecting predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz and early marriage affecting predominantly ethnic Uzbek’s and some other minorities are two forms of violence against women that are deeply entrenched in society, and widespread in rural areas and among less educated families.²³²

The prevalence of both early marriage and bride kidnapping has not scientifically been established. However, the number of birth by women aged 15-19 provides suggestions on early marriages occurrence, especially amongst non-Caucasian ethnicities. According to a monitoring study conducted by UNICEF and the NSC in 2014 about 12,7% of women aged 15-49 married while minors, in rural areas the percentage is 15.9%, while in urban areas it is 9.2%.²³³ The last data of the National Statistics Committee shows that in 2014 a total of 11,797 women in the group age 15-19 contracted a civil marriage against 948 men of the same age group.

The Ministry of Interior keeps annual statistics on forced marriage from which we can see that in 2014 five criminal cases were initiated. These statistics are incomplete due to the hidden nature of these crimes. However, one of the visible consequences of early marriages is the sharp increase in early motherhood with 4.4 children born every 1,000 women in 2006 against 7.4 children born every 1000 women in 2014, in the mother’ age group 15-17.²³⁴ Additionally, in 2014 25.9% of new-

231 Human Rights Watch, “Call Me When He Tries to Kill You” State Response to Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan, October 2015. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/kyrgyzstan1015_4up.pdf

232 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016

233 Doklad Akjykaty (Ombudsmena) Kyrgyzskoj Respubliki. O sobljudenii prav i svobod celoveka i grazhdanina b Kyrgyzskoj Respublike, b 2015 godu, p. 303 (printed version).

234 Doklad Ombudsmena, p. 304 and NSC data collection, 2015



borns were children from mothers in a marriage not registered with the authorities.²³⁵

The Kyrgyz Republic is not only a CEDAW State party, but it has also ratified the Child Rights Convention in 1994 and the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages. Since ratification of these treaties, Kyrgyzstan has adopted a new Constitution and revised the Children's code.

According to Article 36 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, no marriage shall be registered without free and mutual consent of the parties to the marriage. Article 14 of the Family Code establishes 18 years as the minimum age for contracting marriage and this limit can be lowered in some exceptional cases to 17 years old with the approval of the local competent authorities. The Family Code does not enunciate the reasons, but in practice this authorisation was commonly understood in case of a pregnancy out of wedlock. The Criminal Code foresees a conviction of five years for contracting a marriage with a girl who has not reached the age of 17, while the penalty is up to ten years in case of kidnapping and forced marriage of a minor.²³⁶ This law is clearly not being enforced.

Early marriage has strong ethno-cultural patriarchal roots according to which the role of women is limited to household tasks and children upbringing. These traditions and notions prevail over the legal framework and are protected by a culture of silence and in some cases of active complicity. The numerous trainings conducted with teachers, local officers and police officers on gender sensitive issues and VAW have yet to yield the expected results. While people understand the law they do not practice it. Therefore, besides behaviour change interventions an end to impunity on violators is required for the Kyrgyz Republic to fulfil its human rights obligations.

Reporting is also challenging as **according to the law the victims of kidnapping or early marriage themselves should denounce the fact.** In the case of bride kidnapping, amendments to Art 155 of the Criminal Code should have been followed by changes to the Criminal Procedure Code to make the case public, but this has not happened yet.²³⁷ Therefore, **not only most victims are unaware of their rights, but also when they know, denouncing their own families would mean initiating a judicial trial against them** or against the family of the abductor. A way to overcome the obstacle and contribute to stop the practice of early marriage and bride kidnapping, it would be to have the State opening the case and initiating the investigation based on a witness statement. In order for this to happen, modifications have to be made to the Criminal Procedure Code to make the crime a public and not a private case.²³⁸

A recent UN Women study has identified some of the factors leading to early marriage. There is a strong interconnection between early marriage and the economic conditions of the bride's family and the leverage of the groom's family to anticipate the marriage. From the point of view of both families it is important to ensure that the girl is still virgin, thus the youngest the better. From the viewpoint of the groom's family, a younger girl would more easily adjust to the new family rules and will learn her role and duties.²³⁹ The interethnic conflict in the south has increased the prevalence of early marriage. Girls are forced to marry from the age of 16 due to safety considerations.²⁴⁰

Often early marriages and bride kidnapping are interlinked and both forms of VAW are an exemplification of power inequalities perpetuated by men against women and girls. Nevertheless, to address the issue it is fundamental to have a comprehensive approach that targets not only victims and vulnerable women, but also men of all ages and elder women who conforms to patriarchal rules and gender roles as a way to acquire authority, and thus support perpetuation of **traditions detrimental to women's rights.**

235 NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p.24

236 Doklad Akjykaty (Ombudsmena), p.302

237 Email exchange with UNDP Rule of Law staff on 2nd and 4th of August 2016.

238 East-West Management Institute is supporting Crisis Centre to advocate to have kidnapping as a public case under the CPC. Source: UNDP RoL staff.

239 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016 and Child Marriage in Kyrgyzstan, Overview UNFPA at <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa%20kyrgyzstan%20overview.pdf>

240 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016

Estimates on **bride kidnapping** include figures of 43 girls kidnapped every day²⁴¹ and about 35-45 % of marriage countrywide happening through bride kidnapping, which often includes pre-marital and subsequently marital rape. The 2015 country review on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, reports that 60 % of marriages in the countryside are accomplished through kidnapping, of which two in three without the consent of the girl.²⁴²

This evidence is not fully accepted by some officials who assert that bride kidnapping is usually consensual or in any case a part of the Kyrgyz culture. This shows a worrying disregard for the law by some state officials. Indeed, there seem to be a belief that bride kidnapping Ala Kachuu, literally "grab and run", is an ancient tradition and as such beyond reproach. Renowned historians and researchers, however, report that there is no mention of bride kidnapping in the national Manas epos, which forms the basis of Kyrgyz culture.²⁴³ The same source mentions that bride kidnapping started in the 19th century and apparently increased in the form of elopement during the Soviet period to overcome parents' disagreement over a wedding. However, in those cases elopement was organised with full agreement of the bride. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the phenomenon increased and took big proportions.²⁴⁴ Other nomadic expressions of marriage games also required the full consent of the would-be bride. It is important to understand that according to mainstream interpretation of Islam also by Islamic religious scholars **kidnapping is a violation under Islam. Purported traditions are thus selectively elevated above law and religion if it is suitable for the abuser.**

Testimonies on bride kidnapping tell us that elder women in the groom's households play a leadership role and are the ones who select the bride to be kidnapped based on certain characteristics linked to traditional gender roles, elder women help to make plans and give instructions, while the young men are often only executors. Moreover, once the bride is kidnapped those who forcibly put the veil in the head of the selected bride as proof of "consent" to marriage are the women of the groom's family. The countrywide research conducted by UN Women confirmed the above and found that, in many cases, the groom's father play no role.²⁴⁵

There is a **strong linkage between early marriage and bride kidnapping and heightened vulnerability to multiple forms of VAWG such as domestic violence, SGBV, early motherhood and school dropout** after the 9th grade. Early marriage and bride kidnapping are closely connected to other forms of women's rights violations such as avoidance of marriage registration, which limits the spouses' protection under the Family Code and complicate women obtaining their rights in case of separation. According to official data, in 2014 more than one of every four children (25,9 %) was born outside of a registered marriage.²⁴⁶

In case of a reversed bride kidnapping, the bride's parents display particular concern over the loss of reputation that will occur if people assume their daughter no longer to be a virgin following the abduction. Disturbingly, such concerns often take precedence over anxiety about the young woman's safety or well being after being forced into marriage. Reportedly, due to societal and family pressure over 90% of women stay and marry the abductor, but the final outcome is often not a happy marriage, but rather a life of submission and abuse, which frequently results in divorce and in some tragic cases in suicide, in particular when the bride does not receive support from her family of origin.²⁴⁷

Kidnappings violate women's rights and her right to choose, and have a serious impact on her physiological and physical well-being. Bride kidnapping can also have serious consequences

241 Meeting with UNDP, Rule of Law Officer, Bishkek 14-06-2016

242 National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p.31

243 Russell Kleinbach, professor of Sociology at Philadelphia University and deputy director of the Kyz Korgon («Girls' Shelter») Institute.

244 Galdini, Franco. Bride Kidnapping In Kyrgyzstan at <http://www.rferl.org/content/bride-kidnapping-in-kyrgyzstan/25403604.html>

245 Ibid.

246 NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p. 24

247 Najibullah, Farangis. "Bride Kidnapping: A Tradition Or A Crime?" http://www.rferl.org/content/bride_kidnapping_a_tradition_or_a_crime/24181723.html



on the health of the mother and of the new born. A scientific study conducted by the American Institute of Central Asia has identified a correlation between infant birth weight and conditions of pregnancy and new born. Children of women who were forced into marriage can feature a reduced birth weight, which has consequences for the physical and intellectual development of the child.²⁴⁸

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality

SDG 5. Target 5.2 Elimination of all forms of VAW

SDG 5. Target 5.2 Elimination of harmful practices

SDG 4. Inclusive and equitable quality education

Key reasons for bride kidnapping are found in widely accepted power imbalance and in women's discrimination, where male hegemony and women's objectification are commonly accepted concepts, without even realising it. Social and family pressure for the groom to kidnap when the marriage age comes and for the bride to accept to stay in order not to dishonour the family, are among the key factors for perpetuating the practice.

