

GEORGIA

National-level Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing +30

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Section I: Highlights

In December 2023, Georgia received EU candidate status, marking a significant milestone in its journey toward integration with European institutions. Central to this progress is Georgia's commitment to advancing gender equality and combating violence against women (VAW), aligning its legal frameworks with international standards, and implementing targeted policies to protect women's rights.

Georgia boasts a robust legal framework for safeguarding women's rights, encompassing various laws addressing discrimination, gender equality, domestic violence, and the rights of persons with disabilities and children. Recent legislative reforms, such as the enactment of anti-sexual harassment laws and amendments to labor codes, demonstrate Georgia's proactive stance in creating safer work environments and holding perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable. Additionally, the adoption of laws on the rights of persons with disabilities and children underscores Georgia's commitment to inclusivity and social justice.

Georgia has made strides in institutionalizing mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, particularly within the public service sector. Notable initiatives include the introduction of internal mechanisms in public entities and the establishment of the Tbilisi City Assembly's mechanism for addressing sexual harassment. Moreover, strategic documents like the State Concept on Economic Empowerment of Women and the Gender Equality Strategy provide a roadmap for promoting gender equality across various spheres of society.

Efforts to improve data collection and gender-disaggregated statistics are vital for evidence-based policymaking and monitoring progress toward gender equality. Georgia has taken significant steps in this regard, with initiatives such as the National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics and the adoption of a Strategy for Gender Statistics. Time-use surveys and nationwide studies on violence against women have provided valuable insights into gender disparities and the prevalence of VAW in Georgia.

The government has implemented various measures to address violence against women, including specialized training for law enforcement officials, the establishment of emergency hotlines and shelters, and the introduction of risk assessment tools for assessing cases of violence against women. However, challenges remain and work needs to be continued.

Georgia has made commendable progress in advancing gender equality and combating violence against women, evidenced by its legislative reforms, institutional mechanisms, and data-driven approaches. However, sustained efforts are needed to address remaining challenges and achieve substantive gender equality. By prioritizing legal reforms, institutional capacity building, data collection, and multisectoral collaboration, Georgia can further strengthen its commitment to promoting gender equality and ensuring the rights and safety of women and girls. To build on its achievements and address remaining challenges, Georgia should consider:

- ✓ Enhancing institutional capacity and coordination to effectively implement gender equality policies and combat VAW across sectors.
- ✓ Prioritizing data collection and research on gender disparities, VAW prevalence, and the impact of interventions to inform evidence-based policymaking.
- ✓ Intensifying efforts to prevent child marriage through awareness campaigns, legal reforms, and targeted interventions in high-risk regions.

- ✓ Engaging civil society, international partners, and the private sector in advancing gender equality and combating VAW through collaborative initiatives and resource mobilization.

Section II – Priorities, Achievements and Challenges

Georgia is a country in the southern Caucasus with a population of around 3.7 million. Georgia's population is aging. Between 2002 and 2023, the share of women aged 65 and above among the total number of women increased from 15.3% to 18.7% while the same figure for men increased from 10.9% to 12.1%.

The poverty rate in Georgia declined and the share of the population under the absolute poverty line comprised 11.8% in 2023.¹ The country's poverty rate does not differ significantly by gender, and its reduction has benefitted both women and men.

Georgia has been classified in the “very high human development” group for the third consecutive time, based on the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index (HDI).² As per the 2023-2024 Human Development Report, Georgia has improved its Human Development Index (HDI) rating compared to the previous report, placing it 60th among 193 countries and territories. Georgia's overall Human Development Index stands at 0.814. With this rating, Georgia surpasses EU member Bulgaria, NATO member North Macedonia, and Albania. In the post-Soviet region, Georgia ranks ahead of Armenia (0.759), Azerbaijan (0.745), Moldova (0.767) and Ukraine (0.773).³ On the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2023,⁴ Georgia ranks 76th of 146 countries and has a value of 0.71.

On December 14, 2023, Georgia was granted **EU candidate status** on the understanding that Georgia takes the relevant steps as set out in a Commission recommendation. The proper functioning of democratic institutions and reforms related to justice and the rule of law are a priority for Georgia to further advance toward future EU membership. In this regard, the Council welcomed the overall good legislative framework, institutional set-up, and vibrant civil society and recalled that these elements provide Georgia with a sound basis. Georgia made overall progress on reforms related to public administration, public procurement, and the economy. In this regard, the Council encouraged a sustained level of alignment with EU rules and standards and encouraged Georgia to further deepen the sectoral cooperation with the EU, based on the EU-Georgia association agreement and the deep and comprehensive free trade area agreement between the EU and Georgia.⁵

The Government of Georgia has joined or **ratified several global and regional normative** and development frameworks related to women's rights and gender equality, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA),⁶ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),⁷ the Istanbul Convention⁸ and the Generation Equality Forum.⁹ In addition, the country has made significant strides to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security and its subsequent resolutions and the GoG has endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

¹ <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/192/living-conditions>

² The Human Development Index (HDI) is an internationally comparable measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: health, knowledge, and living standards.

³ <https://www.undp.org/georgia/press-releases/georgia-human-development-index>

⁴ https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf; pg. 185

⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/georgia/>

⁶ Adopted in 1995

⁷ Ratified in 1994

⁸ Ratified in 2017

⁹ Launched in 2021

Development and nationalized each of the 17 SDGs, including SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.¹⁰

Georgia possesses a **well-developed national legal framework** for safeguarding women's rights. Key components of this framework include the Labour Code of Georgia, the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, the Law on Gender Equality, the Law on Domestic Violence and VAW, the Law on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Code on the Rights of the Child (which covers the protection of girls). The anti-discrimination legislation in Georgia covers a wide range of aspects, encompassing sex, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, disability, political opinions, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

Georgia has made significant improvements to advance legislative and policy reforms around gender equality and violence against women (VAW), to accelerate progress for women and girls, punish sexual harassment, and promote the rights of women and girls.

In 2019, Georgia enacted a **bill on sexual harassment** that then led to corresponding amendments to the Labor Code and the Code of Administrative Offences, creating safer working environments and holding perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable.¹¹

As a result of the adoption of the draft law, the definition of sexual harassment and its regulation in the public space was determined by the Georgian Law "Administrative Offences Code of Georgia".¹² It also determines the enforcement mechanism and imposition of certain sanctions.

The Government of Georgia has been actively working on the institutionalization of **internal mechanisms for preventing and responding to sexual harassment** in the public service. As of April 1, 2024 around 19 public entities adopted internal mechanisms on the prevention of and response to sexual harassment. It should be mentioned that Tbilisi City Assembly is the first local self-government body to introduce a mechanism for the prevention of and response to sexual harassment.¹³

Taking action against sexual harassment responds directly to the commitments undertaken by the Government of Georgia under the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, which, among other obligations, places the responsibility on strengthening measures to end all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual harassment.

On March 17, 2020, the **Law of Georgia on Combating Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability** was adopted, granting the court authority to deprive a person convicted of committing a crime against sexual freedom and inviolability (including against minors) of certain civil rights with a guilty verdict. In particular, according to the new law, a person may be restricted from working at an early and pre-school educational institution, school, shelter/crisis center for victims of violence against women or domestic violence, as well as the person may be restricted from the rights to exercise medical and to transport passengers

¹⁰ Adopted in 2015

¹¹ Country Gender Equality Profile – Georgia 2023; Pg.19; available at: https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/cgep_eng_web2b.pdf

¹² Administrative Offences Code of Georgia; Article 166¹

¹³ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/03/un-women-support-leads-to-approval-of-sexual-harassment-prevention-and-response-mechanism-by-tbilisi-city-assembly-and-tbilisi-city-hall>

(including public transport), as well as the right to be in a library designated for minors, a children's entertainment center, an institution providing any kind of educational/learning services for minors, etc. The monitoring process of persons convicted of crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability is carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. In February 2021 Ministerial Order "On the Procedure for the Prevention and Control of Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability by the Authorized Bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia" was issued. In order to effectively enforce this, an electronic monitoring programme and a registry for persons who have committed a crime against sexual freedom and inviolability were created.

The electronic monitoring program includes drawing up a personal case, based on which the case manager can determine the lifestyle of a person convicted of a sex crime. The latter being an important component in order to avoid the risk of re-committing a crime.

As for the registry, it refers to an electronic database where the personal data of convicted persons, judgments and information on the deprivation of rights provided by law are processed.

In order to effectively monitor convicted persons, there are case managers employed within the Ministry. Case managers, within the scope of their competence, draw up personal cases of convicted persons, implement control measures, such as meeting with the convicted person/deprived person at least four times a year, whether they are summoned to territorial bodies or a visit of a law enforcement officer to a residential or other address.

In 2019 a **Code on the Rights of the Child** was adopted, which entered its legal force on June 1, 2020 setting a legal framework for the protection of the rights of the child. The Georgian Parliament fulfilled the pledge the government made on the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by adopting this Code. The Code is a comprehensive legal document with the power to transform the lives of children in Georgia. The Code is based on a key principle: All legislative and administrative procedures should be developed and implemented with the primary consideration given to the best interests of the child. The Code guides how all state agencies, local government bodies, other administrative bodies and the Common Courts as well as public and private organizations work with and for children. The Code also envisages the creation of specific child rights protection and implementation mechanisms. For instance, it introduces a child-friendly justice system and creates a state system that ensures the welfare and safety of all children. The Code introduces family support programs and completely bans corporal punishment in all settings. With its passing, the Code makes Georgia the 58th country in the world to completely prohibit corporal punishment.

In 2021, a legislative amendment entered into force in the Criminal Procedure Code and the Juvenile Justice Code of Georgia, according to which the investigator of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was granted the authority to include the Witness and Victim Coordinator in the criminal process by his/her own decision before the case is brought before the court. Based on the structural changes to the Department of Human Rights Protection of MIA, the Office of the Witness and Victim Coordinator services was established as a structural unit of the department. The purpose of this amendment is to strengthen the Coordinator's services, ensure the coordination of their activities, and to establish unified approaches and standards to ensure that the functions are quality and results-oriented. The coordinator of witnesses and victims shall prioritize communication with minor victims/victims and witnesses.

The coordinators of the Witness and Victim Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs systematically undergo qualification trainings, including a recent Juvenile Justice certification course coordinators have completed.

Georgia has shown strong commitments to various international development agendas for disability-inclusive development and gender equality. Georgia is committed to the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for people with disabilities for the 2013–2022 period. At the national level, in 2020, Georgia adopted the **Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, which fully entered into force in 2021 and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been ratified. Adoption of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2020 was a positive step for protecting and ensuring the rights of PWD’s and their well-being. This law is of particular significance because it moves Georgia from a medical to a biopsychosocial model of disability, in line with CRPD standards. Georgia also introduced supportive mechanisms for the inclusion of PWD’s into society, started the process of moving towards a social model of disability and recognized the need to promote the activities of organizations representing PWDs.

Due to widespread stereotypes, parents are likely not to register girls as having disabilities, even if they are aware of their daughter’s disability. This practice stems from stereotypes around women with disabilities—and specifically the fear that disclosure of disability may prevent her from getting married. The lack of official status not only makes women with disabilities invisible to policymakers but also prevents them from receiving state benefits and accessing services for which they should be eligible.¹⁴ Data on the Universal Healthcare Programme (UHP) indicate that women with disabilities are significantly less likely to use the UHP. In 2020, 41.3 % of women with disabilities and 63.2 % of men with disabilities used the UHP.¹⁵

In September 2020, a large-scale **labor law reform was carried out**. The legislative package included extensive amendments to the Labor Code and a new Law of Georgia on “Labor Inspection”. The amended Labor Code outstandingly strengthens the legal framework for the protection of the labor rights of Georgian workers by meeting the requirements of EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the International Labor Organization. The amendments include several provisions, in particular, the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, an extended list of grounds for discrimination, the principle of equal pay for equal work, working time regulation, part-time and fixed-time work, the concept of internship, higher standards of maternity and parental leave, etc. The newly amended Labor Code introduced higher standards of maternity and parental leave.¹⁶

According to the principle of substantive equality, which was reflected in the Constitution of Georgia within the framework of the Constitutional Reform of 2017, the state was obliged to take specific measures to eliminate the inequality between women and men and to promote substantive equality. The constitutional change was necessary to eliminate existing inequalities and reverse the patriarchal agenda.

The Election Administration (EA) of Georgia is an independent institution, which, prepares and organizes the conduct of elections of the President of Georgia, Parliament of Georgia,

¹⁴ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/03/un-women-support-leads-to-approval-of-sexual-harassment-prevention-and-response-mechanism-by-tbilisi-city-assembly-and-tbilisi-city-hall>

¹⁵ UN Women Issue Brief; Women with Disabilities in Georgia; available at: <https://rb.gy/lngx2j>

¹⁶ Labor Code, available at: <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

municipal representative body - Sakrebulo, municipal executive body - mayor elections, referendum and plebiscite; Also, the development and strengthening of democratic electoral processes, where the free and unrestricted use of active and passive suffrage is protected and guaranteed.

The CEC established permanent Gender Equality Council in 2011. Today, a mandate of the Gender Equality Council (Council), which is established on the basis of the order of the CEC Chair, is to promote the implementation of the gender equality policy in accordance with the strategic plan of the election administration.

The EA of Georgia acknowledges Georgia's constitutional principle of substantive equality and declares that it is important for Georgia's democracy, peace, security and its long-term development to establish human rights, including gender equality-based approach. Recent research conducted in Georgia corroborates that the imperative for society is to enhance gender equality in politics. According to researches, the majority of voters are in favor of increasing the participation of women in politics. The Permanent Council of Gender Equality (Council) is responsible for the development and promotion of the gender equality policy in the election administration of Georgia. The said document (policy document) of Gender Equality Policy of Georgia's election administration is the second of its kind. It is based on the first document of Gender Equality Policy and on the assessment of the progress of its implementation in 2022 and defines the guiding principles and objectives of the Gender Equality Council of the Electoral Administration. Implementation of the policy document should promote gender equality in election administration and strengthening of women's participation in politics:

- **From an institutional standpoint:** by strengthening the mechanisms of equality between members of the election commissions and the officials of the election administration;
- **In the electoral process:** by ensuring equal opportunities between voters and candidates including by awareness raising.

Georgia undertook commitments under the **Generation Equality Movement**¹⁷ in the following two thematic areas:

1. Gender-Based Violence;
2. Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality.

Equal pay is one of the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes its key to inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Sustainable Development Goal 8 calls for promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth; full and productive employment; and decent work for all. Equal pay is also addressed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) as one of the indicators for women's empowerment. Georgia has committed to fulfilling the obligations indicated by these international instruments.

In 2021 with the help of UN Women, Georgia joined the **Equal Pay International Coalition** (EPIC) and once more has underlined the need for equal pay for equal work. It is noteworthy that with this step, the country reaffirmed its readiness to fulfill the obligation to eliminate the

¹⁷ The global Generation Equality movement was launched in 2021 at the initiative of the United Nations. In the reality challenged by COVID-19, it creates a new space for the fight for women's rights and gender equality. The movement is based on a comprehensive blueprint for the advancement of women's rights – the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

gender pay gap. Georgia has become one of the first countries to join the International Coalition. According to Geostat 2019 data, the monthly gender pay gap in Georgia is 36%, which means that the monthly salary of employed women averages 64 % of the monthly salary of employed men. According to the survey “Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labor Market in Georgia”, published in 2020 by UN Women, the raw hourly gender pay gap in Georgia is estimated at 15.4% with a monthly pay gap of 23 %.¹⁸

The creation of the State Concept on Gender Equality (adopted by the Parliament in 2022) and the State Concept on Women’s Economic Empowerment (adopted by the Parliament in 2023) is a highly progressive development, laying the groundwork for important commitments and gains for the rights of women and girls and their empowerment in Georgia.

Women’s economic empowerment is essential to achieving women’s rights and gender equality. Promoting women’s economic justice and rights in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁹ Georgia took special measures to ensure the essential equality of men and women and to eliminate inequality by adopting the State Concept of Economic Empowerment of Women. In March 2023 the Parliament endorsed the **State Concept of Economic Empowerment of Women** with 78 votes, which is related to the priorities determined by the Georgia-EU association agenda. The document is based on the principle of essential equality guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and aims to establish the vision of women's economic empowerment in Georgia and define the main policy.

The State Concept of Economic Empowerment of Women is a national cross-sectoral concept. Its main priorities are: 1. equal access to economic opportunities; 2. Enhancing the gender-sensitive legal framework; 3. Improvement of the public procurement and employment practices in the public sector; 4. Improving the employment practices in the private sector; 5. Recognition, reduction, and distribution of unpaid and care work; 6. encouraging the formalization of the work of women engaged in shadow economy activities; 7. Fighting conflicting social norms.

In 2022 Parliament adopted the **State Concept on Gender Equality**. It is a strategic document that defines how the state sees gender equality, how it ensures and protects it, including through laws. The concept is the state's vision for the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensuring gender equality in civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres, both in public and private relations.

The cornerstone of the Concept is Article 11 of the Constitution of Georgia provided for by the constitutional amendments implemented by the Parliament of Georgia in 2017, which, along with formal equality, established the principle of substantial equality in accordance with international human rights standards: “The State shall provide equal rights and opportunities for men and women. The State shall take special measures to ensure the substantive equality of men and women and to eliminate inequality.”

In 2022 the Government of Georgia fulfilled another obligation imposed by Article 30 of the Istanbul Convention and adopted a **regulation on issuing compensation to the**

¹⁸ <https://www.geostat.ge/media/57459/Adjusted-gender-pay-gap---2022.pdf>

¹⁹ UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, *Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment*. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/01/hlp-wee-reports-and-toolkits>

victims/survivors of violence against women and domestic violence. As a result, a victim/survivor of violence is entitled to receive compensation from the State if the harm caused by the damage to her/his health resulting from the crime committed against her/him has not been compensated by the perpetrator. The amount of the compensation is determined by a court decision. The responsibility for issuing the compensation lies with the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking and the maximum amount of compensation is set at GEL 10,000. This is an important novelty and supporting mechanism that the State provides to the victims/survivors of violence.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Georgia identifies legislative amendments in 2022 that removed the requirement of official status as “victim of gender-based violence against women” to access State-funded support services to be a positive aspect. The legislative amendment entered legal force on 1 July 2023.

There is a growing need for high-quality statistics in our era, taking into account that reliable data represents the basis for evidence-based and good decision-making. **The National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia 2020-2023** defines the main directions of official statistics production in Georgia and provides general rules of conduct for the statistics-producing agencies. This strategy emphasizes the importance of official statistics for the development of a democratic society and calls on relevant agencies to assure reliability, objectivity, and impartiality in the production of official statistics.

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) has been actively working on improving the availability of gender data for better policymaking. In line with these efforts, in October 2021, Geostat with the support of UN Women adopted its **first-ever 2021–2023 Strategy for Gender Statistics**. The document builds on the 2020–2023 National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Georgia (NSDS) and aims to define Geostat’s strategic vision and priorities for developing gender statistics in line with international and national benchmarks.