However, the overarching reason for the perpetuation of the practices and behaviours mentioned above is impunity regarding these illegal acts and the code of silence among various stakeholders such as teachers, medical workers and law enforcement personnel who should have a positive guiding and deterrence role. These actors instead participate in preparing the ground or perpetrating in the crime by providing advice on the best period to marry, namely during school vacation in order not to be held accountable for. They often turn a blind eye and pretend not to be aware that an illegal act is being accomplished.

There seem to be few legal and social consequences for the commitment of an illegal act, making it appear a natural and positive Kyrgyz tradition. However, several actors acknowledge that both bride kidnapping and early marriage, **represent a severe infringement of women's rights and of the national legal framework**. There is a recognition in Government and among sections of society that these are big issues that need to be addressed.

In addition to the amendment of the Criminal Code to reinforce the penalties for the abduction of women for forced marriage, in 2012 the Ministry of Interior developed a memorandum of cooperation between the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Health to develop and implement the initiative of the Ombudsman *"2012 - the year of the fight against bride kidnapping and violence against women"*.²⁴⁹

Unfortunately, such legislative measures and commitments have found little application in practice and notwithstanding the fact that bride kidnapping is punished under article 155 of the Criminal Code, there was only one conviction in September 2012 for the period 2008-2012 against an estimate of at least 11,000 identified cases annually.²⁵⁰

Women's rights and de facto access to justice

There is unanimity among the interviewed stakeholders that the country has a very good legal framework governing women's rights. However, enforcement remains weak and sometimes non-existing, and difficult due to several factors.

There seem to be a widespread lack of trust in the allegedly corrupted justice system, including the law enforcement bodies. Vast differences amongst urban and rural areas and lack of, or **uneasy access to justice system render law's enforcement uneven and discriminatory**. People living

248 Becker, Charles M., Mirkasimov, Bakhrom and Steiner Susan, Forced marriage and birth outcome. University of Central Asia, Institute of Public Policy and Administration. Working Paper No 35, 2016

249 National Review, p.31

250 CEDAW Concluding observations, 2015, p. 5 and UN Women Staff Meeting

in remote areas are often dependent on Aksakal Courts (literally white beards as predominantly composed by elder men), because they cannot access relevant governmental institutions, which are often in distant provincial centres. **The CEDAW Committee** in its Concluding Comments to the government report expressed concern that not only **cases of VAW are underreported being considered a private matter, but taken mainly to Aksakal Courts** not competent in dealing with them.²⁵¹

These courts may provide fast and inexpensive justice when mediation on civil law disputes between families is concerned, but are not legally competent to deal with women's rights violations, property rights, and alimonies in case of divorce. Nor are members of Aksakal Courts trained in the respective laws and in absence of such judicial knowledge are influenced by patriarchal and conventional attitudes. As reported in one article, members of these courts stated that they prefer to ignore domestic abuses, as their objective is to preserve the family, meaning they will even knowingly and purposefully act in contravention of the law in order to safeguard social norms and beliefs. Thus, in cases of domestic violence they advise the battered wife would be patient and endure the abuse, while the court would simultaneously talk to the man.²⁵²

Especially in rural areas **there is a pressing need to deal with early marriage, bride kidnapping and other women's rights issues**. Council of elders dispense justice based on so-called local traditions that are detrimental for women rights as often they take decisions that are not compliant with the law and further violate women's human rights. Additionally, abductors act almost with impunity as local enforcement officers when aware of cases of bride kidnapping and domestic violence refrain from taking action and thus become complicit of these violations but are not brought to justice themselves.²⁵³

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls

SDG 5. Target 5.2. Eliminate all forms of VAWG in the public and private sphere

SDG 5. Target 5.c. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality

SDG 16. Peaceful and inclusive society and access to justice for all

SDG 16. Target 16.3 Promote the rule of law and equal access to justice for all

The recommendations of the CEDAW Committee to the State Party call **to take measures to end impunity for acts of violence against women by ensuring prosecution and punishment of offenders**.²⁵⁴ Though the Government has accepted these recommendations, so far, the number of cases prosecuted is very limited.

The Child Rights Committee, although commended the Government for the amendment of the Criminal Code, recommended the State Party to take all necessary measures to ensure that all incidents of "bride kidnapping" **are promptly, impartially and effectively investigated, that all those responsible for such abuses are held accountable, prosecuted and sanctioned, and that victims of such abuses obtain redress**.²⁵⁵

It also calls on the Government of Kyrgyzstan *"to prevent early marriages of girls by developing and undertaking comprehensive awareness-raising programs on the negative implications of early marriage for the girl child's rights to health, education and development, targeting in particular traditional and religious leaders, parents and state parliamentarians"*.²⁵⁶

251 *ibid.* p. 4

252 Eurasianet.org. "Kyrgyzstan: Village Courts Have Mixed Record" - Report, Eurasia net at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65419>

253 Meeting with Gender Experts, UN Women Country Office, 18 May 2016.

254 CEDAW Concluding observations, 2015, p.5

255 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Concluding observations on the consolidated third and fourth periodic reports of Kyrgyzstan, 13 June 2014, p.8

256 *ibid.*



Low level of legal awareness among women on their rights and available legal instruments represents a real barrier for claiming redress for human rights violations and even when NGO provide free legal aid, this does not seem to be sufficient to combat the ingrained gender stereotypes and empower women and have them overcome hurdles to have their voice heard should they choose to act. Often women even after having been informed about their rights refrain from turning to the formal justice system because denouncing the husband, or the family while living in small communities may entail the estrangement of the survivor from the community, who in turn may suffer from double-victimization. If he is the main earner in the family, him being fined or imprisoned will negatively impact on the economic situation of the family.

When a woman finds the courage to report abuse to the local police, weak institutions and staff at local and national level are often not well aware of women's rights, nor adequately trained on gender sensitive issues and victim/survivors' treatment. Furthermore, **lack of financial possibilities, lack of knowledge of the system** and her inability to convey her distress and concerns are limiting a survivors chance of getting justice.

A survey conducted in four pilot areas (Bishkek, Chuy, Osh, Batken) underlined that women find it hard to report to male police officers in cases of gender based violence, with vast differences between Bishkek and Batken in case of rape offences (respectively 29.6% and 87.8 %).²⁵⁷ The 2010 events provided a new impetus for the Police and other actors to work on gender based violence issues. Under the UNSCR 1325 framework, the Ministry of Interior with the support of the international community conducted substantive work, including the UN to improve response to gender based violence crimes. UNODC advocated for enhancing the number of women in the police and for gender sensitisation of all officers. Today women account for only 12,3% of the police forces (the total figure is not available) and only 7,4% are in decision-making posts.²⁵⁸ The OSCE has introduced a police reform and focused on making the police service more impartial and gender sensitive. **Changes are happening very slowly and there is a strong need to conduct more rigorous training for staff and sensitisation of law enforcement agencies** so that they can fully understand their duties and role to serve the community and to protect women's rights under the national and international framework.

Additionally, UNFPA has been working on standard operating procedures for victims of violence in conflict and is now working towards the establishment of SOP at the Ministry of Emergency. Specific procedures and standards for the protection of women and girls in case of man-made and natural disasters need to be developed given their heightened vulnerability to various forms of GBV.

Protection issues and gender vulnerability are also intertwined **with displacement** when women are without a valid identity document making access to justice even more arduous. The number of women's internal migrants linked to job's search has increased in the country with a consequent enhanced vulnerability to different forms of abuses due to isolation, lack of family support or network.

Media bias and stereotypes also play an important role in discouraging women from reporting and in perpetuating gender patriarchal norms and biases. Civil society actors underlined the risk for a woman to be re-victimized and exposed to media comments that stigmatise her. A rape case was mentioned where the victim was exposed to insulting comments, threats and the financial burden of the trial that have left her without anything.²⁵⁹ Cases like this can be fully discouraging for women and only enhance the disenchantment and distrust in the justice system.

An analysis of the causes and underlying factors perpetuating violence against women, calls **on the government of Kyrgyzstan to utilise a comprehensive development approach that looks**

257 Ibid. p. 24

258 UNODC, UN Peacebuilding Fund, Zhenschiny v milicii, Bishkek 2016, p. 7

259 Sadyrbek, Mahabat. "There is no State in this country!" Legal and Social treatment of marital rape in Kyrgyzstan' in Gender in Modern Central Asia, and "Kyrgyzstan: Rape Trial Spotlights Women's Plight", in Eurasia net at <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65654>

at the inter-linkages between the SDGs and recognise that true development cannot happen without gender equality. Empowering girls and women and helping them to become equal citizens and family members are prerequisites for a democratic society.

Women participation in governance and decision-making at all levels

Kyrgyzstan is a leading democracy in Central Asia with several progresses made in the sphere of women's participation in decision-making, but it bears also several contradictions, setbacks and a strong resistance to de facto gender equality for men and women.

Despite having had the first female head of state in CIS during the presidency of Rosa Otunbaeva in 2010 and 2011, and featuring women in key positions like the Minister of Justice, President of the Supreme Court, Chair of the National Bank, Minister of Education among others, there is generally a low level of women's participation in governance both as senior policy/law makers and as voters.

Government policy over the past twenty years has been progressive and aimed at establishing a legal and policy framework conducive to women advancement in all spheres. After the 2005 parliamentary elections that saw no woman elected, a quota system was adopted to reserve a minimum of 30% of seats for any gender in parties' candidate lists for Parliament.

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 4. Ensure equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls

SDG 5. Target 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against W&G

SDG 5. Target 5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life

SDG 5. Target 5.4. Promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the

Following the 2015 election, at the time of the first country visit in May 2016, women held 18.3% or 22 out of 120 seats of the unicameral Parliament. In June resignations had brought women's participation in Parliament to 16%.²⁶⁰ In the previous legislature women occupied 26 seats or 21,7% of them²⁶¹.

As Party lists are required to have at least 30% of the candidates from each gender, every fourth candidate has to be of a different gender (in practice this means one woman every four persons for the national parliament and one woman every three persons for local government bodies).²⁶² However, women are almost never placed close to the top of the party lists, plus according to the OSCE Election Observation report "*the quotas on candidate lists for gender, minorities, youth, and people with disabilities were respected at the time of registration, but there are no provisions to maintain the quotas after registration, undermining their efficacy ... post-election candidate withdrawals resulted in only 20 % of members in the new parliament being women*".²⁶³ The number further decreased to 19.2 % as illustrated in the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) report²⁶⁴.

When a woman leaves, she is rarely replaced by another woman, but rather by the following person in the list, who happens to be a man.²⁶⁵ There are also allegations that after the elections, women who were elected experienced discrimination and harassment. In some cases women were forced to give up their seat in favour of lower-ranked males.²⁶⁶

260 Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic website at <http://www.kenesh.kg>

261 NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p. 71 (Russian version)

262 Interview with MP Nikitenko, 20 May 2016, House of Parliament

263 Kyrgyz Republic Parliamentary Elections 4 October 2015- OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, p. 2 at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/219186>

264 Women in Parliament in 2015. The year in review. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2015-e.pdf>

265 Interview with MP Nikitenko, 20 May 2016, House of the Parliament

266 USAID, Kyrgyz women gain access to politics, at <https://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories/increasing-access-women-politics> and Interview with Gender Experts, Bishkek 14 June 2016



Data on local elections held in March 2016 is not very encouraging. Women account for 12% of local council members, with a mere 6% in Osh and 18% in Chuy and Issyk-Kul regions.²⁶⁷

According to the latest data published by the National Statistics Committee, as of 1 January 2015, women represent 39.8% of the Civil Servants in the country and women occupy only 26.4% of political and specialist posts, whereas they hold 40.7% of the administrative positions.²⁶⁸ An analysis by region elucidates that the number decreases drastically in Chuy and Osh regions where women occupy respectively only 12.1% and 14.6% of political specialist posts.²⁶⁹

A look at the zero percentage of women in political and specialist post in some traditionally male dominated Ministries such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transport, and Ministry of Emergency further demonstrates strong gender segregation. In the Ministry of Emergency women are present in good numbers, but only for administrative and non-strategic positions, notwithstanding the important implications that a good gender policy has on the aftermath of a natural and human made disaster.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, as of June 2016, all eight Directors of State Agencies and the Heads of the eleven State Services were men, as well as the five Heads of State Funds and Inspection. In the President Apparatus out of 45 Heads and Deputies, only six were women.²⁷¹

On a positive note, women represent one third of members of the Central Election Commission, and are highly represented (66,7%) in the strategic posts. In addition, women occupy high state positions: Chairwoman of the Supreme Court, General Prosecutor, Head of the Accounting Chamber,²⁷² deputy-speaker of Parliament, a Vice Prime Minister; there are also two female ministers (Justice, Education) out of fourteen Ministries and State Committees.

The figures above show that progress has been made, but is not constant and efforts made to counter the resurgence of traditional gender roles after the collapse of the Soviet Union were not always effective due to strong gender bias and deeply ingrained stereotypes that see women either at home as the household keepers or in traditionally culturally accepted jobs. There is also a widespread view in both rural and urban areas that women should not enter in politics and that if a woman does it, the household will suffer from it. Indeed, apart from these egregious cases of women leaders and the existence of several women activists mostly working in the NGO sector, women still face social and institutional barriers to participating in politics. Women's representation is too often a token with a few elected individuals who are held accountable to change the system and blamed if they fail to do so. Experience has shown that when few women hold the office it is hard to promote women's rights and gender sensitive policies.²⁷³

According to a UN Women's research, although women are participating in politics at both local and national levels, their work is limited by social stereotypes and self-imposed ideals of gender roles. Female politicians are seen as "negotiators", "implementers", while men are the "idea generators" and "leaders". Married female politicians are expected to be wives and mother first, politician second. Thus women are burdened with childcare and housework and there does not seem to be much flexibility at work to facilitate women's double burden. Although four in five female politicians are married with children, there is a general perception that the two obligations are incompatible. Men interviewed seem to be sceptical of female politicians and overall worried about any changes in established gender norms and roles.²⁷⁴

267 Zulfya Kocorbaeva- Зульфия Кочорбаева, ОО «Агентство социальных технологий»

268 NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p. 71 (Russian version)

269 Ibid

270 Ibid

271 Pravitel'stvo Kyrgyzskoj Respubliki at http://www.gov.kg/?page_id=27298&lang=ru, Information retrieved on 4th June 2016

272 National review, 2015, p. 6

273 Only when women are present in critical mass (the figure set by the UN in 1995 is at least 30% to have women's voice heard) they can have an impact on legislative outcome and influence decision making and thus we can have a different perspective and view on issues that is conducive to gender-sensitive policies and practices that takes into consideration women's and men's needs.

274 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016

On the other side, the research underlined that female politicians are perceived as less corrupt, and more effective than their male counterparts. Interestingly enough, the doubt is not about women's abilities to be a good politician, but rather their ability to simultaneously be ideal housewives.²⁷⁵

As regards women voters, the patrilocal system in place and **lack of registration of many brides in the groom's house constitutes a real impediment for women to participate in the local elections.** The same applies for women internal migrants who are often without a resident permit. A campaign to encourage women's registration in the place of living is instrumental along with the continuation of the door-to-door work conducted by UNDP to inform women voters about their rights and the secrecy of the vote.

Women economic empowerment and sustainable development

Girls and boys' education and work opportunities

Equal access to education is part of the strategic policy of Kyrgyzstan to achieve de facto gender equality. Despite the difficulties of the transition period and the economic crisis that had an impact also on Kyrgyzstan, the country has managed to preserve the achievements in the field of compulsory education. Statistics show an enrolment rate of 97% in 2011/2012 academic year for the basic secondary school (1-9 grade), while enrolment in secondary education tends to decrease. In particular enrolment of girls in the period 2008-2012 decreased by 9.7% while enrolment of boys decreased by 7.3%.²⁷⁶ However, official figures on number of girls who fail to complete their schooling is unavailable because these statistics are not kept and after the ninth grade school is not mandatory.²⁷⁷

Among the factors for this decrease is early marriage and early motherhood, thus underlying the importance of having a comprehensive and multi-agency approach that can tackle issues from different angles. Although it is difficult to have clear evidence on the causes and consequences of school drop outs because of the hidden nature of the phenomenon, there seems to be an emerging trend of parents encouraging their daughters to leave school after the 9th grade with a key reason given that education quality is poor. Many parents in southern rural areas are then sending girls to housekeeping course to prepare them for their traditional tasks after marriage. Other options after leaving school include entering informal vocational education or formal vocational schools; staying at home to take up household chores; and following their siblings to take up illegal job in migration.²⁷⁸

Preferential investment in boys is done in the context of them being ultimately responsible for taking care of old parents, while girls will leave the household once they get married and are just in 'safekeeping' until that time. However, some families invest in girl's education to increase her marriage potential and in consideration that an educated woman can give a better upbringing to their children and can support herself or help support her family economically. However, education does not necessarily lead to good employment and even if women are allowed to work, it is understood that their primary role is to take care of the household and children. Therefore, to many families it does not seem necessary to have higher education, but a level sufficient to accomplish the traditionally accepted tasks of mother and wife.

Gender segregation in subjects in both technical and vocational education training (TVET) is significant and has an influence on the career prospect of both boys and girls and facilitates the horizontal segregation in the job market. Girls who continue their education are normally encouraged to pursue specialisation in low-paid sectors. Women students are concentrated in such fields of study as education, health care, services, dressmaking, and handicrafts. One of the objectives of the Government's 2012-2014 National Action Plan for Gender Equality was to

275 Ibid

276 National review, p.15

277 Ibid, p.14

278 UN Women, Gender in Society Perceptions Study (GSPS), Presentation of first findings, 20 May 2016



reduce gender imbalances in the labour market by diversifying the types of jobs undertaken by women and men. This has not been achieved yet and one of the reasons is linked to the lack of a corresponding budget to fully implement these programmes.

This sectorial segregation will have an ultimate impact on their ability to enter in the job market and on their economic situation, but not only. **Women economic empowerment has a significant impact on reducing women's vulnerability to violence.**

State education in Kyrgyzstan is secular and is based on a uniform curriculum for both girls and boys. Progress has been made in terms of renewing the curriculum, but some gender stereotypes remain in schoolbooks.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of private schools based on religious teaching, reportedly every village has one, but not every village has a secular school.²⁸⁰ Information on female madrassa is not available on the web, but clearly development of religious schools without the necessary secular education may contribute to perpetuate and reinforce gender discrimination and support men and women's fundamentalism.

Women's in the labour market

The labour force participation rates in 2010 were 52.3% for women and 76.6% for men, while in 2014 it was respectively 50.4% and 75%.²⁸¹ However, the women's rate is higher than the average for lower-middle income countries, which is 34.2%.²⁸² The official unemployment rate in 2014 was 9.5% for women and 7.0% for men.