Key priorities under the newly adopted strategy include producing high-quality and demand-driven gender statistics; strengthening the capacity, coordination and financing of gender statistics production and use; and enhancing the dissemination and usage of gender statistics. The document was developed as a result of a participatory process involving consultations with all relevant stakeholders and is further informed by key international frameworks including Georgia’s commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Between 2020 and 2021, the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) implemented Georgia’s first-ever **Time Use Survey** with the financial and technical support of UN Women. The survey aimed at generating statistically reliable and internationally comparable time use data in Georgia, improving gender statistics, estimating indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and informing policies focused on gender equality.

In 2022 the **action plan and communication strategy of the Permanent Parliamentary Gender Equality Council for 2022-2024** were approved. The Action Plan includes several main directions – facilitation of the formation of gender policy main directions, improvement of the legal base in the gender equality sphere, capacity building of the Council, and improvement of the state mechanisms, as well as the increase of awareness.

The Permanent Parliamentary Gender Equality Council with the assistance of UNDP, developed and approved a methodology for assessing the gender sensitivity of the Parliament. In 2022 the first report on the **Parliament's Gender Sensitivity Assessment Index** was approved. According to the report, Parliament's gender sensitivity was estimated at 61.78 points (out of 100 points). The purpose of the report was to assess the Parliament's gender sensitivity according to the five areas:

- Equal conditions for men and women to enter parliament;
- Equal conditions for men and women to influence the work of parliament;
- Whether the interests and needs of women occupy an adequate place in the work of Parliament;
- Parliament endorses gender-sensitive legislation;
- Parliament corresponds to its symbolic function.

Another positive step, in December 2022, was the adoption of amendments by Parliament to the law on Normative Acts, to introduce **gender impact assessments for all draft legal initiatives on a voluntary basis**. In 2022, the Ministry of Finance conducted first ever Gender-Responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM) Assessment, which created a roadmap to mainstream gender-responsive budgeting and gender-sensitive reporting. The GRPFM self-assessment of Georgia was carried out by the Ministry of Finance with technical support from UN Women from December 2021 to May 2022 and it sets the benchmark for future assessments. Public financial management was analyzed from a gender perspective for the first time.

In 2022 Permanent Parliamentary Gender Equality Council announced an open competition for the first time to celebrate the contribution provided to gender equality and women's empowerment. The annual award's goal is to increase awareness of the importance of attaining gender equality and to recognize the accomplishments of those who take an active role in efforts in this direction. Awards were given to Iulia Kharashvili, the founder and chair of the IDP Women Association "Consent" and Gogi Revia, the head of the social protection and gender equality department of Zugdidi Municipality's social and healthcare service, this initiative lays the foundation for the tradition, which involves expressing special thanks to the winners of the competition every year for their contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment.

In 2022-2023 Civil Service Bureau of Georgia with the support of UN Women and the ISET Policy Institute conducted the **Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) of the Law of Georgia on Public Service**. The research aims to support the Civil Service Bureau in identifying existing gender gaps in the Law and to provide the Government of Georgia with evidence-based recommendations for its improvement to further promote gender equality and women's empowerment within public service.

The State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration for 2021-2030 and the respective Action Plans²⁰ serve as one of the key mechanisms of civic equality and integration policy, which aim to: - further strengthen democratic society based on equality; and – create equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, for full participation in all spheres of public life. The main inter-related priorities of the Strategy are:

²⁰ <https://smr.gov.ge/en/page/31/state-strategy-for-civic-equality-and-integration-and-action-plan>

1. State language for integration,
2. access to quality education,
3. equality, civic and political participation;
4. social and economic integration;
5. intercultural dialogue - with a special focus on further empowerment of women and youth.

The priorities, goals and objectives identified in the policy document are addressed through the effective implementation of specifically tailored and state-funded unique instruments and tools, specifically:

- offering different special programs for state language comprehensive learning;
- ensuring facilitated access to vocational and higher education;
- offering internship opportunities in the public sector;
- providing quality education in mother tongues;
- teaching smaller minority groups' languages in schools;
- ensuring access to information and media products in native languages;
- launching large-scale information and awareness-raising campaigns in minority languages on state programs and services;
- supporting the culture of ethnic minorities.

Currently, the implementation of the Action Plan for 2023-2024 of the Strategy is in progress. It implies various programs, projects and activities, including those that aim at promoting gender equality, improving access to quality education, and state language competence, increasing women's participation in decision-making and social-economic empowerment.

The Strategy elaboration and its implementation is led and coordinated by the Office of the State Minister in close cooperation with the relevant state agencies, an active engagement of civil society, experts and international partners. The Government Commission has been established to ensure effective coordination among all relevant state agencies. The Commission meets regularly, as well as organizes working sessions, meetings, and consultations as required, and convenes the meetings of the consultative thematic working groups with participation of the representatives of state agencies, NGOs, experts, academia, ethnic minority representatives and all interested actors.

Since the Strategy covers 10 years, two interim assessments are planned to be undertaken in 2024 and 2027, while the final assessment - in the end of its implementation period – in 2030.

The new **2023–2026 Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy and 2023–2024 Action Plan**, which were put in place by the Government of Georgia in early 2023, integrate several important gender equality commitments under the BPfA on promoting women's leadership in public service and integrating gender analysis into the policy planning process.²¹ National policy documents of Georgia include 'Government Programme 2021-2024'²² and 'Georgia's Development Strategy – Vision 2030'.²³ The Development Strategy of Georgia - Vision 2030 is a national multi-sectoral strategy. Its main objective is to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

²¹ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-10/eng_par_handbook_27p.pdf;

²² https://www.gov.ge/files/41_78149_280277_GP.pdf

²³ https://www.gov.ge/files/428_85680_321942_khedva-2030-saqarthvelos-ganvitharebis-strategia-1.pdf

2022-2027 Gender Equality Strategy of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is a part of the process of systemic reforming of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and is based on the principles of eliminating gender-based discrimination, ensuring equal rights and freedoms for men and women, and creating equal opportunities for the realization of these rights. The document is guided by the findings and recommendations of the participatory gender audit conducted by the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia with the support of the UN Women in 2021, and takes into account international tools, standards and best practices for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The gender equality strategy of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia consists of two strategic goals:

1. Ensuring an equal and discrimination-free working environment in the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and promoting women's empowerment;
2. Enforcement of effective, accountable and gender-sensitive justice in the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia.

The tasks under the strategy include:

- Task 1.1 Strengthening the institutional mechanisms and policies of gender equality in the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia
- Task 1.2 Empowering women employed in the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and providing equal opportunities for women and men
- Task 1.3 Improving the production and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia for gender-sensitive policy planning and evaluation
- Task 2.1 Implementation of gender-sensitive investigative and prosecutorial activities in the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia
- Task 2.2 Promotion of gender-motivated crime prevention
- Task 2.3 Improving coordination with international and local organizations to effectively respond to cases of violence against women

The **Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Development Strategy of Georgia** for 2021-2025 and the relevant action plans are in place. The strategy's main goal is to create a favorable environment for small and medium-sized enterprises and identified seven priority directions for the purposes. One of the priority direction out of seven dedicated to promote of women's entrepreneurship development. The strategy provides a situation analysis of gender gaps in relation to SMEs. The main objectives under the 6th main priority are:

- 6.1 Popularisation of “Women Empowerment Principles” (WEPs)
- 6.2 Improving gender-based statistics in state programs
- 6.3 Encouraging women participation in state programs
- 6.4 Strengthening digital skills of women entrepreneurs
- 6.5 Support capacity building of state institutions for the development of gender-based approaches.

The spread of Covid-19 has led to people self-isolating or quarantining themselves. Some people in Georgia and around the world lost their jobs and some started to work from their homes. On 12 March 2020, all public and private entities in Georgia were recommended to

start teleworking and a nationwide state of emergency was declared on 21 March 2020. The data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), which shows domestic violence figures, do not reflect any sharp changes amid the pandemic.

COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on women employed as domestic workers and their employers. As the work of domestic workers requires a physical presence, the restriction on public transport left most domestic workers unemployed and unable to find another job.²⁴

To mitigate the damage caused by the global pandemic government of Georgia developed anti-crisis plan, which was implemented in two stages and covered a large part of the population with various targeted benefits.

The COVID-19 Anti-Crisis Economic Plan (AEP),²⁵ aimed to financially assist people newly out of a job because of the pandemic while also supporting businesses. For stage one of the AEP, utility bills (for electricity, water and waste management) were financed for more than 1.2 million families, and natural gas bills were financed for more than 670,000 families.

The State also ensured nine main food products against price spikes by signing contracts with major importers. Another important part of the AEP was that 600,000 people were allowed to defer their bank loans.²⁶ For stage two, hired employees who lost their jobs or were on unpaid leave received GEL 200 each month for a period of six months. Persons employed in the informal sector or self-employed persons received one-time assistance of GEL 300 if they provided proof of loss of income. Additionally, families with a social rating score between 65,000 and 100,000; families with a social rating score between 0 and 100,000 with three or more children under the age of 16; and people with severe disabilities and disabled children received GEL 100 each month for a period of six months.²⁷ Within stage three of the AEP, utility bills were financed for four more months from November 2020 – February 2021. Children up to the age of 17 received one-time financial assistance of GEL 200. About 80,000 people who were unable to present sufficient documentation required to receive unemployment assistance, received it regardless before the end of September 2020.²⁸

According to stage four of the AEP, people employed in the formal sector who lost their jobs received assistance of GEL 1,200 within six months of January 2021. The self-employed received GEL 300 in one-time assistance. Families with a social rating score between 65,000 and 100,000; families with a social rating score between 0 and 100,000 with three or more children under the age of 16; and people with severe disabilities and disabled children will receive GEL 600 throughout the period of six months. Moreover, people whose economic activity is restricted in the months of December and January had a chance to defer their bank loans.

The Georgian authorities took steps to align laws, policies and institutional framework with the standards of the Istanbul Convention in the area of promoting gender equality and combating

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https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Georgia/Attachments/Publications/2020/COVID-19%20Impact%20on%20Domestic%20Workers_ENG.pdf

25 Georgia, Anti-Crisis Economic Plan.; available at: https://www.gov.ge/files/288_75975_470501_GOG_ACP_COVID19_LKF.pdf

26 *ibid*

27 *ibid*

28 *ibid*

violence against women. Significant changes were made to legislation that were discussed above.

Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence requires evidence-based policymaking. The collection of systematic and comparable data from all relevant administrative sources is crucial in this regard, as is information on the prevalence of all forms of violence against women.

The Prosecution Service of Georgia collects disaggregated data on gender-based crimes as well as other types of hate crime. Based on the memorandum of understanding first signed in 2020 and updated in 2023, the Prosecution Service of Georgia, the Supreme Court of Georgia, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the Special Investigation Service are collecting and publishing detailed joint reports on hate crime, including gender-based crimes, on the web site of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

Section III - Progress across the areas

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Under the Labour Code, discrimination “shall be defined as the direct or indirect harassment of a person aimed at or resulting in impairing the dignity of a person, and creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, degrading or abusive environment for him/her, and/or creating the circumstances for a person, directly or indirectly causing their condition to deteriorate as compared to other persons in similar circumstances.”²⁹

According to this definition, unequal pay for work of equal value should be considered discriminatory. It should be noted that before 1 January 2021, cases of violations of labor rights were considered only by the court. Since 1 January 2021, the Inspectorate has been authorized to investigate labor rights and issue sanctions.

In September 2020, under amendments to the Labor Code, the obligation of employers to ensure the principle of equal remuneration³⁰ for equal work for men and women was set out. This change aims to ensure the reduction of the gender wage gap. It should be noted that the gap between wages is small in the public sector, which is due to the adoption of the law on remuneration in public institutions in 2017. The indicated law has ensured the existence of equal wages for similar positions.³¹

According to Geostat average monthly nominal earning in 2023 is 1858 GEL (\$688). It has increased compared to previous years - in 2022 average monthly nominal earning was 1543 GEL (571 USD) and in 2021 it was 1304 GEL (\$482). The average monthly earnings of employees by sex in 2022 was 1055 GEL (\$390) for women and 1537 (\$570) for men.³² According to Geostat in 2023 rate of unemployment decreased in Georgia to 16.4% compared to previous years when the rate of unemployment in 2021 reached 20.6% and gradually decreased to 17.3% in 2022. The unemployment rate by sex is lower among women and comprises 14% in 2023 and 18.3% for men.³³ Retirement age for men and women is differentiated in Georgia. Women are allowed to retire and receive an old-age pension from age 60.

In 2020, Georgia declared its aspirations towards joining the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) and launched the appropriate procedures for accession. The process was completed in September 2021 and the country has joined the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) and once more has underlined the need for equal pay for equal work.

²⁹ Labour Code of Georgia, Article 2(4).

³⁰ According to the Labour Code of Georgia, Article 41(1), the labour remuneration means a basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which the employee receives directly or indirectly, in respect of his/her employment from his/her employer.

³¹ This refers only to public servants, who have higher standards of labour rights than employees in the private sector. Remuneration of public servants is equal but only within the sector.

³² <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/39/wages>

³³ <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/683/Employment-Unemployment>

According to the Constitution of Georgia, the state shall support the promotion of the employment of its citizens.³⁴

On September 29, 2020, the Parliament of Georgia voted for amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia “Georgian Labor Code” and adoption of the new Law of Georgia on “Labor Inspection”. Amendments to the Labor Code outstandingly strengthen the legal framework for the protection of the labor rights of workers. The amendments include the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, an extended list of grounds for discrimination, the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment - provision on equal pay for equal work, working time regulation (including weekly rest time and break time introduced, over time, working time for minors, etc.), Part-time and fixed-term work (differential treatment prohibited).

Following the amendments to the Labor Code higher maternity and parental leave standards were introduced meaning that maternity paid leave of absence is in the amount of 183 calendar days of a maternity, or 200 calendar days in the case of complicated childbirth or twin birth, shall be compensated. Also, childcare leave for 730 calendar days can be fully or partially used. This period may be distributed between the pregnancy and postnatal periods, as they consider necessary.³⁵ The Code also provides for additional unpaid parental leave, in particular, “employee may, upon his/her request, be granted, in whole or in parts, but not less than 2 weeks a year, additional unpaid parental leave of 12 weeks until the child turns 5.”³⁶ Employees who are breastfeeding infants under the age of 12 months may request an additional break of at least 1 hour a day. A break for breastfeeding shall be included in working time and shall be paid.³⁷

As for women employed part-time, based on the amendments implemented in 2020, an article on part-time work was added to the Labor Code. According to this article, concerning employment conditions, part-time employees shall not be treated in a less favorable manner than comparable full-time employees solely because they work part-time unless different treatment is justified on objective grounds. Therefore, a part-time employee enjoys the same rights as a full-time employee.³⁸

As a result of the same amendments, the Labor Code of Georgia incorporated new provisions regulating the rights of a pregnant woman, a woman who has recently given birth or is breastfeeding, including the prohibition of their employment for night work, providing them with reasonable accommodation, to request the performance of work in the same establishment that corresponds with her health condition, releasing her from the performance of the duties under the employment agreement, which shall not be considered as a period of temporary incapacity for work.³⁹

After the end of a period of maternity leave, parental leave, or newborn adoption leave, the employee shall have the right to return to the same job under the same employment conditions, and to enjoy any improved employment conditions to which the employee would have been entitled if she or he had not taken the respective leave.⁴⁰

³⁴ Constitution of Georgia; Article 5 – Social Status; paragraph 4

³⁵ Labor Code, Article 64; <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

³⁶ Labor Code, Article 40; <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

³⁷ Labor Code, Art.24(6) <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

³⁸ Labor Code, Art. 16 <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

³⁹ Labour Code, Art. 28 <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

⁴⁰ Labour Code, Art. 20 (6-8) <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/1155567?publication=21>

The Law on Public Service of Georgia further allows employees to take time off work for prenatal care, while the Labor Code prohibits termination of employment during maternity leave and considers terminating labor relations to be inadmissible during the period of maternity, newborn adoption leave of absence, and child care additional leave of absence after a female employee notifies the employer about her pregnancy.

According to the same law a public officer, who is a pregnant woman, a woman who has recently given birth or is breastfeeding, a person with a disability, a minor, a legal representative or supporter of a person with a disability, and/or a person who has a child under the age of 3 years, may be employed to work overtime with his/her written consent only.⁴¹ Officers may enjoy the right to part-time work for health reasons, or for raising a child of less than one year old and during pregnancy.⁴² The state-provided compensation is restricted to women in formal employment. This benefit amounted to GEL 1,000 over six months until 2023, when the benefit was increased to a maximum of GEL 2,000.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis did not affect paid maternity, childbirth and childcare leave. The compensation equal to the full salary for civil servants for 183 calendar days and amounting to 1000 GEL for employees in the private sector during the same period, was paid during the pandemic. In addition, in 2020-2021, by decision of the Government of Georgia, a targeted program was approved⁴³ to alleviate the damage caused by the new coronavirus infection. Because many enterprises were forced to reduce the number of employees or place employees on unpaid leave, the Government established 1200 GEL compensation to be paid from the state budget to such persons. Compensation continued to be paid for 6 months, i.e. 200 GEL per month. Persons being on leave because of childbirth, maternity, childcare, or adoption of a newborn (including persons whose employment was terminated or suspended) were also eligible for the compensation.⁴⁴

The Georgian Labor Code defines that state supervision over labor legislation is ensured by the LEPL Labor Inspection functions, authority and power of which is guaranteed by the newly adopted Law of Georgia on Labor Inspection. The law of Georgia on “Labor Inspection” establishes an independent enforcement body, LEPL Labor Inspection Service, and defines basic principles, authority and power of inspection, rights and obligations, and ensures effective implementation of labor norms. The ultimate goal of the Labor Inspection is to ensure the effective implementation of labor provisions/norms, in particular, protection, enforcement, and improvement of labor rights. The mandate applies to and ensures oversight of all labor rights determined by the Labor Code, Law on Public Service, including, forced labor and labor exploitation, execution of the agreements reached through labor mediation, and OSH norms as determined by the Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety. Therefore, for the Government of Georgia to give full effect to all the above-said amendments, a full-fledged Labor Inspection Service is in place as of January 1, 2021.

In 2019 the Parliament of Georgia adopted landmark legislation for the prevention and response to sexual harassment. This legislative milestone – the adoption of legislative changes to the

⁴¹ Law on Public Service of Georgia Article, Article 61¹ paragraph 1¹

⁴² Ibid; paragraph 5

⁴³ Decree of the Government of Georgia No. 286

⁴⁴ On the approval of the targeted state programme to alleviate the damage caused by the new coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) (COVID19) infection caused by
<https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4864421?publication=18>

Labor Code and the Code of Administrative Offences - created a safer working environment, where the perpetrators will be held accountable for sexual harassment.

The law defines sexual harassment for the first time in Georgia's legal system, as an 'unwelcome conduct of a sexual character aiming or resulting in violation of one's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment'.⁴⁵ The new law defines 'sexual behavior' as including making sexually explicit comments, showing genitalia, and other verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior.⁴⁶

According to the new law, sexual harassment in public spaces constitutes an administrative offense resulting in a 300 GEL (\$110) fine, and a 500 GEL (\$190)⁴⁷ fine or 30 days of corrective labor if the offense is repeated within a month. Sexual harassment committed against a minor, a pregnant woman, a helpless person, a person with a disability, or in the presence of a minor, results in a fine in the amount from GEL 500 to GEL 800 (\$295). Repeated commission of sexual harassment within one year after the administrative penalty is imposed, or by two or more than two persons, is punished by a fine in the amount from GEL 800 to GEL 1000 (\$370), or corrective labor for a term of up to one month or administrative arrest for up to ten days.⁴⁸ Victims of sexual harassment can take their case to court or address the Public Defender, which now has a mandate to issue recommendations to legal entities that must be responded to within 20 days.