In all age groups the male employment rate is higher, with the biggest gap observed in the age group 25-34, which corresponds in most cases with the maternity and child-rearing period.²⁸³ In fact, one of the reasons for such a low-level employment rate has to be found in the lack of available social support structures for working women. A decline since independence in government social support such as free or affordable childcare has put pressure on women to stay at home or to work in positions that are flexible and do not interfere with their domestic responsibilities.²⁸⁴ Preschool structures have deteriorated and their number has significantly decreased; in urban areas only 30% and in rural areas only 6% of children are in preschool education.²⁸⁵ According to a recent FAO study there are over 927 facilities now in comparison to 1,696 facilities in 1990 and the majority of children in the country is not involved in any type of early childhood educational program, and thus not being prepared for school, and facing limited development of cognitive and social skills.²⁸⁶

Relevant SDGs:

SDG 1. End Poverty in all its forms

SDG1. Target 1.4 Ensure equal rights to economic resources and access and control over land, property, inheritance and financial services.

SDG 1. Target 1.b Create gender sensitive development strategies

SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition

SDG 2. Target 2.3 By 2030 double agricultural productivity and incomes of small scale food producers, in particular women...

SDG 4. Ensure equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities

SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls

²⁷⁹ National review.

²⁸⁰ Interview with a gender expert and a MP, Bishkek 18 June 2016

²⁸¹ NSC, Women and Men, 2015, p.50 (Russian version)

²⁸² World Bank at <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>

²⁸³ NSC, Women and Men, p.50 (Russian version)

²⁸⁴ Meeting with ILO staff and ADB brief

²⁸⁵ Asian Development Bank – Gender Analysis, summary

²⁸⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Gender Equality in Rural Kyrgyzstan, Country Gender Assessment for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2016 (Draft), p. 19

SDG 5. Target 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against W&G

SDG 5. Target 5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation for economic life

SDG 5. Target 5.4. Recognize unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services and promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family

Additionally, structures for children with physical and mental impairment seem to be insufficient and inadequate with a significant impact on the ability of mothers to work. Several women also with a good education leave their jobs to take care of their children.²⁸⁷

The Ministry of Education is trying to re-establish pre-school services with multiple variants, part time, half days, hourly services and so on, but so far the number of places available is still highly insufficient compared to the demand.²⁸⁸

Also as a consequence of reduced support services, women are very active in the informal sector as it leaves more flexibility in terms of time management for carrying out traditional tasks of child rearing, caring of elders and housekeeping. This has important repercussions on their economic stability as not only do they not have any protection against dismissal, but also as the informal sector does not provide such benefits as sick and maternity leave and pensions.²⁸⁹

From the point of view of the Government there is also an interest that people move from informal to formal employment, where they would be required to pay higher taxes and pay social contributions and in return benefit from social and labour protection.²⁹⁰

There is an accentuated horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the labour market. Men and women work in distinct sectors and also occupy different levels in the workplace hierarchy. Women are overrepresented in public sector jobs that are paid through the state budget and generally carry low salaries, such as those in education (76.6% of employees) and health care (80.3%).²⁹¹

When it comes to the private sector, cultural stereotypes, patriarchal views and de facto discrimination limit women's opportunities as entrepreneurs. Although women have de jure equal property rights, in practice they have limited access to land (property are de facto left to male members of the family and when a woman gets married the husband rarely registers any property on her name)²⁹². As a consequence women especially in rural areas have limited access to credit, assets, skills, information, and professional contacts that are needed to grow their businesses. In general women are involved in microcredit and small business, while men are involved in medium and large enterprises.

Women are also present in large numbers in the informal trade and markets, although some experts think that the entry of Kyrgyzstan into the Eurasian Economic Union ('Customs Union') has had a clear negative impact on women's ability to pursue their work as traders. New more stringent rules and standards have reduced the competitiveness of Kyrgyz traders within the region and the likelihood to make a profit. However, employment in Russia is now more accessible and safer, also for women, and the Customs Union provides opportunities in economic sectors such as food processing, a traditional domain of women.

Yet overall, lack of work at home has also meant an increase of women's migrants and a continued exposure to risks of exploitation and abuses, including GBV and human trafficking.

²⁸⁷ Meeting with CSO on 17 May 2016, UN House.

²⁸⁸ Meeting with Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Bishkek 16 June 2016.

²⁸⁹ Meeting with ILO staff, UN House, May 2016

²⁹⁰ Asian Development Bank – Gender Analysis, summary- Country Partnership Strategy: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013–2017

²⁹¹ Asian Development Bank – Gender Analysis, summary- Country Partnership Strategy: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013–2017 and National Statistics Committee (NSC)

²⁹² Meeting with Gender Expert Zulfya Kocorbaeva and MP Isakunova, Bishkek 18 June 2016.



Other issues that deserve further study

- Meetings with UN agencies and partners have underlined the important inter-linkages between empowerment of rural women, food security, food quality and women's health, capacity to have healthy children and to provide for their children. Ongoing and future programming in this area should have a holistic approach that takes into consideration financial sustainability of small businesses, climate changes, environmental issues and enhanced access to diverse and nutritious food. Joint efforts of UN Agencies working in the socio-economic and environmental spheres could enable a comprehensive approach to these issues and long-term sustainability of their interventions.
- Reproductive rights of women and spacing of pregnancies appear to be serious issues especially among the rural population and younger women with important repercussions on the health of women and their own children and in perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Although UN Agencies have extensively promoted women's reproductive rights and the use of contraceptives, there seem to be an increased pressure for women to have children and be confined in the domestic walls. In 2017 the Ministry of Health budget for the provision of free contraception will come to an end and this may have an important impact on a further increase of unwanted pregnancies, but it will also increase the risk for HIV/AIDS infections etc.
- The number of HIV positive population doubled from 2010 to 2014 with an important repercussion also on newborns. Sexual education and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases should be given high attention.
- According to the CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations, there seems to be a widespread violence against women in prostitution and drug users, in particular by the police, and related to the performing of forced testing for HIV/AIDS. In several cases these women are also victims of domestic violence / intimate partner violence, but there is a lack of shelters and support adapted to their needs.²⁹³
- A draft Law to criminalize the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community passed the first of three Parliamentary readings on 15 October 2014. The Parliamentary committee on legal and public order and fight against crime concluded on 26 February to present a revised and tightened version for the second reading. The reading was scheduled for 6 May 2015, but removed it from the agenda under pressure of some national NGOs, western governments and human rights organizations. The European Parliament had warned in a resolution in 2015 that the "adoption of this bill could affect relations with the EU," which provides budget support and other assistance to Kyrgyzstan. However, infringement of the right of members of the LGBT community by law enforcement personnel and their marginalization in society continue to be reported. Based on a report submitted for the 2015 review of Kyrgyzstan's compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW), NGOs commented that there is stigmatization of and discrimination against members of the LGBT population, which increase their vulnerability to violence and decrease the likelihood that they will seek help²⁹⁴

293 CEDAW Concluding observations, 2015, p. 5

294 Coalition of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, Alternative Report on the Situation of Women Who Use Drugs, Sex Workers, and Lesbians, Bisexual Women and Transgender People, Joint Submission, 2014, p. 12

3. Women's Human Rights and de facto gender equality: Policies and Implementation Mechanisms

3.1. International and national framework

International legal framework

The Government of Kyrgyzstan has ratified over fifty international treaties, including the UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 10 February 1997. Since becoming a state party to the Convention the Government has submitted four periodic reports and demonstrated a commitment to fulfil the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee and adhere to the standards of the Convention.

The Government has worked towards the improvement of the national legal framework governing women rights and gender equality, in accordance with the international legal framework and commitments therein. Additionally, on 22 July 2002 the Government ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol allowing for individual complaints and inquiries procedures.²⁹⁵ The latter is considered a crucial step in ensuring that women victims of discrimination can address the CEDAW Committee once the internal remedies are exhausted.

After the Fourth UN World Conference for Women held in Beijing in 1995, the GoK ratified the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA), which recommended that mechanisms should be put in place to meet defined goals.

National legal and policy framework

The 2010 Constitution recognizes that fundamental human rights are inalienable and belong to each person from birth (Art. 16(1)). It also mentions that no one should be subject to discrimination on the basis of sex, race, language etc. (Art. 16.2) and that "men and women shall have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for their realization" (Art. 16(4)).

With independence in 1991 development of a national gender framework to advance women rights started with the National Programme "Ayalzat" for the period 1996-2000, based on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). The same year the President proclaimed 1996 the "Year of Women" and established the Commission on Family, Youth and Children under the Government and with Centres for Women's initiatives at the regional level.²⁹⁶ Overall, the programme was underfunded, but it provided a legitimate framework for international donors and civil society to operate within.

In 2002 a **National Action Plan for the period 2002-2006** was adopted with a specific focus on development of gender equality policy. Women's participation in politics increased due to the adoption of a Presidential Decree that introduced a 30% system of quota and required women's nomination for positions of deputy heads of government agencies.²⁹⁷

In August 2007 a **second National Action Plan on Gender Equality was adopted for the period 2007-2010**. It defined the state gender policy, goals, objectives and principles, directions and priorities of the Country Development Strategy for 2007-2010 and gender analysis of laws became mandatory. In contradiction with these progressive policies, this period saw an absence of women in the legislative sphere and a small representation in the executive one.²⁹⁸

The adoption in 2012 of a long-term National Strategy on Achieving Gender Parity by 2020 and relevant National Action Plans (2012-2014 and 2015-2017) represents an important endeavor, but efforts and resources should be focused to ensure that targets are reached and that the Government can promptly report on this goal. The formulation of the National Action

295 Ratification status for Kyrgyzstan. At UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) Website. http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=93&Lang=EN

296 National review, p. 6

297 National review, p. 7 and Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan at <http://forumofwomensngos.kg/bpfa-in-kyrgyzstan>

298 Ibid, p. 7



Plan was led by the Gender Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, which adopted an inclusive approach through consultation of line ministries and civil society actors. The priority areas of the NAP are in line with the Platform for Action beyond 2015 and with the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the last fifteen years a number of laws have been introduced and enacted to address specific aspects of discrimination against women and/or women's rights. Major achievements are the **2003 Law on Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence**, the **2003 Law on State Guarantees for ensuring Gender Equality**, and the amendment of the **Articles 154 and 155 of the Criminal Code made in 2013 concerning Bride Kidnapping**. These articles define the financial and criminal liability of people who kidnap a woman with the purpose of marriage. The amendments increase the maximum prison sentence for bride kidnapping to seven years, and to ten years where the bride is a minor.²⁹⁹

According to women rights activist the 2003 domestic violence law does not provide the definition of domestic violence, foresees only lenient sentences for offenders and lacks preventive measures.³⁰⁰ A new draft law "On social and legal protection from domestic violence" was developed with the support of gender experts and UN Agencies. In June 2016 the rather progressive draft was under discussion by Parliament and if adopted would bring about important improvements in terms of coordination among responsible bodies, overall implementation mechanisms and issuing of restrictive orders.

Thanks to the initiative of women parliamentarians and lobbying of CSOs a Law was developed on prohibition of Islamic religious marriage - for those under age 17. The draft Law was resubmitted in June after having been voted down in May 2016. Re-submission was due to civil society advocacy. The re-submitted law passed the first reading in the Parliament Committee on Social Issues also in June 2016. According to experts interviewed, the draft Law in spring 2016 foresaw the obligation for registration in the civic registry for all marriages. Following negotiations, MPs and women's rights advocate compromised to have the prohibition of Nikha-religious marriage only for children in line with the relevant child protection commitments of the state and avoid any human rights issues pertaining to adults.

In 2013 the Government, facilitated by UN Women, drafted and then adopted a national action plan (NAP) on women peace and security for a period of three years. A second NAP was adopted for the period 2016-2017 after facilitation by UNDP. This plan covers the following areas: participation of women also at the decision making level; conflict prevention, women's involvement and impact on women and girls; protection and gender sensitive response in conflict situation; effective assistance to victims in crisis situations.

Additionally, as of June 2016 a Draft national action plan on the implementation of the CEDAW concluding observations was developed under the guidance of the Gender Department at the MLSL and submitted for approval to the government. The CEDAW NAP was developed with the support of UN Agencies (UN Women and UNDP in particular) and provides a clear framework for the UN to mainstream gender into the next UNDAF.

3.2 Institutional gender equality mechanisms

Along with the development of laws, structures have been created to support and promote the women's rights agenda. In 1998, the National Council on Gender Policy was established under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, consisting of ministers, heads of departments, parliamentarians and representatives of the civil society. In 2000 the Commission was abolished and the **Council transformed into the National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development** with a working body, namely the Secretariat in the Presidential Administration. In 2004 a special section on family and women was created in the Department of Social and Cultural Development of the Office of the Prime Minister.³⁰¹

299 Ibid, p.7

300 Meeting with Gender Experts, UN Women Office, Bishkek, May 2016

301 Ibid, p. 7

In 2012 the National Council on Gender Development was re-established under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Council is an advisory body and comprises ministers, deputy ministers, heads of provinces and civil society representatives. According to interviewed experts, the Council should meet four times a year, but this timing is not always respected.

The Ministry of Social Development is currently the central State executive body in charge of conducting a unified gender policy in the country. The Gender Policy Department is a structure established within the Ministry with six full time employees. The ministry led the discussions for the development of the Gender Strategy and the national action plan and was also responsible for issuing the report to the CEDAW Committees and coordinate the consultative process with state bodies and civil society actors.

Although the existence of an institutional gender mechanism is a positive step, its frequent relocation and the related staff changes limited its effectiveness. Moreover, the CEDAW Committee in its COB expressed concerns over the Department of Gender Policy, stating that it *"lacks necessary authority and capacity, including adequate human and financial resources and capacity to ensure that gender equality policies are properly developed and fully implemented"*.³⁰²

Notwithstanding its small size and limited capacity, the Gender Policy Department works intensively in several areas and cooperates closely with several UN agencies, including UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

Ombudsman's Office

In 2009 a functional analysis was conducted with the support of UN OHCHR to help improve the structure and efficiency of the Office and it was considered the necessity to have a dedicated Gender Department based on the complaints examined. As a result a public gender development council was established in the Ombudsman's office with a view to ensure justice in the area of gender issues and for monitoring and analysis of domestic violence cases. In 2013 the Council was transformed into a Department for protection against domestic violence and gender discrimination. This department analyses and monitors all incoming applications and aims to research features of domestic violence and gender discrimination. Given the amplitude of the problem, the Office of the Ombudsman prepared two special reports on the violence against women and domestic violence, respectively in 2012 and in 2014.

Based on the CEDAW's Committee concluding observations, the Office will soon conduct a survey on women's harassment at work. Trade Unions will support the survey to look into issues such as maternity leave, discrimination against pregnant women, and work without pay on holidays, etc.

Although the Government of Kyrgyzstan has ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol, there is no adequate structure to process such type of complaints. The Ombudsman Office also faces several challenges in terms of cooperation with governmental bodies in charge of implementing the recommendations and also from the operational point of view. The Office is financially dependent on the presidential budget, which is insufficient to ensure efficiency of the mandate. Moreover, operating with funding from international organizations is not ideal, it being a governmental body.

The actual status of the Ombudsman is not in compliance with the Paris Principles of Independence: with the support of UN OHCHR a new Law on the Ombudsman is being drafted with a focus on independence from Government and financing by Parliament. It is hoped that the new law will help attract experts and stable financing for it to carry out the mandate of the office.

The National Statistical Committee

The National Statistical Committee (NSC) plays a key role in monitoring progress of the country towards the gender equality objectives set at the policy and international level. The NSC has improved the development of gender statistics and has developed a set of core indicators

302 CEDAW Concluding observations, 2015



to monitor the gender equality progresses. Since 1996 NSC with the support of UNFPA issues a yearly publication called “Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic” which gathers gender-disaggregated data reflecting the indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Recently, the number of indicators has been expanded to better cover issues of gender-based violence (GBV). According to the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence, State bodies, local authorities and managers of legal entities are required to provide information relevant to gender issues to the NSC. Amongst others, the NSC has the task to participate in the preparation of the CEDAW reports, and the national report on human development.

The NSC has competent staff and one of their members is part of the UN Group for the development of global indicators for the SDGs. The NSC cooperates with several UN Agencies like FAO on the agricultural census, and with ILO, UNFPA, WFP, with WHO on surveys related to human development index, and pilots industrial statistics with UNIDO.

The Beijing Platform for Action has given impetus to the development of gender sensitive indicators and with the adoption of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) more NGOs are active and advocating for the development of comprehensive statistics that can help measure progress in all areas.

At the time of writing the Government has appointed an interagency working group in charge of establishing a strategy for achieving the SDGs. In order to achieve the SDGs targets comprehensive support is needed and the UN is a potential collaborator in this regard. An integrated system for data collection is not in place and the SDG agenda provides for a *raison d'être* for building a system that has gender sensitive indicators across all thematic areas as well as its monitoring sub-system. Data thus derived should be comparable worldwide and the system should be developed in line with international standards.³⁰³

The upcoming UNDAF should serve to help build the capacity of the government on data collection, data analysis and development of indicators with the ultimate goal of improving policy making and the life of people.³⁰⁴

Forum of Women-members of the Parliament

At the legislative level in 2012 gender equality issues have been transferred from the Committee on Human Rights to the Committee on Social Policy. In 2011 inside Parliament a **Forum of Women-members of the Parliament** (MPs) was established to unite women MPs and used as a platform to promote gender equality legislation. The role of the Forum is key as it brings together cross-party collaboration with currently six political factions and has fostered a gender perspective into parliamentary discussions. The Women’s Forum of MPs has been very active in advocating for legislation on women’s rights and on promoting gender-sensitive laws and carrying out gender analysis of the legislation. However, according to the MP met gender analysis of the legislation is often conducted in a formal rather than in a substantive way, thus limiting the impact of the 2006 approved Decree on Gender Policy improvement. The Forum meets on a regular basis and also travels to the regions to meet with voters.³⁰⁵

3.3. The Role and Contribution of Civil Society Organisations

Kyrgyzstan has the most freely active civil society in central Asia and much progress has been done thanks to their activism which in turn received great support from the Government starting from 2005 when after the ‘Tulip Revolution’, members of the Government administration started meeting women’s groups and listen to their voices.

Women’s organisations and civil society organizations (CSOs) in general have played and still play a key role in the advancement of women’s rights agenda and on raising awareness and understanding on the principles of gender equality in all spheres. While during the past decade progress was made both in the legal and policy framework, today Kyrgyzstan faces new challenges,

303 Meeting with the National Statistics Committee (NSC) staff, Bishkek 23 May 2016

304 Ibid.

305 Interview with MP Nikitenko, House of Parliament, 20 May 2016

with older women’s rights advocates supporting women’s advancement and gender equality and progressive younger women somewhat disconnected from the women’s rights agenda. A new generation of gender activists needs to be groomed.

At the policy level they work closely with international organizations, the UN Agencies, the Gender Theme Group (GTG) and with the government actors, both at the national and the local levels. CSOs cooperation with the UN was instrumental for the adoption of the NAP on Gender Equality, the NAP on UNSCR 1325, the adoption of the domestic violence Law and for the amendments of Article 155 of the Criminal Code. Grassroots and civil society organizations mobilized into a national campaign to eradicate the practice of bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan.