Having an internal complaints mechanism on sexual harassment in place is a very important first step for gender mainstreaming in state entities and allows for effective implementation of Georgia's legislative framework in the area of combatting sexual harassment.

Taking action against sexual harassment responds directly to the commitments undertaken by the Government of Georgia under the Istanbul Convention, which, among other obligations, places the responsibility on strengthening measures to end all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual harassment.

The Government of Georgia has been actively working on the institutionalization of **internal mechanisms for preventing and responding to sexual harassment** in the public service. As of April 1, 2024 around 19 public entities adopted internal mechanisms on the prevention of and response to sexual harassment. Key ministries including the Ministry of Defense, the Prosecution Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development are among the many public institutions that have developed and adopted internal sexual harassment prevention and response mechanisms.

In 2024, as a result of UN Women support, such a mechanism was approved in the City Assembly and City Hall of Tbilisi Municipality. The framework prohibits sexual harassment by employees or political officials of municipal bodies and, if such an act is confirmed, provides for appropriate sanctions. In addition, the mechanism (1) promotes awareness of sexual harassment and its inadmissibility for the employees of Tbilisi City Assembly and Tbilisi City Hall; (2) stipulates a victim's right to an efficient and timely response to the reported act; and (3) outlines the establishment of a non-discriminatory environment free from

⁴⁵ Administrative Offences Code of Georgia; Article 166¹ paragraph 1; Law of Georgia on Gender Equality; Article 6; paragraph 1; sub-paragraph "b"; Labor Code of Georgia; Article 2, paragraph 4

⁴⁶ Labor Code of Georgia; Article 2, paragraph 4¹

⁴⁷ Administrative Offences Code of Georgia; Article 166¹ paragraph 1;

⁴⁸ Ibid, paragraphs 3 and 4

sexual harassment and a healthy organizational culture. Tbilisi City Assembly is the first local self-government body to introduce a mechanism for the prevention of and response to sexual harassment.

The e-learning course for the prevention of sexual harassment⁴⁹ in the workplace developed by the Public Defender's Office with the support of UN Women is among the most requested 20 training courses according to 2023 Annual Report of the Civil Service Bureau.⁵⁰ The e-learning course aims to raise awareness and promote the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Public Defender includes information about the measures taken by the PDO office about sexual harassment cases in its annual reports and recommendations issued by the PDO about the sexual harassment cases are available online.⁵¹ As the practice of the Public Defender shows, the awareness of the legislation prohibiting sexual harassment and the relevant mechanisms has increased, which is reflected in the number of applications from women employed in various fields.

Since 2020 around 14 cases of sexual harassment were established by the public defender. The cases examined by the Public Defender during the reporting period (2020-2024) concern the facts of sexual harassment in the workplace, sports federation, and educational institutions while providing healthcare services.⁵² In most cases, the harasser is the supervisor, however, sometimes employees are harassed by persons of the same rank or lower position.⁵³

In 2022 the Public Defender started working on the challenges faced by female athletes. In this regard, it is welcoming that in 2023 the Georgian Football Federation shared the recommendation of the Public Defender and as a result, it became possible to provide female football players with medical insurance, which is an important positive step in the process of achieving equality.⁵⁴

The Time Use Survey was carried out in Georgia generating data on the time spent on paid and unpaid work by women and men. In Georgia, this data was unavailable until the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) filled this data gap releasing the results of Georgia's first Time Use Survey on 9 December 2022.⁵⁵

Georgia's Time Use Survey revealed that women in Georgia spend almost five times more on unpaid domestic and care work compared to men. Being married and having young children significantly reduces women's likelihood to engage in paid work and their weekly labor market work time on the one hand, and increases their time spent on domestic and care work on the other hand. The data also shows that women have less free time (1.2 hours per day) compared to men (1.8 hours per day), spend less time on social and community interaction activities (2.1 hours compared to 2.8 hours) and are more likely to experience time pressure (32.6%)

⁴⁹ <http://sexualharassment.ombudsman.ge/ka/login>

⁵⁰ [http://csb.gov.ge/ Annual Report – 2023](http://csb.gov.ge/Annual%20Report%20-%202023); Pg. 22

⁵¹ <https://www.ombudsman.ge/eng/191127024229seksualuri-shevitsroeba>

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ *The Situation in Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2022*; pg.148

⁵⁴ *The Situation in Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2023*; pg. 183

⁵⁵ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/GTUS%20Report%20ENG%20WEB%20%281%29.pdf>

compared to men (25.1%), which has adverse effects on their physical and mental health and wellbeing.⁵⁶

Georgia is rich in agricultural tradition, which is an integral part of its history, mentality, and cultural heritage. Agriculture played an important role in the formation of the Georgian statehood and contributed much to its economic development. Agriculture and rural development have an important role to play in the country's sustainable economic development and inclusive economic growth. 75% of the rural population is self-employed, mostly in the agricultural sector.⁵⁷

For Georgia, agriculture remains a priority sector in terms of GDP contribution and economic growth. Gender differences in the sector show that women are more involved in low-income activities than men, such as subsistence agriculture. The participation of women in agricultural activities is lower than that of men.⁵⁸

In 2022, the average amount of men working in agricultural holdings exceeds 10% the same indicator for women workers, while the number of man-days worked by the men workers during the year exceeds by 3% that the man-days worked by women workers. Women on average work more than men. One of the reasons for this can be attributed to the intensive involvement of women in animal husbandry, which means feeding cattle/poultry or milking cattle for a whole year.⁵⁹

Rural Georgia is home to approximately 40.6% of the total population. The majority of the country's rural population is self-employed in agriculture. Women living in rural areas of Georgia constitute 51% of the rural population. In rural Georgia, the data show that 33.5% of women are economically active. Rural women who are not working in agriculture mostly work in public service sectors—particularly education and health.

The Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for the period 2021–2027 and its corresponding action plan for the 2021–2023 period is a notable improvement. The document has a full subchapter that analyses the situation related to gender, which points to limited access to information, technology, and agricultural resources, as well as limited access to agricultural lands, finances, and other assets.⁶⁰ The document also states that in the implementation of the strategy, special attention will be paid to stimulating the involvement of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.⁶¹ One of the activities⁶² is dedicated to the employment of women in rural areas in non-agricultural fields. According to the performance monitoring report of the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2021–2027 and Action Plan 2021–2023 in 2021, the number of students enrolled in technical and vocational education programs providing skills necessary for rural non-agricultural employment in 2020, totaled 548 students, of whom 161 (29%) were women. The number of students enrolled in 2021, totaled 601 students, of whom 177 (29%) were women. As part of admissions announced in 2022, the

⁵⁶ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2022/12/women-spend-five-times-more-on-unpaid-care-work-compared-to-men-georgias-first-time-use-survey-finds>

⁵⁷ Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2021 – 2027; available at: <https://eu4georgia.eu/wp-content/uploads/Agriculture-and-Rural-Development-Strategy-of-Georgia-2021%E2%80%932027.pdf>; pg.5

⁵⁸ Ibid; pg. 14

⁵⁹ <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/196/agriculture>

⁶⁰ Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2021 – 2027; available at: <https://eu4georgia.eu/wp-content/uploads/Agriculture-and-Rural-Development-Strategy-of-Georgia-2021%E2%80%932027.pdf>

⁶¹ Ibid; Pg. 30

⁶² Activity 1.2.18

number of students enrolled in vocational education programs was 13,411 individuals. Of those, 6,267 were women, and 7,144 were men.

The Regional Development Program (RDP) of Georgia is a medium-term government document setting out main goals in Georgia's regional development and determining priorities and measures for the period 2018–2021. RDP has been designed considering a number of horizontally applied requirements, including the consideration of horizontal policy objectives related to sustainable development, gender equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion.

Human capital is a crucial development factor for all countries trying to make good use of globalization processes. According to the RDP Georgia needs to invest a lot in the coming years in the improvement of human capital almost in all categories.⁶³ Disparities regarding accessibility to social infrastructure and good quality general education, VET, and health services are very high – leaving those in rural, remote, and high mountainous areas without little skills and options, very often for young people. This is the reason behind migration` to Tbilisi, other cities or abroad.⁶⁴ Another important factor influencing the development prospects is the level of social cohesion and inclusiveness. As analysis revealed Georgia is confronted with the decreasing but still very high disparities among social groups and citizens of different territories..⁶⁵

Georgia's women are legally entitled to own and inherit land and property, but customary practices usually give men privilege in property inheritance, ownership, and administration. According to Article 19, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, "the right to property and inheritance shall be recognized and guaranteed". The Civil Code of Georgia regulating private property, family and personal relations is based on the principle of equality.⁶⁶ The distribution of land area among men and women is the following: the share of land operated by women in the whole land operated by all agricultural holdings is 18% in 2023 and for the last 3 years varies within 17-21 percent.⁶⁷

In 2022 a Thematic Inquiry into Women's Access to Financial Resources was conducted by the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia. The report underscores that women encounter more restricted pathways to economic assets than men. This limitation stems from various factors, including an unsupportive environment and ecosystem for women's engagement in entrepreneurship, which is influenced by familial and communal dynamics shaping women's decisions and achievements. The study identifies barriers to accessing financial resources, such as the uneven distribution of family responsibilities and caregiving duties, insufficient availability and quality of care services, subpar public infrastructure, and constrained mobility.⁶⁸

In September 2020 a memorandum was signed between the Rural Development Agency (RDA) and the UN Women to increase the capacity of rural women. The purpose of the agreement is to support women's economic empowerment by involving women in Rural Development

⁶³The Regional Development Program (RDP) of Georgia; available at: <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo185566ENG.pdf> Pg.79

⁶⁴ Ibid;

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Civil Code of Georgia, Article 1

⁶⁷ Women and Man in Georgia, 2023; pg.106

⁶⁸ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 38; available at: https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/cge_eng_web_3.pdf

Agency programs in Georgia and to develop a special program aimed at vulnerable groups of women. Within the scope of the Memorandum, RDA adopted the Gender Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2024 in 2022. Strategy and Action Plan are based on the recommendations of the Participatory Gender Audit (PGA).

The Rural Development Agency (RDA) Greenhouse Pilot Programme was launched in 2022 in Marneuli and Lagodekhi⁶⁹ municipalities as part of a collaboration between UN Women and the RDA, with 80 % of the funding contribution coming from UN Women. In 2023 the program was extended to women farmers in the municipalities of Chkhorotsku, Vani, and Chokhatauri and is fully funded by state resources. Moreover, the development of the stand-alone support programme for women is part of the 2022–2024 Gender Strategy and Action Plan of the RDA. Within the framework of the program, the co-financing provided in 2022-2023 exceeds 1.8 million GEL.⁷⁰

The goal of the developed stand-alone Greenhouse Program is to empower economically inactive women within the target municipalities by improving their socioeconomic status and stimulating women's involvement in agricultural activities. The program offers financial and technical assistance to eligible female participants to establish new greenhouses. It is important to note that this program is exclusively for women and that the participants are required to legally own or co-own land plots of no more than 5,000 square meters. Within the framework of the program, a greenhouse with an area of at least 200 square meters will be financed. The beneficiary's co-financing requirement is set at a minimum of 10 % of the greenhouse set-up cost, which is significantly lower than the co-financing rates typically required in other existing RDA programs.⁷¹

Plant the Future supports the development of nursery and perennial gardens in the regions and currently offers financial support/subsidies for four separate components: (1) perennial gardens; (2) nursery gardens; and (3) the installation of anti-hail systems and/or the arrangement of wells or borehole pumping stations and (4) co-funding of damaged seedlings because of natural disasters. The programme was introduced by the MEPA in 2015 and runs in almost every region of the country. In 2021 The Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) of the programme Plant the Future was conducted by the ISET Policy Institute (ISET-PI) as part of its collaboration with UN Women within the scope of the project “Regulatory Impact Assessment and Gender Impact Assessment for Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia” was conducted and revealed that specifically defined gender objectives are missing. The policymakers perceive this programme (and those like it) to be gender-neutral and non-discriminatory as it allows the participation of everyone regardless of their sex.⁷²

LEPL Georgia's Innovations and Technology Agency (GITA) is prompting vocational education to strengthen the skills of the labor force, meeting the demand from the private sector and ensuring that workers are globally competitive. From 2019, With the support of the World Bank, GITA implemented a program for advanced IT specialists in highly demanded professions, ensuring their certification and licensing. The involvement of women and girls in

⁶⁹ Under the first pilot program, 37 applications were approved in the two aforementioned municipalities (Marneuli and Lagodekhi)

⁷⁰ <https://www.rda.gov.ge/en/articles/news/792501-programis-sapilote-programa-qalebisatvis-pharglebshi-100-qali-daphinandsa>

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² <https://iset-pi.ge/en/publications/ria>

the program was 31% of the total number of beneficiaries and 32 % of the total certified beneficiaries.⁷³

3000 Advanced IT specialists' program	2021		2022-2023				Total
	Pilot	%	Phase 1	%	Phase 2	%	
# of beneficiaries	574	100%	1,106	100%	1,802	100%	3,482
<i>women</i>	158	28%	294	27%	626	35%	1,078
<i>men</i>	416	72%	812	73%	1,176	65%	2,404
# of graduated beneficiaries	574	100%	980	100%	1,547	100%	3,101
<i>women</i>	158	28%	265	27%	545	35%	968
<i>men</i>	416	72%	715	73%	1,002	65%	2,133
# of beneficiaries granted with international certification	371	100%	422	100%	621	100%	1,414
<i>women</i>	103	28%	111	26%	232	37%	446
<i>men</i>	268	72%	311	74%	389	63%	968

In 2023, GITA has started providing ICT training at the beginning level for 5,000 specialists (2023-2025) in three main directions: Web Design, Programming, and Project Management. 1,046 successful students were enrolled in 79 training courses in 2023. Percentage share of women beneficiaries counts 54% of the total number of students.

Results of the program diversified by the directions	Men	% share	Women	% share	Total Number
Web Design	71	23%	239	77%	310
Project Management	58	29%	145	71%	203
Programming	355	67%	178	33%	533
Total # of beneficiaries	484	46%	562	54%	1,046

With the support and initiative of GITA "Binance Charity" program was funded by "Binance" and took place in 2023. The initial component involved the facilitation of three training courses, each focusing on distinct areas: Blockchain and Bitcoin Fundamentals, Blockchain Development, and Cryptocurrency Fundamentals. A total of 140 students successfully completed these courses, 30% were women. Also, over 70 participants receiving international certifications as evidence of their achievements, 31% were women.

Results of the program	# of graduated Beneficiaries				# of certified beneficiaries			
	Women	Men	Total	% share of women	Women	Men	Total	% share of women
B1. Blockchain and Business Fundamentals	28	35	63	44%	19	26	45	42%

⁷³ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Georgia%2028EN%29.pdf>; pg. 2

B2. Blockchain Development	2	27	29	7%	1	20	21	5%
B3. Blockchain Cryptocurrency Fundamentals	12	36	48	25%	12	25	37	32%
Total # of beneficiaries	42	98	140	30%	32	71	103	31%

In 2023, GITA initiated ICT trainings targeting school-age students, in collaboration with the Bank of Georgia. These training sessions, focused on Web Development, take place across 8 tech parks located throughout Georgia. School students aged between 14 and 18 have the opportunity to enroll in and actively engage with the program's training modules. Up to 500 school students will be trained each year.

Results of the program	2023					
	Phase 1	%	Phase 2	%	Phase 3	%
# of Beneficiaries	130	100%	123	100%	88	100%
<i>Women</i>	38	29%	37	30%	19	22%
<i>Men</i>	92	71%	86	70%	69	78%
# of Graduated Beneficiaries	74	100%	71	100%	21	100%
<i>Women</i>	15	20%	23	32%	6	29%
<i>Men</i>	59	80%	48	68%	15	71%

In addition, GITA is running STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Design, and Mathematics) boot camps where participants are chosen following the strict gender balance (50% male-50% female)⁷⁴ and additionally running boot camps for only females.

Tech Boot Camps (2023)	
Results of the program	
# of total beneficiaries	149
Men	50
Women	99

GITA also introduced the Innovation Grants for Regions program in 2023. The program awards up to GEL 25,000 grants to startups in regions, through which 40 startups will be financed annually. During the application assessment process, if the women owned company passes 51%, gets 18 points from maximum 36, the company get additional 2 points.

Program's Result (2023)		
# of trained Applicants	310	100%
<i>Women</i>	125	40%
<i>Men</i>	185	60%
# of Beneficiary startups	41	100%
<i>The applicant is a woman</i>	14	34%
<i>The applicant is a man</i>	27	66%

⁷⁴ ibid

Women's empowerment is one of the main priorities of Georgia's innovative ecosystem. In 2021, Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) in cooperation with the UN Women and with the support of the Embassy of Norway in Tbilisi, prepared and approved "Gender Equality Action Plan 2020-2022". The Action Plan aims to promote the integration and mainstreaming of the state policy on gender equality in the activities of the Agency and to implement the recommendations identified by the gender audit.

The state program **Enterprise Georgia** has operated in Georgia since 2014. The main objectives of the Program is the promotion of entrepreneurship in Georgia; stimulating local production - especially in the least economically developed regions; development of new enterprises; creation of new jobs; and increasing export potential. Although this program is not designed to address gender issues directly, it creates new opportunities for women. To tackle the economic challenges caused by COVID-19, some changes have been made to the state program Enterprise Georgia. The changes made to the program increase the agency's support and its co-financing capacity. Under the program, business owners can start or expand their business on leased real estate/land. In accordance with the changes implemented in the program, in the case of the hotel industry, land may be leased from the state. Promotion of the hotel industry is carried out throughout Georgia, except for Tbilisi and Batumi.

To facilitate the successful implementation of the Georgian government's "Step to a Better Future" initiative, a new grant program "Produce for a Better Future" has been developed within the framework of the state program "Enterprise Georgia". The program provides support for trade along the dividing lines (the territory of the Abkhazia Autonomous Republic and the Tskhinvali region/former South Ossetian Autonomous Region) and related activities, as well as co-production and partnership projects of the population living on both sides of the dividing lines. The goal of the project is to create the basis for cooperation and building trust. The funding varies minimum 7000 GEL for one beneficiary residing/operating in the occupied territories of Georgia up to 35000 GEL for up to 4 per beneficiary residing/operating at least one of whom must reside/operate in the occupied territories of Georgia.⁷⁵

Enterprise Georgia has a gender equality policy – gender equality strategy and action plan for 2020-2023. The purpose of the strategy is to promote the implementation and integration of the state policy of gender equality in the activities of the agency. The strategy helps to better define the different needs and priorities of women, men, boys, and girls in the work of the Agency. The main principles of the strategy are strengthening and protection of gender equality and prevention and elimination of discrimination, including sexual harassment. The action plan includes such activities as processing gender desegregated data, conducting information sessions and trainings to raise awareness and develop the necessary knowledge about women's economic empowerment, providing information on the principles of women's empowerment to the funded enterprises, implementing of a policy against sexual harassment and other possible forms of discrimination and an effective complaint mechanism within the agency. Agency Enterprise Georgia has adopted a sexual harassment prevention mechanism.