Civil society organizations work also as service providers and as of June 2016 in the country there are 13 crisis centres run by NGOs that provide support services for women who are the victims of violence, aggression and abuse. Their vast work as service providers for domestic violence survivors is undermined by lack of funds and sustainability. Informants mentioned that the work of crisis centres is often interrupted for lengthy periods due to lack of funds, while the Government co-funds only one crisis centre in Bishkek.

CSOs partnered with UNFPA and UNAIDS on issues such as maternal and reproductive health and family planning and cooperated with a wide range of stakeholders including religious leaders; ILO partners work on the advancement of the Labour Code and the ratification of ILO Conventions on women’s rights protection, especially with regards to maternity leave, social contributions, lawful recruitment and dismissal; CSOs working with UNICEF on children with disabilities issues are keen in looking at the gender implications of extensive child care and lack of support services that impede mothers to have a paid job outside the home. CSO are working on economic empowerment of rural women with UNDP, FAO and UN Women and would like to see the programme to expand to cover new beneficiaries.

On gender issues, gender legal framework, domestic violence, early marriage, women’s political participation and legal aid support, CSOs are working with UN Women and with the support of the coordination of the GTG members greater results have been achieved such as the development and the adoption of NAPs and a long term strategy. CSOs experts worked on the drafting of the CEDAW Shadow Report with several UN Agencies and a substantive amount of work was done thanks to coordination efforts and division of areas of expertise. Training for police officers on issues of domestic violence was conducted by UNICEF and UNODC partners and soon with the support of UNDP, CSOs will provide training for judges. Overall all CSOs working on issues of VAW demonstrate a greater coordination and also satisfaction on the collective work carried out, although many challenges are ahead and would require a comprehensive support and commitment for the UN over the next five years and beyond.

On the contrary, some CSOs working on environmental issues seems to be rather sceptical on the need to conduct a gender analysis and mainstream gender into their work.

CSOs have played a crucial role in the implementation of the peace-building project, where Steering Committees have been established with the participation of civil society organisations, government and the UN. All projects steps were discussed jointly and have allowed strengthening the role of civil societies at the local level, but also at the national level.

These are only some examples of actions conducted by organizations working on gender and women’s empowerment issues. The varying levels of knowledge and capacity of civil society organizations along with differing levels of de facto enjoyment of women’s rights in the various regions of the country renders the work of CSOs more complex. These experiences have allowed to enlarge the civil society space and have been formative for the NGOs staff, but have also underlined the challenges and vulnerability of the civil society actors. **More institutional support should be provided to help CSOs have a role in policy making and not only on implementation.** It is also crucial to open the space to more NGOs instead of working with the same large partners that “meet the requirements”. Overall, CSOs met mentioned the following challenges:



- Project-based work with consequent lack of financial sustainability that would be necessary to bring long term results and a tangible impact; very successful actions could not be integrated into institutions and structures and were discontinued due to lack of funds.
- Limited capacity of NGOs staff working at the local level; patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women are hard to change also amongst some NGOs staff .
- Lack of in depth understanding of gender equality principles to effectively engage the government and the local community leaders.
- CSOs are ageing. It is important to have more youth engaged in the civil society sectors.
- The rights of HRs advocate and their risk when they fight against corruption are often overlooked while there should be at the core of the next UNDAF.
- Weakness of the UN Communication strategy on gender issues and people are not sufficiently informed about ongoing actions. UN does not seem to react on DV and child abuses crimes on a regular basis.
- Much research is conducted but with little follow up on lobbying for systemic action by government.
- Need for systematic coordination and sharing of information among stakeholders.
- Limited human and financial resources and competition for funds among CSOs.
- Perception that there is duplication of work of UN agencies with waste of funds.
- Financial procedures and reports for small NGOs in the field are cumbersome and do not seem to take into consideration the difficulties to collect supporting documents in rural areas.

4. Engaging men in women's rights and gender equality issues

Kyrgyzstan is a country of profound differences between the capital Bishkek and other regions of the country and more generally between urban and rural areas. Along with the gain of the soviet era that has supported women's advancement and equal rights, at least in the public sphere, a patriarchal society still persists and is even being reinforced, where gender stereotypes and customary practices discriminating women are widespread and perceived as "natural". Women may have important posts in the public sphere, but their overall recognition is linked to their roles as mothers and wives, rather than as individuals.

Traditionally men are the head of the household and breadwinner, but men are also the victims of social pressure and gendered stereotypes and thus expected to conform to social norms and behaviors. Men are expected to marry at a certain age in order to be considered successful. The sociologist Aitieva³⁰⁶ underlined that many men are raised by mothers who were victims of kidnapping and fathers who committed kidnapping, and receive signals from their family and community that kidnapping is a "normal" and "acceptable" behavior and that women must be submitted. The same applies to domestic violence, several men have seen domestic violence as part of their life and find it hard to break the generational repetition.

In rural areas researches report that men tend to marry the woman chosen by the family but then would happily engage in polygamy in order to marry the woman of their own choice, readily finding women who would take-up this inferior position. This is an indication of how men are both victims and perpetrators of gender discrimination and social norms, with the difference that ultimately they hold the power and ultimately act in their own interest.

Men's involvement into wider security issues is paramount to address gender based violence and gender discrimination. A gender analysis of security issues brings into light that women's security is most at risk at home and that women are mostly victims of gender based violence perpetuated by men and elderly women in the households and not in the street.

306 Medina Aitieva, Sociologist co-author of the American University-Central Asia study on abduction for forced marriage. Human Rights Watch Report, December 2015.

Positive transformation requires inclusivity of both men and women, dialogue among the two and empowerment of women. Working with men is a prerequisite to address gender-based violence and eradicate discriminatory behaviors and attitudes. As of today there is a very good examples of work conducted by the UNFPA in trying to use a gender transformative approach by looking at men and boys' involvement into responsible fatherhood and gender-based violence.

A pilot survey on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions was conducted in Talas and Chuy Oblast in 2013, covering students from 11th grade and adults leading to evidence based programming started in 2014 in the pilot regions. Two main concepts are promoted: happy and responsible fatherhood and men and boys' involvement into gender issues. This pilot programme represents an important step to build the basis for a new gender-aware generation. Deconstructing masculinity and gender assigned roles can eventually bring transformative changes and put the basis for an inclusive society that benefits both men and women.

An expansion of the programme at the national level could bring about effective results in countering gender prejudices and sensitising both men and women on the importance to have **peace and equality at home** for the achievement of a more just society that provides space for women's rights achievement and countering GBV.

Other initiatives are taking place to challenge traditional gender perceptions. In north-eastern Kyrgyzstan, for example, local high school students have created clubs for young men who are interested in promoting gender equality and raising awareness about domestic violence. And in Bishkek, a new wave of feminism is emerging to address broader issues of sexuality and inequality, as well as reproductive rights.³⁰⁷ Across the country, UN Women in 100 secondary schools engages male students to advocate for and act towards girls' rights.

5. Key Findings, Gaps and Opportunities

The Kyrgyz Republic in line with its national and international commitments and recommendations of UN Treaty Bodies must ensure that legal, social and economic barriers to women's empowerment are removed. **The formal commitments should translate into practical actions and on visible improvements in the lives of the majority of women by holistically and urgently addressing the below issues.**

- **The economic crisis is contributing to the feminization of poverty** in rural areas where women due to gender biased traditions and customs have limited access to properties, assets and financial services. Both in rural and urban areas the insufficiency and inadequacy of social welfare services accompanied by deeply rooted gender norms have pushed women back home or into the informal labour market. This entails a risk for women's impoverishment and vulnerability to various forms of exploitation, lack of social protection such as health and maternity leave, contribution for a pension and regulated working hours. Strong gender segregation in the employment sector reflects the gender segregation in education, thus limiting women's empowerment and access to opportunities.
- Effective women's economic empowerment has still to happen. The process of economically empowering women in difficult contexts requires a multidimensional approach, including interventions that target women, their community and the larger society, to create true empowerment. So far actions are limited to pilot interventions and too often the promotion of economic activities is not sustainable. Women's economic empowerment should be seen at the macro and micro level and full enjoyment of rights (de facto access to land, property, inheritance, etc.) guaranteed by the state to enable access to credit and financial opportunities. Women's economic empowerment has a direct influence on children nutrition, education, and

307 Positive news. "Challenging patriarchy in Kyrgyzstan", Positive New, 25 January 2015 <https://www.positive.news/2015/society/16994/challenging-patriarchy-kyrgyzstan/>



health and overall is instrumental to end the cycle of women's poverty. Moreover, in the present context of migration of men abroad, women often remain alone and have to take up the role of head of households, but with little preparation and an unsupportive society.