Below, you can see the total number of supported beneficiaries, including women inclusive entrepreneurs, by state programs of Enterprise Georgia:

⁷⁵ <https://smr.gov.ge/en/page/41/awarmoe-uketesi-momavlistvis>

Credit-Giarantee mechanism (May, 2023 - May, 2024)*:	
Total number of beneficiaries	299
Number of companies with women ownership of 50 percent and more or companies with at least one women manager	108
%	36%
Interest-rate co-financing (Septemebr, 2021- May, 2024):	
Total number of beneficiaries	997
Number of companies with women ownership of 50 percent and more or companies with at least one women manager	371
%	37%
Micro grants program (2015-2023):	
Total number of beneficiaries	12,521
Number of women beneficiaries	5,347
%	43%

*The program started in 2020; however, aggregated data regarding women is available from May 2023.

The 2021–2025 Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Development Strategy of Georgia⁷⁶ is a good example of including gender in state policy. The strategy provides a situation analysis of gender gaps in relation to SMEs. The strategy’s sixth main priority is “promoting the development of women[’s] entrepreneurship,” through popularizing the Women’s Empowerment Principles. The goal includes harnessing the economic potential of women by further promoting the development of women’s entrepreneurship.

Supporting women entrepreneurs and their economic empowerment is one of the important priorities. In order to identify the needs and development of women's entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia created a sub-council for women’s entrepreneurship under the Private Sector Development Advisory Council. The creation of a sub-council for women’s entrepreneurship lays the ground for establishing an institutional framework to support the promotion of women in business in Georgia and gradually close the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

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https://www.economy.ge/uploads/files/2017/ek__politika/sme_strategy/2022/sme_strategy_2021_2025_eng_2.pdf

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

In the past few years, poverty in Georgia has shown a downward trend. The poverty rate in Georgia declined from 21.3.3% in 2020 to 11.8% in 2023.⁷⁷ On the country level, Georgia features similar levels of poverty to some EU Member States, e.g. Croatia, Greece, and Bulgaria (19.5%, 21.2%, and 22.9% respectively). The country's poverty rate does not differ significantly by gender, and its reduction has benefitted both women and men.⁷⁸ In Georgia, a man is traditionally considered to be the head of the household. Accordingly, the share of male-headed households exceeds 62 %.⁷⁹

The incidence of poverty is much higher among women-headed households in which the only adult is a woman or households in which all adult members are women. Georgians living in women-headed households are about 2 percentage points more likely (21.6%) to be poor than households headed by men (19.5%).⁸⁰ Data from the Georgia Welfare Monitoring Survey support the association between women's education levels and poverty rates. Poverty levels tend to decrease as the education level of women in households rises.⁸¹

When examining the gender dimensions of poverty, it is crucial to consider access to essential services. Geostat's data highlight disparities between households headed by women and by men in terms of their access to computers or the Internet. According to the data, male-headed households are more likely to have Internet access (91 %) and computer access (59 %) than female-headed households, where Internet access is at 90 % and computer ownership at 62 %.⁸²

Regarding asset ownership, men own and dispose of larger shares of almost all types of assets, such as real estate, land, and large equipment. The gender asset gap favors men and is more pronounced in rural areas.⁸³ Furthermore, there is a notable gender disparity in landownership in Georgia. This trend has held throughout the past decade.

The State provides equal rights and opportunities for men and women. The state takes special measures to ensure the essential equality of men and women and to eliminate inequality. In March, 2023 the Parliament of Georgia endorsed the first State Concept of Economic Empowerment of Women.⁸⁴ This state concept is based on the principle of substantive equality guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and aims to establish the vision of women's economic empowerment in Georgia and define the main policy.

The concept of women's economic empowerment refers to the realization of women's rights in such a way that they have the opportunity to manage and benefit from resources, assets, and income and use their time, to be competitive in the market, to make independent economic

⁷⁷ Geostat; available at: <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/192/living-conditions>

⁷⁸ GENDER EQUALITY IN GEORGIA IN GAP III PRIORITY AREAS: COUNTRY REVIEW; pg. 10

⁷⁹ Geostat; Women and Men in Georgia – 2023; pg.78 available at: https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women_And_Men_In_Georgia_2023_ENG.PDF

⁸⁰ GENDER EQUALITY IN GEORGIA IN GAP III PRIORITY AREAS: COUNTRY REVIEW; pg. 10

⁸¹ Ibid; pg.26

⁸² <https://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php?action=ICT>

⁸³ GENDER EQUALITY IN GEORGIA IN GAP III PRIORITY AREAS: COUNTRY REVIEW; pg.10; available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Georgia%20Country%20Gender%20Review_0.pdf

⁸⁴ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5755428?publication=0>

decisions, to plan their own economic activities, including managing risks and being actively involved in the development of economic policy at the central and local levels.

The concept justifies the need to implement measures at both the macro- and micro-level and is aimed at strengthening equality in Georgia through the economic empowerment of women, which, in turn, will contribute to the increase of the country's well-being and economic power.

The purpose and structure of the state concept of women's economic empowerment are based on the UN recommendations around the following 7 main directions: 1. Equal access to economic resources. 2. Strengthening the gender-sensitive legal framework. 3. Improving procurement and employment practices in the public sector. 4. Improving employment practices in the private sector. 5. Recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid and care work. 6. Encouraging the formalization of economic activities of women employed in the shadow economy. 7. Struggle with discriminatory social norms. Each direction is an important prerequisite, and their combination helps to transform the socio-economic environment and create equal economic opportunities for the systematic economic empowerment of women.

The new National Concept for Women's Economic Empowerment addresses many of these unresolved issues, defines key national priorities and paves the way to better economic and family policies and greater equality for all.

To promote employment of Georgian citizens, the LEPL State Employment Support Agency (SESA)⁸⁵ was established in October 2019 under the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. SESA is operational as of January 1, 2020. The purpose of the Agency is to promote employment of the Georgian population. SESA implements active labour market policy (ALMP) through state programs, which include, training and retraining and qualification raising of job seekers, intermediary services, public works for socially vulnerable population, wage subsidy for PWDs, etc. The functions of SESA also include cooperation with employers and employers' organizations to effectively provide intermediary, information, and advisory services to job seekers.

A legal framework promoting a systematic and consistent approach to employment policy was developed. On July 1, 2020, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a Law of Georgia "on Employment Promotion" that regulates the work of state institutions related to employment promotion, responsible institutions, forms of employment and employment promotion measures, etc.

The Georgian legislation guarantees equal access to education. The Constitution of Georgia ensures the right to education for all, the right to receive education, and to choose the form of education.⁸⁶ Primary education is free in Georgia and fully funded by the State and citizens have the right to state-funded vocational and higher education. Elementary and basic education are compulsory.⁸⁷ The law on General Education determines that the state shall ensure the openness of general education and equal access to it for all during their entire life.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Worknet.moh.gov.ge

⁸⁶ Constitution of Georgia, Article 27; paragraph 1

⁸⁷ Ibid, Article 27; paragraph 2

⁸⁸ Law on General Education; Article 3; paragraph 2.a

Article 4(2)(b) of the Gender Equality Law guarantees without discrimination “equal access to education for men and women and free choice of education at any stage of learning”. Focusing on vocational and higher education, Article 7 further declares rights about vocational and higher education, including the sciences:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freely choose a profession and specialty according to their abilities. Such equality shall be ensured through equal access, without discrimination, to general, vocational, and higher education.
2. The State shall ensure that equal conditions are created for men and women to acquire general, vocational, and higher education in all kinds of educational establishments, and to participate in educational and scientific processes

Article 9(8) of the Law on Education provides that “pupils shall have the right to be protected from improper treatment, neglect and abuse.” With respect to a mechanism for filing complaints, Article 12(1) states: “In order to protect their rights and freedoms, pupils, parents, and teachers shall have the right to appeal unlawful and other wrongful acts of teachers and the school, as well as to receive full compensation for any inflicted damage”. Article 13 does prohibit discrimination during admission to a school and prohibits schools from using their powers and resources in a way to directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils, parents, teachers, or their associations.

General education teachers represent the largest category of employees in the education sector. The number of female schoolteachers amounted to approximately 55,000 in 2022, exceeding the number of male schoolteachers 7 times.⁸⁹

In academia and research in Georgia, women have played an active and significant role, making up 60% of professors and instructors in higher education institutions over the past three years.⁹⁰ However, when examining the distribution across different ranks of professors, women are underrepresented among full professors and overrepresented among assistant professors and instructors. A similar trend is observed among PhD supervisors, where men have consistently outnumbered women over the past five years, despite a slight increase in women’s representation in 2021/22 and 2022/23. On the other hand, women dominate among researchers, comprising 54 % of the total in 2022/23.⁹¹

The main goal of the ongoing education system reform in Georgia is to make it more flexible, modern, and oriented toward quality educational outcomes. To achieve these goals, the educational system has to be accessible to everyone providing all citizens with equal opportunities to achieve high-quality sustainable results. Access to education at every level plays a vital role in any country’s economic development as well as women’s empowerment.

The latest data available regarding early childhood education and care in Georgia were collected in 2018 through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) by Geostat.⁹² The MICS revealed an overall early child development index score of 89.6 for children aged 3–4 (88.5 for girls and 90.8 for boys). While they are on track in three of the four developmental dimensions, literacy and numeracy remain a challenge. Specifically, 26.0 % of girls and 24.8 % of boys aged 3–4 are on track in literacy and numeracy, while the share of children

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Geostat 2022b.

⁹¹ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg.54

⁹² <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/707/multiple-indicator-cluster-surveys>

developmentally on track in other dimensions (physical, social and emotional, and learning) ranges from 88.4 to 99.6 %.⁹³

When it comes to kindergarten attendance, the MICS data showed that in 2018, 77.9 % of Georgian children (79.3 % of girls and 76.5 % of boys) attended kindergarten. However, this number decreased to 72.4 % in 2021/22 according to the Child Welfare Survey (CWS) in Georgia probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many parents hesitated to send their children to kindergarten after restrictions lifted in 2021, to avoid potential infection.⁹⁴

The CWS showed that the absolute majority of children aged 3–6 (98.5 % of girls and 92.7 % of boys) attend public kindergartens. The CWS also observes significant urban-rural disparities in preschool education. Rural children are over seven times more likely to lack preschool access than their urban counterparts. Barriers to preschool education affect 1.5 % of urban children and 12.4 % of rural children, with a difference between the genders—8.5 % of girls and 4.3 % of boys.⁹⁵

In Georgia, during the 2021/22 academic year, general education enrolment was above 98 %, with equal enrolment rates for boys and girls.⁹⁶ Boys are more likely to quit general schooling after completing compulsory basic education. The 2022/23 dropout rate saw an increase compared to the previous two years, with 6,409 girls and 8,502 boys leaving school.⁹⁷ The increase is especially evident at the primary and lower secondary levels. Boys had higher dropout rates than girls at all levels of secondary education. The dropouts due to child marriage significantly decreased in 2021 and accounted for seven cases. This number was 17 in 2020 and 56 in 2019.⁹⁸

According to the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking (ATIPfund), the number of cases of violence reported by educational institutions has drastically increased from 116 in 2021 to 469 in 2022.⁹⁹

Vocational colleges play a critical role in equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for successful careers. It is essential to recognize that vocational education is not limited to young people, but also extends to adults seeking skills development opportunities.

Regarding participation in vocational education, women's engagement is comparable to men's, but there was a slight decrease in the number of enrolments and graduates for women in 2022 in VET compared to 2021 (enrolments: from 49 to 47%; graduates: from 50 to 49%).¹⁰⁰ Gender stereotypes are evident in most VET education programs, with women predominantly enrolling in traditionally female-dominated courses. Fields such as education, health and social welfare, the arts and humanities, and business administration have a higher representation of women, whereas men outnumber women in engineering, manufacturing, construction, and STEM fields.¹⁰¹

⁹³ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 45

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ <https://www.geostat.ge/media/52968/Child-Welfare-Survey-%28CWS%29.pdf>

⁹⁶ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 47

⁹⁷ *ibid*

⁹⁸ *Ibid*; pg. 49

⁹⁹ *Ibid*; pg.50; <https://ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2021121616234346487.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 51

¹⁰¹ https://georgia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/georgia_serat.pdf

Women's participation in higher education has also been comparable to men's participation throughout the years. There has been a slight increase in women's enrolment in bachelor's and master's programs, from 51.7% in 2021 to 52.1% in 2022, and slight fluctuations in the share of women PhD graduates.¹⁰²

UN Women's 2023 study on women in information and communications technology (ICT) in Georgia, women are severely underrepresented in the country's ICT sector.¹⁰³ Despite the growth in the number of ICT students in VET programs, the gender balance of admissions to and students in ICT programs remains strongly male-dominated, with female students representing only around 29% of VET ICT program students in 2021/22. The biggest gender gap is observed at the bachelor's level in ICT programs, with women students representing only 14% of bachelor's degree students in 2021/22. The gender balance in ICT master's and PhD programs shows a more positive trend than in bachelor's programs. There is a notable increase in the share of female engineering students, rising from 7% in 2020/21 to 12% in 2021/22.¹⁰⁴

The 2023 UN Women study showed that despite their lower numbers, female students in ICT demonstrate better academic performance than male students. However, female students also exhibit lower levels of self-confidence in the labor market in ICT, which might affect their competitiveness.¹⁰⁵

Recognizing the pivotal role of human capital in ICT as a driving force behind digital and digital-enabled innovations and its significance in empowering women, the Government of Georgia has taken on commitments within the Generation Equality Forum to promote gender mainstreaming in technology and innovation. The relevant government agencies have collaboratively developed an action plan with both public and private stakeholders in the ICT ecosystem to put these commitments into practice.

To overcome the COVID-19 pandemic-related crisis as well as ensure rapid economic recovery and development, the Government of Georgia developed the 2021–2024 Government Program “Toward Building a European State”, in which one of the top priorities concerns the use of ICT to develop Georgia's digital economy and information society. In line with the National Broadband Development Strategy (NBDS) for 2020-2025, the state program for supporting the development of broadband infrastructure will continue. Households and administrative bodies will have access at a minimum rate of 100 megabit per second and 1 gigabit per second, respectively, which will allow half a million residents in almost 1,000 settlements to enjoy high-quality Internet. Strengthening digital skills is important to increase female entrepreneurs' access to various governmental programs and other information. It is important to provide appropriate support in this area, which will allow women entrepreneurs to understand better the market demands and trends, run their businesses, and introduce e-commerce without leaving home in a pandemic.

Social protection schemes and programs are the primary tools for channeling resources to the poor in Georgia. They aim to minimize the effects of poverty by contributing to poverty alleviation and preventing beneficiaries from falling into extreme poverty. A gender equality

¹⁰² Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 52

¹⁰³ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Women%20in%20ICT%20ENG.pdf>; pg.72

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ ibid

approach to social protection programs is key to enabling men's and women's equal access to protection from poverty.

The social protection system of Georgia consists of a mix of lifecycle (e.g. old-age pension, disability benefits) and non-lifecycle (e.g. Targeted Social Assistance (TSA)) benefits. Women make up the majority of beneficiaries of the subsistence allowance and the old-age pension. Georgian government transfer payments on social protection accounted for 27.02% of the total state budget. The old-age pension scheme is one of the largest social assistance programs in Georgia. It provides a flat-rate benefit to all pensioners. The pension starts for men at the age of 65 and for women at the age of 60. Overall, pensions and social assistance have a strong impact on reducing poverty rates, especially among the elderly population.

In Georgia, less than half of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit.¹⁰⁶ Women represent the highest share of social protection program beneficiaries. According to the Geostat data in 2022, approximately 18 % of the population (670 551 individuals) were covered by a subsistence allowance; 4.8% (178,426 individuals), by a social package; and 21.9% (808,326 individuals), by an old-age pension.¹⁰⁷ The largest category in terms of the number of beneficiaries within the social security system is the recipients of the old-age pension, covering approximately 22% of the entire population. Due to women's longer life expectancy (age 77.7 versus 69.1) and earlier retirement age (60 versus 65), female recipients of the old-age pension outnumber male recipients by approximately 2.5 times.¹⁰⁸ In 2018, Georgia approved a funded pension scheme, which functions alongside the universal basic non-contributory pension. Additionally, in June 2023, the Parliament adopted the Law of Georgia on Voluntary Private Pension. Overall, the pension system of Georgia is based on the so-called multi-pillar system.

In 2022, The Parliamentary Gender Equality Council conducted a thematic inquiry on gender mainstreaming within governmental policies. The aim was to explore how gender is mainstreamed in governmental standards on public policymaking. The thematic inquiry also explored how gender is mainstreamed in public policies, strategies, and action plans that pertain to the key development objectives of the country (more specifically, areas such as social-economic development, labor and employment, education and science, and public administration). The thematic inquiry report revealed that, despite certain progress, integration of a gendered perspective has not been systematically carried out throughout state policies. The report further revealed that the existing public policymaking standards and methodologies do not integrate indicators on gender-sensitive policymaking and that gender analysis, as a rule, is not undertaken during public policy planning across sectors. Aligned with the key findings, the report thus put forward a set of recommendations calling on the Government of Georgia to institutionalize gender mainstreaming methodologies as an integral part of the policymaking cycle across every sector.

Single mothers are another category that has a greater need for social protection measures. In 2022, the Civil Code of Georgia underwent amendments that expanded the status of single parents. The revisions included the addition of opportunities for mothers to enhance their access to state services, covering situations where a minor child's second parent (mother or

¹⁰⁶ WOMEN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN GEORGIA; UN Women Issue Brief; available at: <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Women%20and%20social%20protection%20in%20Georgia%20english.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid; pg. 28

¹⁰⁸ ibid

father) is deceased or missing or has been stripped of all parental rights and duties. According to the Law single mothers or single fathers are persons with a child under 18, if the birth certificate of a child fails to provide the record on a second parent; with an adopted child under 18 if the birth certificate of a child fails to provide a record on the second parent; if the second parent of a child is deceased, declared deceased or missing; if the second parent of a child has been deprived of the parental right. The relevant change is included in the Tax Code, according to which the tax benefit provided by law will apply to both single mothers and single fathers.¹⁰⁹

The State Care Agency provides the services (victims/survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, and violence against women) within the shelters or crisis centers. On 13.08.2021 Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation was signed between the State Care Agency and the LEPL State Employment Support Agency. One of the aims of the cooperation is to raise the professional qualifications of single mothers, victims of domestic, and sexual violence, and persons under state care, and in this way promote their employment in the labor market. The memorandum provides for the provision of professional counseling and career planning services to the beneficiaries of the State Care Agency at the municipal level, and also includes training and /or re-training courses, career guidance and professional consultations, development of core competencies, and internships in places of employment.