- **Domestic violence and violence against women remain serious concern in Kyrgyzstan** and multiple barriers mentioned earlier impede survivors from seeking help or accessing justice. The **adoption of the new draft legislation on domestic violence is a matter of urgency** as many of the forms of violence against women happens within the domestic walls and by family members. Given the high number of women's rights violations and gender based violence cases, the police would benefit from the establishment of gender sensitive units staffed with female officers and highly trained male officers that deal with various forms of GBV, including domestic violence, early marriage, bride kidnapping and rape. This measure would very likely help increase the reporting and in the long term the convictions for GBV crimes and act as a deterrent along with other preventive/educational measures.
- **Justice sector reform and access to justice for women find several impediments.** Government structures in general and the justice sector specifically do not enjoy citizens' trust and are said to be corrupted and slow. Access to justice for women and men in rural areas is almost non-existent given the limited reach of formal justice system. There is an ethnic and religious subculture that in several cases overlaps and prevails over formal rule of law structures making it hard or impossible for a woman to have direct access to justice. It is important to break this subculture and societal control that puts pressure to first use local dispute mechanisms like the Aksakal Courts formed predominantly by elder men also for women's rights related issues, though criminal infringements are not to be discussed by Aksakal Courts.
- **Women equal participation in the decision-making room** is a question of equal representation of citizens and a question of human rights. Yet a great deal needs to be done to ensure women's de facto inclusion in the country's governance structures in order to enforce and implement the women's rights legislation now in place. Bylaws should be adopted to ensure that the 30% quota remains effective and enforced also after the elections and that the number of female elected members and members in office should remain the same and cannot decrease. The Election Commission and the Constitutional Court have often failed to uphold the law.
- The patrilocal system in place and **lack of registration of many brides in the groom's house constitutes a real impediment for women to participate in the local elections.**

Among the roots and underlying causes we have:

- Limited education, marginalisation of women in the public and political space and in the country economy is eroding women's rights and position and have heightened women's vulnerability to multiple forms of VAWG exposing them to domestic violence, early marriage, early motherhood and inherent risks such as maternal mortality, school dropout, polygamy and unregistered marriage.
- Socio-cultural and religious factors that dictate women and men's role in the society without any appreciation of the real needs of individuals and respect of their human rights. Often women are disempowered accepting discrimination as 'normal' and even try to justify violence meted out to them. Men from their side are also victims of gender norms and subject to social pressure to conform to existing models.
- The resurgence of patriarchal values and the strengthening of traditions or religious beliefs detrimental to women's rights is undermining the progress made and women's capacity and opportunity to make independent choices for their own life, to freely access education, the labour market, politics, and participate in the social, economic development of the country.

Progress and gaps within the Institutions:

- There is a **wide implementation gap resulting from the lack of adequate structures and sufficiently formed personnel** that can enable the effective implementation of adopted laws and counter existing stereotypes and forms of discrimination hampering the full enjoyment of women's rights and de facto equality. The good work of law and policy-makers too often ends with the **adoption of laws and policies that are celebrated as a result and not as means for the achievement of equal rights**, whereas continued effort are indispensable to ensure the implementation of these laws and national programmes.
- **Institutions remain weak and the reforms hard to implement because human resources remain almost unchanged** or well-trained staff members especially at the local level have been replaced by others that are not gender sensitive. Insufficient understanding and lack of gender awareness and expertise among civil servants, politicians and staff working in governmental bodies at all levels; lack of commitment to gender equality, especially if at the cost of retaining control and networks, are all factors undermining de facto gender equality. Presently it seems that achieving gender equality is the duty of a few and decided according to personal conviction. This overall sentiment reflects also weaknesses in a systemic gender mainstreaming approach conducted by UN agencies in their work with the various government bodies and civil society partners.
- At the government level there is a **misperception of what constitutes de jure and de facto equality** with little consideration for the multilayer factors that constitute a solid barrier to the achievement of substantive gender equality. Institutions operate under entrenched gender norms and practices. Even when a woman is recruited, this does not mean that she is included and given a voice.
- The Ministry of Social Development which hosts the Gender Machinery is working hard on facilitating implementation of the law, while justice sector performance and women's access to justice and protection is undermined by several factors, such as weak and corrupted institutions, resorting to courts of elders, and widespread impunity towards acts of violence against women, accompanied by ignorance of both duty bearer and rights holders vis-a-vis women's rights.
- Patchwork interventions and unsustainable results call for more integrated and thoughtful approaches that are based on evidence, which requires investment in quality sociological research. Having an in depth knowledge **of how people think and what people value and why**, will help to better address gender related issues that have remained unresolved for so long by bringing about behavioural change and discarding societal norms that are oppressive and unfair to women.
- Lack of baseline data, regular monitoring and reporting on NAP progresses accompanied by inadequate budget to support gender related structures and mechanisms, render the ad hoc efforts made by some national bodies and international actors unsustainable.
- Progress has been made in terms of budget allocation for the implementation of National Action Plans and Laws, yet these are highly insufficient making their implementation impossible without the support of international donor agencies. The achievement of gender equality seems to be a separate exercise while **gender responsive budgeting (GRB)** should be at the core of the UN mandate in its work with all government bodies at all levels. A gender responsive budget leads to more efficient use of the resources (in this case limited), brings accountability and transparency and is an important mechanism for ensuring greater consistency between economic goals and social commitments.



Recommendations:

Parliament and governance structure need to be strengthened with competent staff and resources that would allow the enforcement of the legislative framework. Extensive work is required to raise awareness about adopted laws and relevant weak institutional mechanisms and other support systems like crisis centres and police that must become strong institutions in order to face the constant challenges deriving from widespread violence against women and cultural acceptance of it.

Sustained work has to be carried out to combat the current **strong segregation of gender issues with only a few Ministries and Government bodies** taking the lead and being clearly committed and active, and others hedging that gender issues are not relevant to their work. All UN agencies, funds and programmes need to implement headquarters commitments and ensure accountability in their daily work, putting gender issues on the agenda in every strategic meeting with Government and civil society actors and implementing partners.

The Women Forum of MPs provides an excellent platform to promote gender sensitive legislation, but its cohort should be strengthened and its gender awareness built to ensure they could successfully advocate for women's rights advancement. In future the Parliament may ask government bodies to report on the extent to which their budget is gender responsive. Capacity building is also needed in strengthening the monitoring function of the Parliament for the gender equality strategy and the implementations of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations. Additionally, extensive support has to be provided to conduct the gender analysis of the Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Civil Code, and Civil procedural Code.

The work conducted in the **development of gender statistics has proved to be highly relevant and useful and has to be continued** to enable the Government of Kyrgyzstan to monitor its own progresses and make adjustments towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

The **application of adopted Laws** must be supported by law enforcement mechanisms, but it is also **strictly linked to societal changes, behavioural changes and people's perceptions of what is right, wrong, acceptable or unacceptable**. In order for UNCT interventions to have impact and provide concrete support to the Government to achieve transformative change, it is fundamental to have a holistic approach that takes into consideration gender roles, and relations in each context and look at how gender difference intersects with other identities. UN Women and UNFPA have conducted knowledge, attitude and perceptions studies that should provide a very good basis to develop programmes that can bring changes.

Justice sector reform is crucial and its potential impact on women cannot be ignored. Three basic reform packages are strongly needed to support societal changes, namely: 1) building confidence of women and their legal awareness to facilitate access to justice; 2) free legal aid, which does exist but needs to be extended also based on a pro-bono culture among lawyers; 3) building capacity among law enforcement and the justice system on women's rights and holding officers accountable for decisions they take according to existing review and complaints mechanisms.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) should be supported as a key tool to address structural gender imbalances and inequalities deriving from gender neutral budgets and help governments understand how they may need to adjust their priorities and reallocate resources to achieving gender equality and advancing women's rights.

Achieving gender equality and promoting women's full agency and participation is a fundamental question of human rights, but it is also a question of smart economy and comprehensive development. It is a crucial element in the foundation for a peaceful and prosperous world that benefits the whole society.

6. The role of the UN in the Kyrgyz Republic**The UN in the Kyrgyz Republic**

Kyrgyzstan became a member of the UN in 1992. Currently there are 21 UN agencies, funds and programmes working within the UN Country Team (UNCT).

The Resident Coordinator's (RC) system in the Kyrgyz Republic is anchored in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the common strategic framework intended to serve as a foundation for different UN entities to implement their respective activities in a coherent and coordinated way. The current UNDAF 2012-2016 was titled 'peace and stability toward sustainable development' and extended to 2017.³⁰⁸ It identifies three priority areas as shown below:

- 1) Peace and Cohesion, Effective Democratic Governance, and Human Rights;
- 2) Social Inclusion and Equity; and
- 3) Inclusive and Sustainable Job-Rich Growth for Poverty Reduction.

The current UNDAF for the Kyrgyz Republic does not identify separate specific gender outcomes and gender equality had to be considered as a cross cutting issue along with human rights. Also, the UNDAF does not feature gender issues at the output level. Additionally, the existence of a gender mainstreaming strategy with identified priorities was meant to serve as guidance for the different agencies. Unfortunately, this was not always the case and gender analysis and gender mainstreaming has not been consistently followed within the AFP and the UNCT.

To facilitate the achievement of the outcomes, under the UNDAF, several thematic working groups have been put into place: UNCT thematic groups on Youth, Communications, and HIV, where ad hoc efforts have been made to mainstream gender issues, but have not yielded the expected results; the Gender Theme Group (GTG) and the Extended GTG, the main coordinating mechanisms for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE).

The Extended GTG consists of UN gender focal points and staff of international organizations present in the country, including donors. It also served as a sub-group of the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC), a donor coordination mechanism of 19 members, constituted of donors, government agencies, and civil society institutions jointly chaired by the UNRC and the Kyrgyz Prime Minister.³⁰⁹ Regrettably, it appears that the sub-group has been abolished.³¹⁰

The assessment analysis elicited two main factors impeding a successful mainstreaming of the gender strategy within the UNCT and within Agencies.