The state provides free legal aid for the socially vulnerable. Representation in the courts is provided to socially vulnerable people free of charge in criminal cases, where mandatory defense requirement applies, as well as in civil and administrative cases. The service is equally accessible for both men and women. An insolvent person is a member of a family registered in the unified database of socially vulnerable families, whose social-economic ranking point is 70 thousand or less, besides, socially vulnerable person is also considered insolvent in case of holding 100 thousand or less points and if they belong to one of the categories listed by the Resolution N424 of the Government of Georgia. According to this Resolution:

- ✓ Member of the family with many children, that has 3 or more children under 18 years old;
- ✓ A veteran of war or military forces;
- ✓ A person with limited capacity status under 18 years of age;
- ✓ Adult with the status of distinct or significant limited capacities;
- ✓ An individual with the status of distinct, significant or moderately limited capacities, if this limitation of capacities takes place from childhood.
- ✓ An orphan under 18 years of age;
- ✓ Internally displaced persons as a result of Russian military aggression against Georgia¹¹⁰

In exceptional cases, a public lawyer shall be appointed to the persons who are not registered in the database of socially indigent persons, however, due to hard socio-economic conditions cannot afford a lawyer's service. This is regulated by Decision #27 of the Legal Aid Service Board adopted on September 9, 2015. This condition applies to the persons who belong to the following categories:

- ✓ Persons who met the criteria of insolvency and their data is available in the archives of a unified database of socially vulnerable families;

¹⁰⁹ The income of a single mother earned within a calendar year and not exceeding 3000 GEL is not subject to taxation; while the change applies the same preference to the single fathers as well.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.legalaid.ge/en/p/122/service-for-insolvent-persons>

- ✓ Persons whose difficult social-economical condition is proved by the certificate issued by the local self-governing institutions;
- ✓ Persons with incurable and serious diseases;
- ✓ Single mother who has juvenile children;
- ✓ The person acknowledged as a victim of political repression;
- ✓ Retired person;
- ✓ A lawyer employed by the Legal Aid Service, his/her family member and relative;
- ✓ Family who lost bread-winner;
- ✓ Beneficiaries of the Program on Rehabilitation and Resocialization of Former Prisoners of LEPL “Crime Prevention Center”;
- ✓ Beneficiaries of international humanitarian union “Catharsis” (Charity House).
- ✓ Juvenile person who may be a party to civil/administrative cases.¹¹¹

Over the past five years, the average life expectancy at birth has shown fluctuations ranging from 71.4 to 74 years. The lowest life expectancy of 71.4 years was observed in 2021, which can be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the average life expectancy increased to 73.7 years, with women having a higher life expectancy (78.1 years) than men (69.4 years).¹¹²

In terms of vaccination, a pilot project to introduce the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine to Georgia was launched in December 2017 in three territories (Adjara, Tbilisi, and Kutaisi) to prevent cervical cancer. The target group consisted of girls at least 9 years of age or older. HPV vaccination was then included in the National Immunization Calendar for girls aged 10–12 starting in September 2019. In 2023, ‘catch-up’ vaccination was extended to girls and women aged 13–26 and was also included in the National Immunization Calendar for boys aged 10–12. Vaccinations are provided free of charge through primary healthcare clinics using a two-dose vaccine. The rate of uptake for the HPV2 vaccine was 24% in 2021.¹¹³

The right to the protection of health is protected by the Constitution which ensures “the right of a citizen to affordable and quality health care services”.¹¹⁴ According to the Constitution, the State shall exercise control over all healthcare institutions and the quality of medical services and shall regulate the production and circulation of pharmaceuticals.¹¹⁵ In addition, the state has an obligation under the Constitution to establish a healthy lifestyle.¹¹⁶

Article 9 of the Gender Equality Law, covering healthcare and social security, states in full: General and equal access to medical care shall be provided to the population without discrimination.

Special measures taken for promoting the health care of mothers and children, family planning, and protecting women’s reproductive rights, also, state policy protecting pregnant women and maternity, and other measures taken based on gender peculiarities shall not be considered discriminatory.

The adoption of the Maternal & New-born Health Strategy 2017-2030, by the Government of Georgia is a significant development concerning sexual and reproductive health policy. This

¹¹¹ *ibid*

¹¹² <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/41/population>

¹¹³ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg.60

¹¹⁴ Constitution of Georgia; Article 28; paragraph 1

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*; Article 28; paragraph 2

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*; Article 5; paragraph 7

strategy defines 14-year policy for maternal and newborn healthcare, family planning, and sexual and reproductive healthcare. Its main objective is to maintain and expand evidence-based and effective interventions to save mothers and newborns and to protect their health; as well as to strengthen the reproductive health sector directly linked to them and to ensure universal access to high-quality services. Among others, the Strategy provides for the issues related to breast-feeding, and nutrition of newborns and mothers.

The Strategy envisages that by 2030, there will be no preventable deaths of mothers and newborns or stillbirths, every child will be a wanted child, and every unwanted pregnancy will be prevented through appropriate education and full access for all to high-quality integrated services. The Strategy is guided by internationally accepted principles such as Human Rights, Gender Equality, Life-Course Approach to Reproductive Health, and Quality of Care.

The document provides strategic inputs that support the development and execution of operating plans at the country level to accelerate the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality in Georgia by strengthening and expanding policies and programs for the improvement of Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH) within the continuum of care; and gives direction and provides guidance for the fields of Family Planning and Adolescent SRH, as very important determinants of MNH.

This strategy is closely linked to international strategic documents, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the new WHO European Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health (2017-2021), and the Every Newborn Action Plan (WHO/UNICEF).

There was a significant drop in the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in 2017. In 2021, the MMR reached 71.8, primarily attributed to COVID-19-related mortality. The following year, in 2022, the MMR was recorded as 35.4 which is higher than the regional (Europe and Central Asia) average. In Georgia, the lifetime risk of maternal death is 1 in 1,900.¹¹⁷

The real-time electronic health management information system, tracking every mother and newborn through pregnancy and delivery, was launched in 2016. Its use is threefold: it tracks the health condition of mother and child, it helps doctors access — with the approval of the mother — the patient’s medical history, and it collects country-wide reliable data to be used in policymaking. Now, as soon as an expecting mother visits a prenatal care clinic, a notification of the confirmed pregnancy is immediately registered in the system. The social service agency is then pinged, to ensure she will receive the financial support she is entitled to.

The telemedicine project in Georgia is jointly implemented by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in cooperation with the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and with the financial support of the European Union. The Government of Georgia has already provided 50 rural outpatient clinics with telemedicine equipment.¹¹⁸ With the support of these organizations, another 200 clinics will be able to provide higher-quality services to the population.

¹¹⁷ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg.59

¹¹⁸ The list of 50 clinics involved in telemedicine is provided on the webpage of the Ministry; Available at: <https://www.moh.gov.ge/medi.php?uid=202312052133533678813482&lang=1>

The telemedicine project in Georgia promotes the development of digital medicine in Georgia to make screening programs even more accessible to women living in different regions. Telemedicine involves the use of modern digital communication technologies to provide quality medical services, which are both time and cost-effective for patients. At this stage, within the framework of the telemedicine program, a pilot project is being implemented in three primary healthcare facilities in Tbilisi. In the March-June 2023 reporting period, a total of 9,936 women were registered for cancer screening, of which 19% of the registrations were made directly by citizens (1,846 women), 30% (3,005 women) were registered by primary health care providers, and the remaining 51% (5,085 women) - by health facilities involved in the screening program.¹¹⁹ The prevalence of breast and cervical cancer screening has slightly increased and nearly 40% of cases are diagnosed at later stages.¹²⁰

Telemedicine is also used to raise awareness among parents on childcare and child development issues. Using a digital platform, the parents of 50 pilot clinic patients can attend scheduled online meetings conducted by leading pediatricians, psychologists, and nutrition specialists in Georgia. During the online meetings, parents can ask questions, get answers, and share their experiences with other parents. The introduction of telemedicine supports building a sustainable primary healthcare system by ensuring equal access to services for all patients. The integration of telemedicine into the rural clinics of Georgia will contribute to the further development of universal health care.¹²¹

Georgia is among the countries, providing Universal Healthcare to its citizens. Launched in 2013, the program was re-designed in 2017, introducing principles of social justice in needs-oriented services. State healthcare programs are implemented by the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) and its legal entities.¹²²

State program for maternal and newborn healthcare are available. The goal of the state maternal and child health program is medical supervision of pregnant women and newborns, effective patronage and prevention of their health complications. The state program provides financial and geographic access to various types of medical services and medicines for pregnant women and newborns. To use the antenatal care services provided by the program a woman must apply for registration before the 13th week of pregnancy to the medical institution that serves pregnant women within the framework of the state program.¹²³ To reduce perinatal mortality and to improve the well-being of pregnant women, the country implemented the Maternal and Child Health Vertical Programme, with eight free antenatal care visits in accordance with WHO recommendations.¹²⁴

In the scope of the program, the below-listed services are provided:

- ✓ Antenatal care.
- ✓ Detection of Hepatitis B and C, HIV infection/AIDS, and syphilis in pregnant and prevent transmission of Hepatitis B from mother to a child.
- ✓ Special treatment of pregnant with syphilis

¹¹⁹ <https://georgia.unfpa.org/en/news/telemedicine-innovative-health-service-improve-access-cancer-screening>

¹²⁰ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 59

¹²¹ <https://www.unicef.org/georgia/stories/remote-care-how-telemedicine-transforming-rural-health-care-georgia>
¹²² https://help.unhcr.org/georgia/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2021/06/UNHCR-Healthcare-Brochure_ENGL.pdf

¹²³ <https://www.moh.gov.ge/medi.php?uid=202312052134257150169324&lang=1>

¹²⁴ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg.60

- ✓ Early detection of genetic pathologies
- ✓ Newborn and child screening for hypothyroidism, phenylketonuria, hyperphenylalaninemia, cystic fibrosis, galactosemia, adrenogenital syndrome, and biotinides deficiency.
- ✓ Diagnostic examination of newborn hearing.
- ✓ Providing relevant medication

According to the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), more women are receiving antenatal care. The share of pregnant women who attended at least four antenatal care visits increased during the past decade and reached 86.7% in 2021. Additionally, coverage for at least six antenatal care visits increased from 48.0 % in 2018 to 71.8 % in 2021.¹²⁵ Post-partum care is integrated into the Universal Healthcare Program. State health programs in Georgia do not cover the management of post-partum depression.¹²⁶

According to the Law on the Rights of the Patient, adolescent patients (14-18 years old) have a right to provide informed consent to receive counseling on the methods of non-surgical contraception without parental notification.¹²⁷ Minor patients may receive information about their health status and treatment. The information provided shall correspond to their age and level of mental development.¹²⁸ The rights of pregnant and nursing mothers are also regulated by Chapter VII of the Law on the Rights of the Patient. Pregnant and nursing mothers may receive full, timely, and clear information from medical care providers about the direct or indirect negative effects of any planned medical intervention on a fetus or a newborn baby during pregnancy, labor, or postnatal periods.¹²⁹ Women in labor may make decisions on the medical care to be provided to her and her fetus. Women in labor may not refuse medical care that ensures the birth of a living fetus and carries minimal risks for the health and life of the women in labor.¹³⁰

The law of Georgia on Healthcare determines that All citizens of Georgia shall have the right to independently determine the number of children they have and the time of their birth.¹³¹ The State shall ensure human rights in the field of reproduction.¹³² The Law on Healthcare provides that abortion can be carried out for any reason if the pregnancy does not exceed 12 weeks.¹³³ The number of registered abortions has declined.¹³⁴

In Georgia, 127,765 persons with disabilities (3.5% of the total population) are registered as beneficiaries of the state cash assistance program from the Social Service Agency. Specifically, 38 % (48,577) of registered persons are women with disabilities, while 17 % are women aged 18–49.¹³⁵ Based on a report developed by the PDO in 2022,¹³⁶ some positive changes have

¹²⁵ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg.58

¹²⁶ *ibid*

¹²⁷ Georgian Law on The Rights of the Patients. Art. 41.1,

¹²⁸ *Ibid*; Article 43

¹²⁹ *Ibid*; Article 35

¹³⁰ *Ibid*; Article 36

¹³¹ Law on Healthcare; Article 136;

¹³² *Ibid*

¹³³ *Ibid*; Article 139; paragraph 2

¹³⁴ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 59

¹³⁵ See the website of the Social Service Agency at <https://ssa.moh.gov.ge/statistik.php?lang=1&id=202212062358125404245357&v=0>.

¹³⁶ The assessment of the needs of women with disabilities and the protection of their rights; 2022; available at: <https://ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2022032913195226234.pdf>

been made in developing guidelines and protocols as well as by creating some program to improve the standards of protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The government introduced an increased minimum wage for healthcare workers in clinics that participate in the state's universal healthcare program. The new minimum wage took effect on January 1, 2023, and applies to all clinics involved in the state's universal healthcare program. Under the regulation, the minimum hourly wage for covered doctors is 7 GEL per hour, which works out to approximately 1,260 GEL per month. Covered nurses have a minimum wage of 4.4 GEL per hour, or 792 GEL per month. In addition, the minimum wage will continue to increase gradually through 2025, peaking at 9 GEL per hour for doctors and 5.6 GEL per hour for nurses.

Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes

Combating gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, including violence prevention and victim protection, is one of the priority issues for the Government of Georgia. In recent years, Georgia has achieved significant progress in this direction. The country has improved its legislative responses and implemented social protection mechanisms to counter these pervasive issues.

In 2017 the Government of Georgia ratified the Istanbul Convention. In 2018, the Parliament of Georgia adopted changes to the Criminal Code of Georgia, adding gender-based and family-member killing, as well as driving one to commit suicide, as aggravating circumstances of the crime, which was a crucial aspect of responding to the high rate of femicide in the country.

In 2019, Georgia continued its efforts to address GBV by enacting a bill on sexual harassment. In 2022, the Government of Georgia adopted the National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2022–2024, outlining vital measures for prevention, victim protection, and assistance. In November 2022, a regulation on issuing compensation to the victims/survivors of violence against women and/or domestic violence was adopted. As a result, a victim/survivor of violence is authorized to receive compensation from the State in the maximum amount of GEL 10,000 in the event that the compensation for the damages is not paid by the abuser. Moreover, in December 2022, a bill to increase access to VAWG/DV services for survivors of violence was adopted. The bill implies the removal of the legal eligibility requirements for accessing state-run shelters, thereby allowing any woman seeking shelter to go directly to a crisis center, where a group of specialists will immediately determine the specific services needed in each individual case.

To address VAW cases, Georgia has established the unified emergency number ‘112’, complemented by a mobile app with an SOS function; the ‘116 006’ consultancy hotline, which is offered in multiple languages (nine languages, including in Georgian, English, Ukrainian, Russian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Persian, Arabic languages); and the child helpline ‘111’, which has been established in 2020 and strengthened to receive calls from children regarding violence and other violations of child rights. Child helpline supports children and young people, who call to express their concerns. The helpline works every day. Child helpline is also available for adults – parents, professionals, and any individual who wants to talk about child-related problems.

The 112 mobile app also includes information about child marriage and allows adolescents to use the SOS function in the event of a threat. The years 2020-2021 were a year of global difficulties and challenges, which put the Public Safety Command Center "112" in front of a radically different reality. A unified government hotline 144 was created on the infrastructure of 112. The purpose was to allow the community to connect 112 smoothly. Information and resources are also available for domestic violence within the app.

In 2020, an electronic link was created and sent to the entire population in the form of text messages, through which the user has the opportunity to download the „112“ application and, if necessary, use the silent alarm button to send a notification and establish non-verbal communication with the operator; In 2020-2021, a number of videos were created and distributed on social media networks. The mentioned videos aimed to emphasize the strict policy maintenance and work conducted by the MIA towards combatting violence against

women and domestic violence, as well as, to provide the population with information on alternative mechanisms for contacting the police.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia takes important awareness-raising and preventive measures in order to combat domestic violence/violence against women. For this purpose, both the Ministry itself and within various international campaigns, has been conducting informational meetings periodically for over 5 years.

The Ministry joins the yearly 16-day-long global campaign on combatting violence against women each year. Within the campaign in 2023, following activities were planned and carried out:

- Representatives of Human Rights Protection Department, State Care and Assistance of Human Trafficking Victims Agency, Legal Aid Service of Georgia, in partnership with The U.S. State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), Embassy of Sweden and UN Women, held a meeting in a number of regions, with local residents, including, local bodies of self-governance, school children, students and other interested parties. During the meetings informaton about mechanisms to prevent and respond to domestic violence/violence against women was provided;
- As a part of the campaign, along with many other activities, a multi-departmental workshop was held by MIA. Discussed topics included trends and challenges related to judges and risk assessment tools, electronic surveillance, along with a workshop with local police unit managers.
- Representatives of the Structural Divisions of Litigation and Organizational Assurance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were trained on the fulfilment of the obligations undertaken under the 2022-2024 National Action Plan of Georgia on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and on the fulfilment of the activities determined within the competence of the Agency. In addition, the Human Rights Department held an informational meeting with students on the same topic, including the recommendations issued by the European Commission on Human Rights and the Equality Environment.
- More than 2 million mobile service provider subscribers were sent short text messages on the ways to apply to the police in case of violence against women and domestic violence;
- Representatives of the Department of Human Rights Protection spoke on issues of violence against women and domestic violence at radio programs and in various print media outlets;
- In order to raise public awareness, in July 2023, the Ministry of Internal Affairs placed informational banners on buses, stops and metropolitan areas in Tbilisi and the regions.

Data: hotline on violence issues - 116 006

Reporting Period	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of calls at 116 006	1 775	1 864	3 474	4 100

Source: <https://atipfund.moh.gov.ge/>

Data: Children's help hotline - 111

Reporting Period	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of calls at 111	1 681	1 206	3 375	4 661

Source: <https://atipfund.moh.gov.ge/>

Similarly, the number of reports of domestic conflicts or violence reported to the '112' helpline increased from 15,910 in 2015 to 18,428 in 2020 and 26,896 in 2021.¹³⁷ In 2021, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) reported that there were 8,338 victims of domestic violence, of whom 83% were women, while in 2022, there were 7,846 registered victims with 84% of them women.¹³⁸ On September 23, 2020, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Supreme Court and the National Statistics Office (Geostat) to create a unified data system on crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination.

The Memorandum of Cooperation on the Production of Crime Statistics on Crimes Committed on the Grounds of Intolerance motivated by discrimination and the Publication of a Unified Report and segregated statistical data in Georgian and English are publicly available to all interested parties on the website of the National Statistics Office - <https://shorturl.at/hHW03>.

It should be noted that in 2023, a new memorandum was signed by the parties, where the mandate of the Special Investigation Service was written out.

The data to be collected by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, within the framework of the new memorandum, are:

- Total number of investigations launched by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia on the grounds of alleged intolerance;
- Article of the Criminal Code at the start of the investigation;
- Grounds of discrimination;
- Discrimination rates according to territorial distribution;
- The total number of investigations launched by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia on the crime committed on the grounds of alleged intolerance, in which the coordinator of a witness and victim of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was involved.

Therefore, collected data also lists statistics of Gender Based violence.

In 2021, there were 7,990 perpetrators of domestic violence, of whom 83% were men, and in 2022, there were 7,366 perpetrators with 84% of being men.¹³⁹ The number of beneficiaries in shelters increased from 89 in 2011 to 428 in 2021 and decreased modestly to 398 in 2022, while

¹³⁷ National Study on Violence Against Women in Georgia; 2022; pg.25

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Ibid;

the number of beneficiaries in crisis centers increased from 24 in 2016 to 344 in 2021 and dropped to 222 in 2022.¹⁴⁰ In 2021, among the beneficiaries of domestic violence shelters, 96 % were women.¹⁴¹ The number of restraining orders increased to 10,120 in 2021 and decreased to 9,483 in 2022.¹⁴² In 2022, among those instances in which restraining orders were issued, 80 % of the victims were women.¹⁴³ In addition, the number of protective orders issued, increased to 94 in 2022.¹⁴⁴ The tendency of increase is also witnessed in prosecution. The number of criminal prosecutions for domestic violence has increased significantly and reached 5,325 in 2022,¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶ the number of prosecutions for domestic crime in 2023 was 5286; and the number of convictions increased up to 2,375 in 2022.¹⁴⁷

Combatting domestic violence represents a priority for the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Since the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, fighting against violence against women, children and domestic violence has become a policy priority for Georgia. In 2021, the process of specialization of investigators on sexual crimes was initiated within the MIA. The relevant training program was developed within the framework of close cooperation between the Council of Europe, UN Women, "Equality Now" and the MIA. The training program aims to improve the knowledge and skills of the investigators of the MIA in order to provide effective investigation of sexual violence cases, use of victim-oriented and human rights-based approaches, and effective preparation of cases for their criminal prosecution. The specialization envisages the training of investigators in the methodology of investigation of rape and other types of sexual violence, tram-informed inquiry, discriminatory motive, gender identification, consent to sexual intercourse, the use of victim-centered and human rights-based approaches, the preparation of effective cases for prosecution, and other relevant directions. Within the initial phase of specialization, up to 240 investigators, including those in managerial positions, are trained throughout Georgia.

Prior to the specialization process, 10 employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs underwent training of trainers on the same topic, the purpose of which was to deepen the knowledge of the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and develop the skills necessary for trainers in order to further train investigators to ensure effective investigation into sex crimes.

The training program also covers the guidelines (both, theoretical and practical aspects) for interviewing victims of sexual violence, especially minor victims, as well as, it includes introducing investigators to the internationally proven PEACE methodology for victim interviews, which is based on best practices for police investigative interviews and is developed in England, in the early 1990s.¹⁴⁸

In 2021, the guidelines on national juvenile justice law, practice, and psychological aspects were developed for investigators. The guidelines describe in detail the standards for investigating the cases of human trafficking and interviewing/interrogation of alleged victims (affected persons) of the crime, especially minors, informing the alleged victim (affected persons) of their rights and legal guarantees, and offering the use of state services. In the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid; pg. 26

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ Ibid

¹⁴⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/rap-rcha-geo-16-2023/1680aa229a> pg. 14

guidelines, special importance is attached to the need to take into account the signs of trafficking when considering cases related on the basis of Articles adjoining to the trafficking crimes (for example, engaging in prostitution). This serves to conduct proactive investigations and is aimed at identifying possible victims of human trafficking (trafficking).

Geostat's 2021–2023 Strategy for Gender Statistics includes Task 1.1, which aims to increase the availability of gender statistics in the Georgian National Statistics System. Related to Task 1.1 is the activity to continue to produce sex-disaggregated indicators based on existing regular surveys and irregular surveys, such as the Time Use Survey and the National Study on Violence against Women, which was conducted twice already in Georgia in 2017 and 2022.

The National Study on Violence against Women conducted in 2022 explored the prevalence of different forms of violence against women, its impact on women's health and well-being, their awareness about and usage of services available to the victims of violence, the public's attitudes towards the violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the ways to eliminate it.

Georgia has successfully set up state-run shelters and crisis centres that provide round-the-clock accommodation as well as legal, psychological and medical assistance to survivors of violence. Georgia currently has a total of five state-supported shelters (in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Gori, Telavi and Batumi), along with seven state-supported crisis centres (in Ozurgeti, Kutaisi, Gori, Tbilisi, Marneuli, Tsaishi and Telavi). The crisis centers of Zugdidi and Telavi have been operating since 2023. An integrated service center for children victims of sexual violence is operating in Tbilisi. The center provides psychological and social services (short and long-term rehabilitation) of alleged victims/victims/ children afflicted by sexual violence.

One of the main functions of the State-funded Legal Aid Service is the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of the social rights of the victims of domestic violence and violence against women. The Legal Aid Service provides legal advice and legal assistance to victims and alleged victims of domestic violence if they do not have a lawyer involved in the case. Legal assistance includes both the preparation of legal documents as needed and representation in court regarding administrative and civil cases, regardless of the complexity and importance of the case, if the case does not involve a lawyer hired by the victim/alleged victim of violence.

Representation in court in connection with an administrative case is provided if the court considers issuing a protective order, in which case the alleged victim of violence does not necessarily have to be insolvent. Regarding the issuing a restraining order, the victim/alleged victim of violence must meet the criterion of insolvency.

State-funded Legal Aid Service served 55 victims of violence and domestic violence in 2021 and 47 in 2020.¹⁴⁹ In 2022, there were 551 cases of violence and domestic violence¹⁵⁰. In 2023, the number of cases was 531. In the first quarter of 2024, there were 123 cases.¹⁵¹

The Human Rights Protection Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia continues to focus on accountability and adherence to legal measures in combating VAWG. The establishment of a risk assessment methodology, the revision of the procedures to issue

¹⁴⁹ Annual Reports; available at: <https://www.legalaid.ge/en/p/42/annual-reports>
<https://www.legalaid.ge/ka/p/42/annual-reports>

¹⁵⁰Annual Reports; available at: <https://www.legalaid.ge/ka/p/42/annual-reports>

¹⁵¹Statistics provided By International Relations and Analytical department of Legal Aid Service, 31.05.2024.

restrictive orders, and the introduction of an electronic surveillance mechanism are among other positive steps.

With the support of UN Women and the European Union, important steps have been taken to improve the legal mechanisms protecting women and victims of domestic violence. In particular, the risk assessment tool and the standard of issuing the electronic surveillance were updated in May 2023 to become more victim-oriented. The risk assessment tool is a structured questionnaire used by authorized police officers to assess the risk of repeated violence in reported cases of violence against women and/or domestic violence. These questions help officers obtain the most information on the occurrence of violence and the persons involved in it, reveal what risk the specific victim faces, and determine whether there is a likelihood of reoccurrence by the abuser. This tool gives the police the ability to make the right decision and to take effective measures to prevent repeated acts of violence.

If the identified risks indicate a credible threat of violence, the police will be given the option to offer electronic surveillance to the victim, carried out solely for the maximum 30-day duration of the order.

Electronic surveillance ensures maximum safety for the victim through electronic means—specifically an ankle bracelet for the violator, and a monitor for the victim and the perpetrator.

These devices are similar to mobile phones. Thanks to electronic surveillance, the attacker's proximity to the victim is monitored in real-time. If the victim gives consent to use electronic surveillance, the police will submit the request to the court for approval.

When implementing electronic surveillance, and taking into account the victim's requests, certain locations are identified in advance as exclusion zones under the terms of a restraining order, such as the victim's house, workplace, or any other frequented place. In these areas, the violator is prohibited from approaching the victim within the prescribed radii: a 100-metre danger zone and a 500-metre buffer zone. These distances are automatically determined by the receiving devices that both the victim and the violator have, and as soon as the permissible distance is violated, a signal is immediately transmitted to the 112 Monitoring Centre.

If the perpetrator enters any predefined exclusion zone and does not comply with an authorized person's request to leave the danger zone or buffer zone, and/or evades electronic surveillance, his actions will be regarded as grounds for criminal liability.

The devices must sound an alarm not only to 112 but also to the victim and the violator. The police, in all situations, are connected to both the perpetrator and the victim and take immediate measures to ensure the safety of the victim.

The victim's consent is essential when using electronic surveillance because, without it, the police cannot use this mechanism, a very effective system for protecting victims.

Unfortunately, there have been cases in which violators have broken the terms of their restraining order, and the victim or other persons have not informed law enforcement officers that the violator has established communication, such as going to the victim's house. Electronic surveillance safeguards against such cases. Victims no longer have to contact the police; the 112 Monitoring Centre is already monitoring offenders' compliance with the terms of their restraining order.

As a result of changes the specific questions in the risk assessment tool are now more comprehensive and better tailored to the victim, which allows the police to better identify the risk of violence. The risk levels are more elevated too: if earlier there were high, medium and low levels, now there is only 'risk' and 'high risk', with previously assessed average risks now being identified as high risks. Naturally, this increases the possibility of offering electronic supervision to victims.

As a result of the amendments, from May 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024 (for one year), in 139 cases, with the consent of the victim, the decision was made to impose electronic supervision on the perpetrator while from 2020 to May 2023 – this number was 44.

Additionally, more than 10 recommendations have been developed by the Human Rights Protection Department at MIA for law enforcement, including instructions for filling out the protocol of a restraining order and establishing electronic surveillance, instructions on mechanisms for combating crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability; Instructions for the abuser on separation from the victim. It should be noted that recommendations and guidelines are updated periodically based on existing needs and in response to the challenges that are required for the employees of the agency.

Since 2018, specialized prosecutors have been assigned to domestic violence cases. Importantly, to enhance access to justice for sexual violence victims, specialized prosecutors were assigned to sexual violence crimes in 2021 as well. The Legal Aid Service in Georgia is crucial in providing free legal aid to survivors of domestic violence, ensuring access to justice through legal consultations, assistance with documents, and court representation. As of 2024, there are 258 employees of the Prosecution Service of Georgia, including, prosecutors, investigators, managers and victim and witness coordinators, who specialise in domestic crime and domestic violence and 174 employees are specialised in sexual violence.

Mechanisms currently in place to support VAW survivors in Georgia include law enforcement, judicial and support mechanisms. Among law enforcement and judicial mechanisms are:

- ✓ Restraining orders issued by the police based on a risk assessment mechanism
- ✓ Protective orders issued by the courts
- ✓ Electronic monitoring of high-risk perpetrators
- ✓ Witness and Victim Coordinator Service at the Prosecutor's Office
- ✓ Human Rights Protection Department at the MIA, is responsible for monitoring the quality of VAW investigations
- ✓ Perpetrator behavioral correction programs
- ✓ Femicide Watch reports prepared by the Public Defender's Office of Georgia
- ✓ State-funded Legal Aid Service for victims of domestic violence
- ✓ '112' unified emergency phone number, available 24/7
- ✓ '112' mobile app, with integrated chat function and SOS button

Among the VAW support mechanisms available in Georgia are:

- ✓ Health sector regulations for documenting incidents of VAW, including domestic violence
- ✓ Standard operating procedures for primary healthcare workers to respond to, document, and refer VAW cases and survivors

- ✓ 116 006' consultancy hotline, providing information in eight different languages to VAW survivors
- ✓ Five State-funded shelters in different locations provide free 24/7 accommodations and legal, psychological, and medical assistance to VAW survivors
- ✓ Seven crisis centers in different regions provide legal, psychological, and medical assistance to VAW survivors
- ✓ State funding available for essential services required by victims of sexual violence

One of the most important achievements was the establishment of Barnahus in Tbilisi in 2022—the Centre for Psychological and Social Services for Children Victims of Violence. A new Center for Psychological and Social Services for Children Victims of Violence aims to protect children, victims of sexual violence, from re-traumatization and to bring investigative actions and rehabilitation into one space. The Centre aims to create a specific system that responds to the special needs of children who have been subjected to sexual violence or abuse. It also derives from the principle that the needs of children in these cases are totally different from those of adults in the same situation.

The centre ensures that children and adolescents who have been exposed to sexual abuse and crime receive appropriate assessment, treatment and support. The parties involved in investigative and rehabilitation processes gather in one space to avoid subjecting children to repeated interviews by many agencies in different locations. Interviewing a child is minimized and conducted by a professional who is trained in child-friendly approaches. The Centre has a child-friendly environment for investigative interviews which reduces the level of anxiety of the child. Professionals employed here are trained in the best practices of child welfare and protection. According to UNICEF the Center had supported up to 190 children victims of sexual violence in the country since its opening until December 2023.¹⁵² The government of Georgia committed to establishing the second such Center in Kutaisi for beneficiaries in the western part of the country by the end of 2024.

The Centre was opened in close partnership with the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the Victims of Human Trafficking of the Ministry of the Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs with the support of UNICEF and the Government of Estonia. Other Government agencies involved in the development of the Centre include the Administration of the Government of Georgia, Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecutor's Office, Legal Aid Service, and Levan Samkharauli National Forensics Bureau.

Perpetrator behavior correction programs are important elements of an integrated and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating violence against women. Furthermore, to comply with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention, the Ministry of Justice has implemented a specialized program on perpetrator behavioral correction, implemented through probation services since 2015 and in two penitentiary establishments since 2019. In 2021, 26 psychologists and social workers of the penitentiary system were retrained as facilitators to implement the training course in all penitentiary facilities. In 2022, implementation of the program began in eight penitentiary establishments (Pes No.. 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16 and 17). The training program is based on the Spanish model “Intervention Program for the Rehabilitation of GBV Perpetrators” (PRIA and PRIA MA). Its goal is to reduce and prevent different types of violent behavior, change sexist and discriminatory behavior, and prevent

¹⁵² <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2023/4899#gsc.tab=0>

recurrence. In addition, the program helps perpetrators with a history of violence to understand the gender aspects of violence, learn new conflict resolution skills, and develop norms of behavior based on equality and respect in partner relationships. The number of people involved in the programme must be increasing - in 2019, 151 probationers and 10 prisoners participated; and from 2020 to 2021, 157 probationers.¹⁵³

The Public Defender of Georgia, within the framework of the femicide monitoring mechanism, examines the cases of killings, attempted killings and suicides of women. The purpose of the monitoring is to assess the administration of justice on crimes of femicide and attempted femicide and to reveal the shortcomings of the measures implemented by the state agencies.

Reporting Period	2020	2021	2022
Number of femicide cases (women murder)	24	22	25
Number of attempted murder of women	27	31	37

Source: PDO Report: The Situation in Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia (2020; 2021; 2022)

In 2022 the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia launched an Information Campaign “No to Femicide” with the support of the US Embassy and the UN Women. The information campaign against femicide aims to raise public awareness against women and domestic violence and to prevent femicide crimes. Within the scope of the femicide information campaign "No to Femicide", a number of important events were planned to raise public awareness and up to 250 meetings were held; Informative videos were prepared, in which well-known public figures talk about the importance of public involvement in the fight against women and domestic violence.

Official statistical data of the Prosecution Service of Georgia from 2018 to 2023 is 85 registered victims of femicide: gender-based murder, attempted murder, incitement to suicide and incitement to attempted suicide of women. Statistical data for years 2018-2023 is as follows:

- 2018 – 1 victim of femicide
- 2019 – 4 victims of femicide
- 2020 – 12 victims of femicide;
- 2021 – 13 victims of femicide;
- 2022 – 31 victims of femicide;
- 2023 – 24 victims of femicide.

In 2022, the Human Rights Protection Department of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia analysed criminal cases of femicide and studied the criminal, as well as criminological aspects of femicide and attempted femicide. Study is available in English at the official website of the Prosecution Service of Georgia.¹⁵⁴ In 2024, new guideline “On eliminating shortcomings identified in femicide criminal cases” was developed for prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecution Service.

¹⁵³ 2022-2024 NAP; pg. 9

¹⁵⁴ <https://pog.gov.ge/uploads/007f81e3-Femicide-2014-2022-ENG.pdf>

Apart from femicide analysis, the Prosecution Service of Georgia conducts annual analysis of all gender-based crimes. Analysis is published on the official website of the Prosecution Service of Georgia.¹⁵⁵

Combatting crimes against Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), ensuring access to justice for PWDs without discrimination are subsequently reflected in the Strategy of the Prosecution Service of Georgia for 2022-2027. In order to achieve these goals and endorse the core principles of the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” and the law of Georgia “On the rights of persons with disabilities”, the Prosecution Service of Georgia has been developing annual Action Plans on Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since 2021. PSG developed and implemented “Recommendation on Investigating Cases Involving Persons with Disabilities” in 2016, „Guidelines on the Standards and Methodology of Working with Witnesses, Victims and Defendants with Disabilities“ in 2021 and “Guideline on Eliminating Shortcomings Identified in Criminal Cases Involving Persons with Disabilities” in 2024.

The elimination of the harmful practice of child marriage is a nationalized target under SDG 5 of Georgia (country-specific SDG Target 5.3). In 2023, the Parliament of Georgia approved the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights. Among other priority areas, the gender equality chapter of the document explicitly declares the Government’s commitment to invest in the elimination of harmful practices. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia, ATIPfund and other state institutions have declared their readiness to implement measures for the prevention of and response to the harmful practice of child marriage.

Department of Human Rights Protection at MIA has been conducting awareness raising campaigns against child marriage for 5 consecutive years. In 2023, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted an information campaign “Do not deprive childhood” to address child marriage crimes and raise public awareness on this issue, as well as to timely inform law enforcement about these crimes.

As a part of the campaign, the employees of the Department and police departments, together with representatives and interpreters of the partner agencies/organizations throughout Georgia, hold meetings with schoolchildren, teachers, representatives of the Manatura Service, social service employees, medical workers, population, local self-government bodies, gender equality councils and with representatives of other relevant organizations.

It is especially noteworthy that in 2023, an informational poster was published as a part of the campaign, explaining who is considered a child, that childhood marriage is a crime, what are the severe consequences of an early marriage, as well as listing those state services that have a duty to respond. In the poster, information about ways to address police on suspected child marriages/coercion of marriage was provided. In coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science, posters were put up in every school in Georgia, with a total of 2302 schools (216 private and 2086 public).

¹⁵⁵ <https://pog.gov.ge/page/default/qalTa-mimarT-genderuli-Zaladoba-da-ojaxshi-Zaladoba>

In 2021, the training module "Gender Mainstreaming in Education: Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence" was developed through cooperation between the the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, and UN WOMEN. The training module covers the gender issues such as: violence against women and girls, domestic violence, discrimination at work, pay discrimination, etc.; recent studies on discrimination against girls; examples of the impact of stereotypes, stigmas and prejudices and discussion thereof; discussion of workplace sexual harassment, characteristics of bullying, unequal inheritance rights, statutory rape, child marriage, femicide, international instruments on women's issues, international and national instruments. The training module is designed for all general education teachers and resource officers. 1231 teachers and 900 resource officers have already been trained during 2022-2023.

The government maintained law enforcement efforts. Articles 143¹ and 143² of the criminal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties ranging from seven to 12 years' imprisonment for offenses involving an adult victim, and eight to 12 years' imprisonment for offenses involving a child victim. In 2023 law enforcement investigated 19 new cases, compared with 18 new cases in 2021.¹⁵⁶ In 2023, 15 persons were prosecuted for human trafficking.¹⁵⁷

The Government of Georgia adopted a regulation on issuing compensation to the victims/survivors of violence against women and/or domestic violence on 9 November 2022. The relevant legislative amendment was drafted and approved with the involvement and technical support of UN Women.