- At the policy level there seem to be a lack of awareness on the importance that the UN as a whole with its global mandate, and the Secretary General with his multiple calls and endorsements put on gender equality and women's empowerment in all areas of the UN work. Indeed, among those interviewed there is a shared view that a stronger linkage between the UN Mandate as a whole and GEWE priorities of the GTG and the agenda of the UNCT must be established and maintained.
- At the programmatic level, interviews with staff of the UN agencies at all levels highlighted a varied level of understanding, capacity and commitment to integrate a gender perspective into their work. Several perceive that inviting an equal number of females and males to participate in a determinate action would do justice to ensuring gender equality. Others though seem to understand in theory the importance of using a gender sensitive approach and apply a gender analysis to their work, still fail to do it in a systematic way with corresponding gaps at the programmatic level and in reporting.

308 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to the UN System Coordination on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Kyrgyz Republic case study, pp.13-15

309 Ibid.

310 UN Women Representative. Email exchange, July 2016.



The Gender Theme Group in Kyrgyzstan

Many consulted GTG members and other UNCT and national stakeholders felt that the GTG should be reinforced to have increased influence and leverage on the work of the UNCT and with national partners.

The GTG consists of 22 members, but only about one in three attend the meetings on a regular basis. Additionally, members of the GTG have a varied level of knowledge and capacity to influence their colleagues within their respective agencies. Some staff are gender specialists with many years of experience and a gender portfolio within their agency, others have less experience and volunteered to be members out of a personal and professional commitment to gender equality issues. Consequently, within the agencies there is a big discrepancy in terms of seniority and easy access to the head of agency, capacity and leverage to advocate for the GEWE agenda.

The group is primarily working as an information-sharing platform on GEWE issues and several members who consider it sufficient to receive the minutes, often do not attend meetings. Real coordination among members seems to be lacking with a few working in close cooperation on specific issues, events and on ad hoc basis.

Several stakeholders expressed the view that more senior staff support is needed as well as in depth capacity building to ensure that the UN can lead by example for the standards it sets.

Key recommendations:

The GTG should have a stronger role in the UNDAF process and be enabled to provide consistent and constant inputs to the development of the next UNDAF strategy in accordance with the new interim guidelines and the sustainable development goals.

Training on the strong linkages among the various dimensions of work of the UN agencies should be carried out to help establish those linkages that do exist in real life and that are determinant factors for the achievement of de facto gender equality and the eradication of VAW (gender dimension of legal, socio-economic, cultural and religious factors).

Starting from 2017 an accountability framework should be established at the level of the RCO making in depth systematic gender analysis and a gender based approach a mandatory requirement for all agencies to ensure the achievement of Goal 5 on gender equality by 2030.

Sustained senior staff support to the work of the GTG members, along with reporting of gender related issues at the UNCT would help to keep the issue in the mainstream. Specific gender issues involving multiple agencies could be presented as a cluster at the UNCT meetings.

The UN should also tap on the potential of the extended gender thematic group and have regular monthly meetings with all organizations. This would help not only to improve coordination amongst all actors, but also to have more visibility at the national level, increase leverage with the Government and overall accountability of the UN in the field of gender equality. Additionally, the establishment of ad hoc mini groups to advocate on specific issues and for requiring joint meetings with the government is crucial for keeping the pace and greater cohesion.

The UN Comparative advantage and key areas of intervention

The UN has a comparative advantage for a multidimensional approach to the issues listed above:

The UN in Kyrgyzstan has 21 agencies that cover all thematic areas mentioned above in section 1.3, its work is conducted under the overall coordination of the Resident Coordinator and benefits from existing coordination mechanism such as the Gender Thematic Group and the support of responsive civil society. There have been several evaluations of UN Agencies' work and

lessons learned that could provide a very good basis to improve the interventions in the sphere of gender equality and women rights.

All UN Agencies have a clear mandate to mainstream gender issues into their work with several of them having specific gender-related outputs in their Annual Work Plan (AWP). According to the accomplished work and interviews conducted, there are more than ten UN Agencies that are committed and ready to work jointly on a comprehensive gender outcome to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment (UNDP, UNIDO, UN Women, IOM, UNFPA, UNODC, UNICEF, ILO, OHCHR, WFP, WHO, FAO). Their **coherent input and technical support for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment can put the foundation for the realisation of the sustainable development goals**. The gender thematic group has carried out important actions over the years, but needs to be strengthened and supported at the policy and operation level to ensure that work in the area of gender equality and women's rights does not get watered down.

- The UN with its gender thematic group has an important coordination role at the country level on issues pertaining to gender and women's rights. In close cooperation with the government, civil society and other international and national actors much has been accomplished and is under way, including the development and (expected) imminent adoption of the new Domestic Violence Law and the CEDAW National Action Plan. The GTG work was and will be determinant in the implementation of existing legal and policy instruments that require substantial and joint support to achieve the goals therein.
- The UN is the primary body in charge of supporting the Government of the host country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN Agencies have established over the years a relation of trust and cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic that enables full access to the various State bodies, both at the national and local level.
- Executive and legislative branches of the Government, civil society actors and members of the extended GTG interviewed have recognised UN expertise and knowledge on transformative approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and have expressed readiness to embark on a more substantial endeavour that can bring gender transformative changes, and where the UN can lead towards the achievement of SDG 5 and all other interlinked SDGs.

Thus, the UN in Kyrgyzstan is in a privileged position **to provide a coherent input and facilitate transformative societal changes** that require a holistic approach targeting men and women, boys and girls and **put strong basis for the realisation of the sustainable development goals**.



7. Overall conclusions

One of the aims of the **UNDAF is to contribute to sustainable, durable and equitable development**. Sustainable development cannot happen if half of the population is left behind, abused or simply neglected. A strong patriarchal culture that perpetuates gender stereotypes and discrimination, are one of the main challenges in the country, along with widespread lack of awareness on women's rights legal framework amongst the population at large and by those that detain powers.

The UN while supporting the Government must apply a twin-track approach that ensures gender is mainstreamed in all areas of the UN work, but it is also given a specific consideration to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and have strong foundation for a sustainable development and a democratic country.

The next UNDAF should put a stronger focus on accountability of duty bearers towards the achievement of de facto gender equality and eradication of violence against women. Both the interviewed NGOs and relevant Government stakeholders believe that the **UN is best positioned to have a comprehensive outcome on gender and women's rights** that can tackle the key issues identified.

Strategic entry points for the UN to work on GEWE can include, but are not limited to:

- **Functional education on GEWE** that can bring transformative societal changes by targeting men and women, boys and girls. Areas to be covered may include reproductive health and responsible parenting, conflict management and diversity, gender equality, early marriage, bride kidnapping etc.
- **Address social acceptance and impunity for VAW, gender based discrimination and gender-based violence.** Combatting violence against women as a key element for a stability and peace strategy that implies human security for all, both at home and outside. Engage women, men and youth to design and implement education campaigns inspired to values of tolerance, respect and diversity.
- **Communication and advocacy for inclusive development and women's empowerment at the national and local level** through promotion of women's participation in electoral processes, public life and economy. Multidimensional approach with interventions that include women, their community and the society to create true empowerment. Support women to be real agents of positive changes through adequate economic opportunities, education, training and long life learning.
- **Evidence based policy making and programming:** It is recommended to further develop and strengthen models for transformative changes linked to technical assistance for evidence-based policy making that can ultimately address root causes and underlying factors impeding de facto equality and women's full agency.
- **Work with youth on educational and awareness programmes and have them fully engaged in supporting** the development of a new generation free from gender biases and GBV and actively involved towards the achievement of a democratic, tolerant and peaceful country.
- **Bridge the gap between de jure and de facto equality:** support the Government of Kyrgyzstan to strengthen its institutions and bridge the implementation gap in all areas of life and at all levels (Law on Gender Equality, Law on Domestic Violence, Law on early marriage, Law on Bride kidnapping, Family Code, Law on Property, NAP on UNSCR 1325). Provide extensive guidance and expertise for the further development of gender sensitive indicators and statistics that can help monitor the application of the legal and policy framework and increase their accountability.
- **Improve women's access to justice:** Provide extensive advice, capacity building and support to ensure that the justice sector reform takes into consideration gender based violence, biases and challenges encountered by women. Continue support a

gender sensitive reform of law enforcement system that embraces the principle of zero tolerance towards GBV, including vetting of officers, tackling weak corrupted system and helping introduce accountability mechanisms. Use this opportunity to help address gender stereotypes and widespread discrimination of LEA against women, but also against LGBT and HIV/AIDS positive women.

The implementation of the legal and policy framework governing gender equality and women's rights has to be in line with the sustainable development goals and supported by a comprehensive work for the introduction of a gender responsive budget in all Ministries and local government bodies.

Only if the UN together with the Government of Kyrgyzstan set clear targets **for SDG 5** and all women are freed from violence and given equal opportunities to contribute to the development of their country, poverty cases will reduce significantly, family health will improve and children will have a better upbringing and by 2030 the country will be able to meet several SDGs targets.

It is crucial to consider that a number of other SDGs complement and reinforce SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 5 is the basis for the achievement of other SDGs, such as SDG1 to end poverty everywhere which requires gender sensitive strategies and empowerment of women; SDG 2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition calls for opening up opportunities for women and vice-versa only empowered women can contribute with their work to improve family nutrition; SDG 16 to promote inclusive and good governance recognize the important role women play for the achievement of a democratic and peaceful society and so on.

Therefore, sustainable development cannot happen without gender equality and women's empowerment. **Women represent half of the population and are a vital part of the economic, social and political life of the Kyrgyz Republic, but their potential and utility is not exploited fully due to VAW, gender discrimination and stereotypes.** Failure to have a comprehensive approach to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) will substantially limit the achievement of all others SDGs with an ultimate negative impact on the overall development and stability process of the country.

End of Report



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