A victim/survivor of violence receives compensation from the Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking due to the harm caused by the damage to her/his health resulting from the crime committed against her/him which has not been compensated by the perpetrator. The court decides the amount of the compensation. By adopting the compensation rule Georgia has fully ratified the Istanbul Convention and one five-year reservation to Article 30(2) was lifted.

On 2 May 2023, an 8-year-old girl, the child of a femicide victim, received the first compensation in the amount of GEL 10,000 from the State. Since the implementation of the regulation, to the end of March 2024, 14 applications for compensation have been submitted to the State Care Agency of which 12 were approved, one was rejected and one was annulled by the applicant. In 12 of the cases, compensation was issued to the children of femicide victims in the amount of 10,000 GEL as determined by the rule, and in one case, a woman who was the victim of domestic violence received compensation for damage to her health. In one case the applicant was a victim of violence, and accordingly, the compensation amount was determined by the court and 3692.99 GEL was (3800 GEL - compensation for the damages imposed by the court to the offender; 107.01 GEL - the amount paid as part of enforcement)¹⁵⁸.

The progress achieved by the country in combating domestic violence has been made possible through a multisectoral approach and the implementation of targeted policies developed in line with international practices. To facilitate the implementation of international and national legislation in practice, since 2008, the Government of Georgia has regularly adopted and implemented the National Action Plan (NAP) on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors),

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ <https://pog.gov.ge/uploads/124143f0-Trafficking-in-Human-Beings-2023-full-ENG.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ E-mail communication with the State Care Agency; Date: March 23, 2024

specifically for the periods 2007–2008, 2009–2010, 2011–2012, 2013–2015, 2016–2017, 2018–2020 and 2022-2024.

The 2022–2024 NAP¹⁵⁹ serves to improve the legal framework related to the issues of violence against women and domestic violence and to ensure the provision of appropriate services and measures aimed at raising public awareness.¹⁶⁰ It should be noted that while formulating the areas, goals, and objectives of the action plan, the main principles of the Istanbul Convention were taken into account. In addition, it is important to note that the goals, objectives, and activities of the NAP, which serve to further improve the legal framework and related services directed towards the elimination of violence against women and domestic violence, as well as to raise awareness in society, were developed based on Goals 5 and 16 of the SDGs, CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention.

The 2022–2024 NAP includes four scopes of activity:

Scope I - Prevention of violence against women and domestic violence;

Goal 1 - Promoting zero tolerance for violence against women and domestic violence in society and improving prevention mechanisms

Scope II - Protection of and support for victims of violence;

Goal 2 - Increasing access to quality support services for victims (survivors) of violence against women and domestic violence

Scope III - Elimination of cases of violence against women and domestic violence;

Goal 3 - Ensuring an effective and rapid response to cases of violence against women and domestic violence

Scope IV - Implementation of an integrated policy regarding data collection

Goal 4 - Increasing the effectiveness of state policy in the direction of combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence and protecting victims by strengthening integrated and coordinated approaches

The goals, objectives, and activities of the 2022–2024 NAP will be implemented by the administrative bodies responsible for the activities, using the financial resources for GEL 6,062,850, the source of which is the state budget and donor assistance.

According to the 2023 report on the Measures to be implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims/Survivors for the years 2022-2024, almost **60%** of the designated activities have already been executed by the responsible agencies.

In January of 2024, by the resolution of the Government of Georgia, the “**National referral procedures for identification, protection, assistance and rehabilitation of victims of violence against women and/or domestic violence**” was approved.

The key aim of the document is the development of the prompt and effective coordination among the relevant agencies; settle actions to support victims of violence and prevent re-victimization. The document was developed by the Interagency Commission on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, with support from UNFPA and active involvement of civil society.

¹⁵⁹ <https://myrights.gov.ge/en/Policy%20Documents/plan/>; <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/violence-eng.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ UN Women, Country Gender Equality Profile of Georgia (2020). Available at <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20georgia/attachments/publications/2020/country%20gender%20equality%20profile%20of%20georgia.pdf>.

The Inter-Agency Commission is the body responsible for developing the National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors).¹⁶¹ In addition, the Commission's duties include monitoring the implementation of the action plan and periodic reporting.¹⁶² The implementation, monitoring, and reporting work will be performed through the Human Rights Department of the Administration of the Government. The annual report is posted on the official website of the Human Rights Department (<https://myrights.gov.ge/>) to inform decision-makers and stakeholders about the progress on the issues envisaged by the National Action Plan, as well as to raise the awareness of the general public.

Furthermore, on July 25, 2023, the Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence established two working groups under the auspices of the Commission:

- ✓ **Working group on assisting the fulfillment of recommendations of international organizations (such as GREVIO and CEDAW);**
- ✓ **Working Group for elaboration of the Action Plan for the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence.**

Both working groups are comprised of state agencies and non-governmental organizations.

It should be noted that, for the years the only division working on human rights issues in the Government Administration was Human Rights Secretariat.

The insufficient resources of the Secretariat was always an issue of concern for partners and international organizations. Therefore, recently, in 1st of September, 2023 a **new Human Rights Department** was created.

The functions of the secretariat, as well as the people working for the secretariat remained within the department. Moreover, a **Research and Analysis division** has been added to the department and new staff (3 persons) was added.

The new staff of the department work more intensively on analytical and research tasks. This way the department ensures that the work of the Commissions and Committee operating under Human Rights Council in the Government Administration is supported more effectively.

The Government of Georgia fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking and therefore Georgia remained in Tier 1.¹⁶³ The government continued to demonstrate serious and sustained efforts considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity.

¹⁶¹ Ordinance No. 286 of 12 June 2017 of the Government of Georgia

¹⁶² Article 4 of the Statute of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

¹⁶³ 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Georgia; available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/georgia>

According to the Global Slavery Index 2023 the Government of Georgia is placed among those authorities that are taking the most actions to end human trafficking. Georgia takes 14th position out of 160 countries and 1st place in the Region.¹⁶⁴

Anti-Trafficking policy is coordinated by the Inter-Agency Council on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings consisted of all relevant governmental agencies, Parliament of Georgia, NGOs and International organizations. The Council met consistently and on December 21st, 2022, adopted the 2023-2024 Anti-Trafficking NAP corresponding the 4P principles (Prevention, Prosecution, Protection and Partnership).

The government maintained law enforcement efforts. Article 143¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia prohibits human trafficking in adult. The criminal sanction for this crime varies imprisonment from seven to twenty years, which depends on the aggravating circumstances.¹⁶⁵ The Criminal Code also prohibits trafficking against minors. The sanction for this crime varies imprisonment from eight years to life imprisonment, which depends on the aggravating circumstances.¹⁶⁶ Georgian Criminal Code also criminalizes use of the services of the victims of human trafficking.¹⁶⁷

The law enforcements are permanently trained. They use special Guidelines and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for effective revealing the THB cases. In 2023 law enforcement investigated 19 new cases, compared with 18 new cases in 2021.¹⁶⁸

The government maintained several specialized trafficking units, including the Anti-Trafficking and Illegal Migration Unit in the Central Criminal Police Department (CCPD) and its six mobile groups. Mobile groups regularly operate in the high risk areas. They also monitor persons and organizations which offer employment in or outside of the country; organizations which ensure transportation for persons leaving the country; travel agencies; enterprises which employ foreigners, organizations and persons provided visa assistance; they interview Georgian nationals deported from Turkey and European countries with a view to revealing potential THB cases. The General Prosecutor's Office (GPO) maintained five specialized prosecutors dedicated to trafficking cases, and the Adjara Police Department operated a task force in the Adjara Autonomous Republic with specialized investigators and prosecutors. In 2023 law enforcement investigated 19 new cases, compared with 18 new cases in 2021.¹⁶⁹

The CCPD updated an MOU between mobile units and labor inspectors to conduct joint inspections to identify forced labor. The law enforcements use special guidelines and indicators to identify the THB cases.

The Tbilisi City Court maintained a 10 judge panel that heard "crimes against human rights and freedom," including trafficking, and the Tbilisi Court of Appeals also maintained seven specialized judges assigned to handle "crimes against human beings," which included trafficking,¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ Global Slavery Index 2023 available at: <https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/downloads/>

¹⁶⁵ Article 143¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426>

¹⁶⁶ Article 143² of Criminal Code of Georgia <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426>

¹⁶⁷ Article 143³ of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

The government created a group of specialized labor inspectors to identify labor trafficking and opened branch offices in Batumi and Kutaisi and developed guidelines for labor inspectors on identifying labor trafficking victims. The Agency for State Care operated eight mobile groups responsible for identifying potential victims among vulnerable children. In 2023 mobile groups assisted 301 children (245 in 2021).¹⁷¹

In addition, the State Care Agency continues to operate anti-trafficking shelters in Tbilisi and Batumi that provide victim assistance programs for official victims. In 2023 the government allocated 1,004,201 lari (\$376,810) to the government-run anti-trafficking shelters, a significant increase compared with 400,000 lari (\$150,100) in 2021. State-run shelters provided medical aid, psycho-social support, legal assistance, childcare services, reintegration support, and a one-time financial payment of 1,000 lari (\$375) to victims. In April 2021, the government amended the law to remove a clause that denied victims the 1,000 lari (\$375) cash assistance if they received restitution and removed the obligation of a victim to apply to the court for remedy before requesting the one-off state compensation.¹⁷² In case of necessity, the interpreter service is available as well.

The CEDAW Committee in its concluding remarks welcomes the adoption of the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings 2022–2024 and the efforts made by the State party to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, by criminalizing pimping, offering multilingual legal, psychological and social support to victims of trafficking in persons and strengthening international cooperation, including during the COVID-19 pandemic by restructuring the services in shelters and crisis centres provided by the Agency of State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Ibid

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ file:///Users/irinalortkipanidze/Documents/Beijing%20+30/CEDAW_C_GEO_CO_6-EN.pdf pg. 9

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Georgia is ranked 55th out of 146 countries in the 2022 Global Gender Gap Index.¹⁷⁴ Georgia made an improvement in political empowerment from 2021 to 2022, moving up to the 57th position from the 60th. Based on the 2022 data, Georgia ranks 121st among 187 countries concerning the proportion of women in national parliaments.¹⁷⁵ The guarantees for gender equality and women's participation in politics (active and passive right to vote) are established by the Constitution of Georgia, the Law on Gender Equality, and the Election Code of Georgia.

The proportion of women in the Parliament of Georgia remains below global (27 %) and regional (31 %) averages for women in national parliaments. During the 2020 election, 31 women were elected to the Parliament, constituting 21 % of the total. As of 2023, 27 of the 141 MPs are women, comprising 19 %.¹⁷⁶

The Georgian Parliament enacted a gender quota mechanism in 2020 and amended the Election Code of Georgia accordingly. Gender quotas have positively impacted women's political participation by increasing the ratio of women candidates and the share of elected women.

Thus, to achieve the goal, the electoral system was changed, and a mandatory gender quota mechanism was established - at least one in every four persons in the proportional list must be of a different gender for the 2020 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia. The Parliament consists of 120 members are elected by a proportional electoral system and 30 members by the majoritarian electoral system.¹⁷⁷ Accordingly, the gender quotas were determined as a 25% proportion of the list.

The number of women elected to local self-governance bodies (sakrebulo, or municipal councils) has increased. Only 13.8 % of those elected to local governments in 2017 were women; by 2021, that percentage had risen to 24%. Women made up 42 % of candidates in the local proportional electoral system, compared to just 18 % in the majoritarian electoral system. Women achieved notable success from the proportional list, winning 31.4 % (441) of mandates, which is a considerable rise above their 19.8 % win in 2017.¹⁷⁸

The results of the local elections for mayor indicate slight progress, with three women being elected in the 2021 local government elections, compared to only one woman elected in the 2017 elections. Only one female was elected out of the five mayors of the self-governing cities. Regarding the proportion of women voters for the local government elections in 2021, women constituted approximately 51 % of voters.¹⁷⁹

The Election Administration (EA) carries out relevant activities based on equality principles. 2023-2026 and 2020-2023 strategic plans elaborated by the administration, imply balanced

¹⁷⁴ World Economic Forum 2022.

¹⁷⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Women in National Parliament. Available at the: <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=7&year=2022>

¹⁷⁶ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg. 87

¹⁷⁷ According to the Constitution of Georgia (Article 37. Elections of the Parliament), the election system for the 2024 parliamentary elections of Georgia will be fully proportional: The Parliament will consist of 150 members elected by the proportional system in a single multi-mandate electoral district on the basis of universal, free, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot, for a term of 4 years.

¹⁷⁸ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia; pg.87

¹⁷⁹ Ibid

gender and equality-based environment. Election administration also has a gender equality policy document, according to which, three major objectives are identified:

The Goal of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Election Administration – In order to safeguard substantive gender equality, within mandate and competences of the election administration - **to ensure protection of equal opportunities and substantive equality in the electoral process, to improve systemic and institutional mechanisms, and women empowerment.**

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to resolve the following objectives:

Strategic objective 1: sustainable development of election administration’s systemic and institutional mechanisms and capacity building for the prevention of gender inequality and the empowerment of women in the workplace.

Strategic objective 2: raising awareness and providing information are essential to bolster equal opportunities within the electoral process and uphold substantive equality.

On 23 May 2022, the Election Administration adopted a key document, the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Mechanism, to ensure a safe working environment. In November 2022, UN Women Georgia conducted an awareness-raising activity for a large number of CEC employees. Following their Training of Trainers (ToT) by UN Women, CEC employees trained district election commission members and remaining CEC staff. This initiative supports the administration's longstanding commitment to gender mainstreaming policies.

The Gender Portal, launched in 2020 in collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), serves as a bilingual (Georgian-English) platform offering comprehensive gender-disaggregated statistics spanning from 2014 to 2023. This portal includes data on the unified voter list, electoral subjects, observers, media representatives, and the composition of election administration. It features a download function for Excel, facilitating detailed comparisons of election data. Users can access statistical information presented both in percentages and absolute numbers.

Along with women’s representation in national parliaments and local government, women’s participation and leadership in public service is a key indicator of progress towards women’s equal and meaningful partaking in decision-making. Moreover, when women participate and lead in public service, public institutions become more gender-inclusive and more representative of the societies they serve and produce more efficient policies and services.

In Georgia, the head of state, the president, is a woman. By March 2024, 2 out of 12 ministers were women.

The share of women among civil servants has remained unchanged since 2020, at about one-third (31.3 %) in 2022. Over the years, the percentage of women holding rank I and II managerial positions in the public service sector has fluctuated. However, there has been a steady, positive trend between 2019 (36 %) and 2022 (43 %).¹⁸⁰ According to Geostat data from 2017 to 2022, there was a slight increase in the percentage of extraordinary and plenipotentiary women ambassadors from Georgia, from 11 % to 15 %.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid; pg. 90

The judiciary system remains a sphere where women are well represented. The proportion of women in the judiciary constituted 55 per cent in 2022, showing a 1 per cent increase from 2019.¹⁸¹ There are three women among the nine judges of the Constitutional Court, and this number has remained unchanged since 2019. Out of 28 judges there are 11 women justices at the Supreme Court of Georgia. The chairperson of the Supreme Court is also a woman. In 2023 a woman was appointed as the chair of Batumi City Court.

In 2023, the Prosecution Service of Georgia had 798 employees, including 327 (41%) women and 471 men. The number of female employees increased by 2% since 2020. Moreover, deputy chief of the Prosecutor General of Georgia is a woman. In 2023, for the first time, woman was awarded the title of the best prosecutor of the year. 56% of members of the Prosecutorial Council are women and 75% of the members, including head, of the deliberative body of the Prosecutor General of Georgia – the Ranking Board, are women.

The Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) of the Law of Georgia on Public Service shows the relative increase in women's participation in public service in recent years (39 % of women in rank I and II managerial positions in 2018, compared to 43 % in 2022). As of 2022, the gender equality status quo in the Georgian public service is as follows – women comprise 31 % of the total public service workforce – including the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) - and 59 % excluding the MIA.¹⁸²

The GIA identified two major obstacles to achieving gender equality in the public service sector: (1) the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions and (2) the lack of a gender-responsive work environment.¹⁸³

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have been identified as one of twelve critical areas of concern by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They play a central role in supporting government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas. Institutional mechanisms are required to be located at the highest possible level in government and to be invested with the authority and resources needed to fulfill their mandates.

Institutional mechanisms for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment are present in different branches of power and at different levels in Georgia:

- ✓ Legislative branch - the Permanent Gender Equality Council (GEC) of the Parliament;
- ✓ Executive Branch - Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues;
- ✓ National Human Rights Institution - the Public Defender's Office
- ✓ Local self-government - Local government gender equality councils and gender equality focal points.

The Permanent Gender Equality Council (GEC) of the Parliament is tasked with overseeing and safeguarding gender equality in Georgia. It plays a pivotal role in defining the State's gender equality policies, creating and developing legislative frameworks, and monitoring

¹⁸¹ Ibid; pg. 91

¹⁸²https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/brief_-_gender_impact_assessment_of_the_law_of_georgia_on_public_service_eng.pdf

¹⁸³https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/brief_-_gender_impact_assessment_of_the_law_of_georgia_on_public_service_eng.pdf

gender equality issues within parliamentary bodies. Chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament or a designated GEC member, the entity is composed of Members of the Parliament. The GEC's work may also involve participation from cabinet members, agency heads, local CSOs and other development partner organizations.

The GEC's mandate, defined by the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament and by the GEC's by-laws, includes analyzing legislation to propose solutions for addressing gender inequality. Additionally, the GEC is mandated to evaluate legislative drafts from a gender equality perspective, plan activities to advance gender equality, establish a monitoring and evaluation system for gender equality initiatives, and provide relevant recommendations. The GEC also monitors the executive branch's actions related to gender equality and holds hearings on the reports produced by the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women, and Domestic Violence.¹⁸⁴

The Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Issues, founded in 2017, is the central unit within the executive government on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The main purposes and functions of the Commission include promoting gender mainstreaming within the executive government in all policies and programs; Supporting the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data; Coordinating implementation of national action plans on gender equality, violence against women, and domestic violence and the UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security (UNSCR1325).

The Commission is co-chaired by the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Gender Equality Issues and a Deputy Minister of Justice of Georgia. The Commission further consists of deputy ministers from line ministries/state agencies.

The Public Defender's Office (PDO) is the third key institution in Georgia's gender equality architecture legally mandated to monitor the protection of gender equality and provide appropriate responses to violations of gender equality. To implement this work, Gender Equality Department has been set up within the PDO.

The department's tasks include monitoring the implementation of national and international acts on gender equality, ensuring state guarantees for human rights protection, addressing violations of rights based on gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, examining and responding to complaints related to gender equality violations, and preparing relevant reports, recommendations and proposals. Under the department, the PDO has also integrated the monitoring of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) into the national human rights monitoring mechanism; this has been recognized as an important achievement by various international forums, including the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Furthermore, the department conducts research and awareness-raising activities to advance gender equality in the country. A critical mandate, the Femicide Watch was created in 2016. This mechanism empowers the Public Defender of Georgia to conduct annual analyses of gender-related killings, attempted murders and suicides of women. Its primary objective is to identify gaps in victim protection mechanisms and provide relevant agencies with recommendations.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Parliament of Georgia 2018, article 76, para. 4

¹⁸⁵ COUNTRY GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE OF GEORGIA 2023; pg. 22-23; available at: https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/cge_eng_web_3.pdf

Local governments play a crucial role in promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Georgia. This significance is emphasized in the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality, which mandates municipal bodies to develop and implement measures to detect and eliminate discrimination at the local level.

To facilitate a systematic approach towards addressing gender issues, municipal councils (sakrebulo) in Georgia are obligated to establish municipal gender equality councils. To enhance the effectiveness of these efforts, the mayor of the municipality designates a person responsible for overseeing gender equality issues within the local jurisdiction. This ensures a dedicated focus on promoting gender equality and streamlining efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable community. To facilitate a systematic approach towards addressing gender issues, municipal councils (sakrebulo) in Georgia are obligated to establish municipal gender equality councils. To enhance the effectiveness of these efforts, the mayor of the municipality designates a person responsible for overseeing gender equality issues within the local jurisdiction. This ensures a dedicated focus on promoting gender equality and streamlining efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable community.¹⁸⁶

All 64 municipalities in Georgia have established a municipal gender equality council. These councils work collaboratively to study gender-related matters within the municipality and develop municipal gender equality action plans to coordinate and implement relevant actions. 49 municipalities had adopted a municipal gender equality action plan, and 21 had acceded to the European Charter for the Equality of Women and Men in Local Life through the overall coordination of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG), an entity serving as a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political umbrella organization uniting all 64 municipalities across Georgia.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid; pg.22

Peaceful and inclusive societies

One of the top priorities of the Government of Georgia is to protect the rights of women and girls affected by the conflicts, among them the internally displaced (IDP) women and those living in the occupied territories, as well as the areas adjacent to them.

With the adoption of the landmark UN Security Council’s Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in 2000, the global women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda has gained significant normative strength. To integrate this priority, Georgia adopted its most recent National Action Plan (NAP) in 2022 for the period 2022-2024. Georgia’s fourth NAP is preceded by three other NAPs, adopted in 2012 and 2016 and implemented from 2012 to 2015, 2016-2017, and 2018-2020, respectively. Georgia ranks 40th out of 170 countries on the WPS Index, scoring higher than in 2017 with approximately a 10 % improvement since then.¹⁸⁷

The NAP represents the Government’s unified approach to protecting the human rights of target groups, their access to services, and their economic empowerment, including the integration of a gender perspective into the security sector and decision-making processes as well as meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes.

The 2022–2024 National Action Plan of Georgia for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and its goals and objectives are aligned with the priorities stated in the 2021–2024 Government Programme “Towards Building a European State”,¹⁸⁸ the “State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and Action Plan for 2021–2030”, the 2022–2030 Mental Health Strategy of Georgia and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically: Goal 5: Gender equality; Goal 10: Reduced inequalities; Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. For the first time, the action plan has a dedicated budget and financial resources allocated for each activity.¹⁸⁹ The budget required for implementation of the NAP totals GEL 27,680,907.¹⁹⁰

The process of drafting the NAP was coordinated by the Human Rights Department of the Government of Georgia and the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights. Both line ministries and municipalities, as well as the representatives of local non-governmental and international organizations, the Office of the Public Defender, experts and other stakeholders, were actively involved in the development process.¹⁹¹ The Inter-Agency Commission ensures NAP implementation, monitoring and reporting through the Human Rights Department. The 2022–2024 NAP combines three impact areas:

1. “Strengthening of Women’s Participation in Peace and Security Processes”, ensures increased representation and meaningful participation of conflict-affected women and youth (including IDPs and those living alongside the occupied territories), at the decision-making level in peace and security processes.
2. “Elimination and Prevention of Violence”, includes the prevention of all forms of violence against conflict-affected women and girls (including IDPs and those living

¹⁸⁷ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia, 2023; pg. 95

¹⁸⁸ https://www.gov.ge/files/41_79014_435561_govprogram.PDF

¹⁸⁹ Ibid

¹⁹⁰ Ibid; pg. 18

¹⁹¹ 2022–2024 National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (NAP); pg. 6; available at:

alongside the occupied territories), including sexual violence, gender-based violence and other risks related to human security.

3. “Women’s Empowerment and Protection”, aims at promoting the security, access to public services, and physical and mental health of conflict-affected women and girls (including IDPs and those living at and alongside the occupied territories).

The NAP on WPS in Georgia for 2022–2024 encompasses several vital commitments. These include efforts to enhance housing conditions and livelihoods for conflict-affected women and youth. The plan is dedicated to preventing GBV and fostering women’s active participation in decision-making processes related to peace and security. The plan also prioritizes women’s empowerment, emphasizing access to basic services for conflict-affected women and girls. Additionally, in addressing violence prevention and elimination, the NAP focuses on raising awareness of violence issues and human security for conflict-affected women and girls.

Women’s meaningful participation in negotiating peace and conflict resolution is one of the most fundamental components of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Women’s participation is low in the main Russian-Georgian negotiation format –Geneva International Discussions (GID) and non-political format created under the GID – Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism Format (IPRM)”.

Regular information-sharing meetings between the participants of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and civil society organizations and women’s rights activists are held. UN Women continues supporting these regular information-sharing meetings. The main goal of these meetings is to support women’s meaningful participation in the processes, including taking into consideration their needs and priorities. Last such meeting was held on 18 December 2023 in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with 18 non-governmental organizations in attendance, including the representatives of women’s civil society organizations. The main objective of the meeting was to exchange information on the outcomes of the 57th, 58th and 59th rounds (rounds held in 2023)¹⁹² of the GID, in particular the integration of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda into the processes. During the meeting, the participants discussed the continuation of the GID process, the policy of the Government of Georgia in terms of the peaceful resolution of the conflict, and the current challenges. In addition, the conversation covered the importance of considering the gender perspective in the negotiation process, which Georgian participants give a significant priority to.

The Ministry of Defense had integrated WPS-related subjects into various educational courses and had also developed strategic documents related to gender equality. In 2021 the Ministry of Defense of Georgia developed the Gender Equality Concept.¹⁹³ In addition, the Ministry of Defense has Gender Equality Monitoring Team and trained gender advisors/gender focal points to ensure gender mainstreaming and implementation Women, Peace, and Security agenda within the defense system of Georgia.

On July 29, 2021, the Ministry of Defense of Georgia and UN Women renewed a (4th) Memorandum of Understanding.¹⁹⁴ The MoU continues cooperation between parties and to further develop and strengthen efficient institutional mechanisms. According to the MoU, the

¹⁹² Next GID Round is planed in April 2024

¹⁹³ “Concept of Gender Equality of the Ministry of Defense” approved by the Order №453 of the Minister of Defense of June 3, 2021

¹⁹⁴ <https://mod.gov.ge/en/news/read/8343/memorandum-concluded-between-ministry-of-defence-and-un-women%E2%80%9D>

Defence Ministry is a leading state entity involved in the implementation of the “Women for Peace and Security” Agenda.

With support of the UN Women, the MoD achieved significant progress in strengthening gender equality and implementation of the National Action Plan on UN Security Council resolutions. The MoD has successfully implemented military women empowerment projects, conducted Gender Audit (twice in MoD and once in National Defence Academy) and Gender Impact Assessment of new the Defence Code (professional development chapter). MoD also conducted gender trainings and seminars for leadership, officers, and gender advisors. Teaching on integrating gender perspectives within the operations is the part of pre-deployment trainings. Up to 10 000 deployed personnel are trained since 2014. All activities are aligned with MoD Gender Equity Concept and the existing state policy on gender equality.¹⁹⁵

This cooperation also includes the promotion of women in the Defence Forces and the recognition of their contributions. Publication *Women in Service to Georgia* fulfil this purpose. The publication presents the profiles of 13 women on duty, reflecting on their courage, bravery, struggles and commitments. Their stories demonstrate the significant contribution women make in service to the defence of Georgia.¹⁹⁶

Ensuring gender equality in the Defense Forces is an important aspect. MoD supports the professional development of female military personnel and their career growth as much as possible. Commander of the Combat Support Company of the 11th Infantry Battalion, Senior Lieutenant Khatia Gogaladze is the first woman who completed in November 2023 the International Maneuver Captain Career course. 26 years old Senior Lieutenant Khatia Gogaladze is Commander of Combat Company in the 11th Infantry Battalion. Khatia has been serving in the Defense Forces since 2014. She graduated from the Defense and Security Bachelor's Program at Davit Aghmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia, afterwards, she completed the junior officer training course with the specialty of infantry.

In 2021, the proportion of women among employees of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia was 51 %, and this figure has remained unchanged over the past three years. Women made up only 7 % of the Georgian Defence Forces in 2022.¹⁹⁷ Women occupied 36 % of the decision-making positions in the Civil Office in 2021, which increased to 38 % in 2022.¹⁹⁸

The implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Georgia consists of two important parts: its localization, and the empowerment of internally displaced and conflict-affected community-leader women across the country. This process involves not only equipping them with adequate knowledge and skills but also studying their needs thoroughly, as well as ensuring their active and effective involvement in advocating for solutions to problems.

UN Women has been working on the localization of the WPS agenda in Georgia since 2018. The initiative is carried out through the cooperation of three CSOs: the Women’s Information Center, the IDP Women Association “Consent” and Women Fund “Sukhumi”. As part of this work, 265 women in 17 municipalities have been trained, their awareness has been raised, and

¹⁹⁵ <https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/archive/doc/gebderulistrategiisdokumenti.pdf>

¹⁹⁶ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Women%20Serving%20for%20georgia%201%20%281%29.pdf>

¹⁹⁷ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia, 2023; pg. 95

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

their technical skills in modern technologies have improved, besides their competence regarding gathering and filing information. Women today are better aware of the significance of their involvement in local policymaking and implementation, and as a result, the advocacy process has improved.

It is noteworthy that the formation of the first large-scale “Women and Youth Peace Ambassadors” network is also an important stage in the localization process and the empowerment of women community leaders. The network was formed at the end of 2023, and it unites 40 internally displaced and conflict-affected women and youth living in 17 municipalities of Georgia.

Internally displaced women have unique experiences and challenges; it is therefore necessary to take their perspectives into consideration to implement effective policies on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. According to Social Service Agency data women comprise 104277 out of 194649 IDPs in Georgia, which is 53%.¹⁹⁹ however, their equal, full and meaningful participation in peace, security and reconciliation processes remains a challenge.

The UN Women study on “Views and Attitudes of IDP Women on Conflict Transformation, Reconciliation and Peacebuilding”²⁰⁰ was an important step in overcoming this challenge. One of the study objectives was to identify the factors that hinder the participation of IDP women in conflict transformation and how to facilitate their engagement in future. The results suggest that the majority of IDP women in Georgia - 87 % - think that the conflicts must be resolved peacefully. Moreover, 88 % are in favor of reconciliation with the Abkhaz and 85 % with the Ossetians. The surveyed women believe that the best way to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the conflicts is to promote friendship among the youth, including young women (55 %), and to facilitate free movement across the Administrative Boundary Lines (53 %). The research revealed that almost every second woman has contacts in Tskhinvali [or] Abkhazia. This is extremely important, because it shows that there is a great deal of resources.²⁰¹

Georgian government firmly commits to delivering on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. For this purpose, the Training of Trainers for the representatives of the LEPL Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Training and Research Institute and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia was conducted on 9 and 10 March 2023. The training was led by trainers from the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), a partner organization of UN Women. The training covered the issues of selecting training methods, the peculiarities of online and hybrid teaching, effective presentation techniques, interactive and participatory presentations, facilitation of group work and other topics. The training participants will use the knowledge they gained at the training in future, in order to further refine the training course on inclusive peace processes, negotiations and gender perspective offered by the LEPL Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Training and Research Institute. The training course on peace processes, negotiation and gender perspective was developed and introduced at the LEPL Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Training and Research Institute with the technical support of UN Women Georgia in 2020. The training course is intended for the representatives of state agencies and civil society organizations working on peace, conflicts and security issues. It encompasses the principles of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions.

¹⁹⁹ <https://ssa.moh.gov.ge/statistik.php?lang=1&id=202212070009083804291872&v=>

²⁰⁰ https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/angarishis_mokle_versia.pdf

²⁰¹ Ibid; pg. 8-12

In 2023 the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a new training course was implemented with the joint support of UN Women and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) specifically for the police officers patrolling the villages along the dividing line. The course will help these officers to acquire better knowledge of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and effectively respond to the different needs of local women and girls. During the training, which focused on the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and the creation of a gender-responsive police force, the participants familiarized themselves with gender equality and gender definitions, concepts, theories, and training methodologies and exercises on Women, Peace, and Security topics.

In addition, training for trainers was conducted in December 2023. During the three-day session, 10 representatives of the MIA Academy and the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department were trained; these trainers will conduct the same course at the Academy.

Human security monitoring in conflict-affected communities, especially those adjacent to the administrative boundary line (ABL) and mainstreaming of gender aspects in this process can improve the situation and provide more security for women and girls living in these areas. For this purpose, with the support and initiative of UN Women, the Gender-Sensitive Human Security Monitoring Tool was developed in 2023 for the Public Defender's Office (PDO) and civil society organizations. The purpose of the training was to enhance the security of people living adjacent to the ABL, among them women and girls, about risks to human security and the timely identification of potential escalation and its effective prevention, as well as to build the capacity of participants to conduct gender-sensitive evaluation, monitoring, analysis and reporting concerning the security situation of conflict-affected people and IDPs and to ensure mutual cooperation in this area.

In 2022, ISET Policy Institute (ISET-PI) and UN Women conducted a GIA of the vocational education support program for IDPs and ecomigrants and the self-employment support grant program.²⁰² The goal of the programmes was to promote the socio-economic integration of IDPs and ecomigrants. The study revealed that the programs improved living conditions by creating better employment prospects. The programmes also increased access to resources, especially for women.

In the summer, 2021 Georgian Prime Minister created a government commission, aiming to develop and implement a state strategy for de-occupation and peaceful conflict resolution. The commission drafted a unified state approach and a strategic vision for the de-occupation and peaceful settlement of the conflict. Government agencies and institutions, civil society, research centers, NGOs, experts, and conflict-affected people were engaged. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a lead and coordinated the commission and working group. Georgian government's peace policy, 'A Step to a Better Future' peace initiative, and the work done by the governmental commission in terms of developing and implementing the State Strategy for De-occupation and Peaceful Conflict Resolution, as part of a unique whole-of-nation process aimed at results-oriented and inclusive peace policy was welcomed by the Group of Friends.²⁰³ In 2022, Georgia developed the first draft of the State Strategy for De-Occupation and Peaceful Conflict Resolution.

²⁰² <https://iset-pi.ge/en/publications/ria>

²⁰³ <https://mfa.gov.ge/en/search?keyword=State+Strategy+for+De-Occupation+and+Peaceful+Conflict+Resolution>

The Government of Georgia has elaborated the “State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030 and the Action Plan” with the guidance and coordination of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality attaches importance to women’s role and use of their potential in peace processes and continues facilitation of increase of their involvement in confidence building and reconciliation process.

The Government of Georgia, within the Reconciliation and Engagement Policy has been implementing the State Strategy on Occupied Territories "Engagement through Cooperation" and respective Action Plan, as well as the Peace Initiative "A Step To A Better Future" (enforced in 2019). The policy employs status-neutral approaches and tools to maximise the opportunity for the population living legitimately in the occupied regions to benefit from the same programs and services available to individuals residing in the rest of Georgia. As part of this policy, enabling access to education and health care has particular importance along with facilitation of trade across the dividing lines.

Residents of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia, those who do not have ID card or the passport of the citizen of Georgia, can still take advantage of these government programs. The population legitimately living in the occupied territories can receive high-quality medical care in the leading hospitals of Georgia for free within the special State Referral Healthcare Programme. Once a week the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia holds a meeting of the commission formed specifically for consideration of these issues. After analysis of the appropriate data, the commission shall consider the availability of funding for the applicant and define the purpose of such funding. In the cases, when a patient needs transportation, the Office of the State Minister informs the Department of Emergency Situations Coordination and Regime and they transport the patient to the appropriate medical clinic.²⁰⁴

During 2021–2022, the referral healthcare system was utilized by 2,669 people from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, with 51 % of them being women.²⁰⁵ This number during 2023-2024 (first quarter) was 1851, with almost equal share of women and men. Furthermore, as a result of relevant legislative changes in 2023, the residents of the occupied regions have been enabled to benefit from free treatment within all state healthcare programmes beyond the State Referral Healthcare Programme, merely with a simplified (online) registration and receipt of a status-neutral personal number. In 2023, 34 beneficiaries were provided quality healthcare within various health programmes.

The population of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia enjoy the same rights and opportunities available to any citizen of Georgia at every level of education, including the opportunity to participate in international educational programmes and exchange programmes for studying abroad. At the same time, the Government of Georgia offers special programmes and privileged services within the reconciliation and engagement policy, *inter alia* provided by Peace Initiative "A Step to a Better Future" – "Enhancing Educational Opportunities for the residents of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia". Since 2020, youth from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia have an opportunity to enroll in Georgian higher educational institutions and continue their studies with state funding and without taking any

²⁰⁴ <https://smr.gov.ge/en/page/42/referaluri-momsaxurebis-saxelmwifo-programa>

²⁰⁵ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia, 2023; pg. 96

exam. Moreover, the Post-secondary Education Preparation programme launched in 2019 is operational, enabling additional one-year needs-based training opportunities in various subjects to youth from the occupied regions, as well as enrollment without exams, scholarships and accommodation. The "1+4 programme" is also available for the residents of occupied territories, enabling simplified access through one exam (instead of 4) in their native (Abkhazian/Ossetian) language. Besides, young people can enroll via unified national exams on their own accord. In 2020-2023, 1,135 students were enrolled in higher educational institutions of Georgia from the occupied territories without taking the unified national exams with state funding; 22 young people - via the 1+4 program, 10 young people from occupied Abkhazia- as a result of passing the national exams.

To facilitate trade and business cooperation across dividing lines and provide socio-economic support to conflict-affected people living in the occupied territories, unique financial mechanism was introduced in 2020 within the peace initiative - "Peace Fund for a Better Future". The Peace Fund has been annually issuing commercial grants under the grant competition to provide funding for the joint business projects across the dividing lines. Since its inception, within 4 cycles of grant competition (2020-2023), the Peace Fund has financed **around 100** business projects out of **over 300 applications**, **35%** of the beneficiaries being women. Since 2024, the Fund has been authorized to issue financial grants to legal business entities.

The State Legal Aid Service offers free legal advice to IDPs and refugees. They are entitled to use person-to-person and telephone/online consultation services. Legal Aid Service provides legal assistance for the protection of their rights, when:

- The rights determined under the Law of Georgia on Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia” or by-laws has been violated and an insolvent internally displaced person is authorized to request appointment of a lawyer;
- Providing legal assistance to a refugee (representation in a court or administrative agency) is advisable because a case falls into the category of complex and important cases.

1,057 IDPs in 2021 and 1,018 IDPs in 2022 benefited from legal aid services. In 2023, the number of beneficiaries was 1,082, with 609 women and 473 men, and in the first quarter of 2024, it was 247, with 129 women and 118 men.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

Georgia is a disaster-prone country. The country's geographical position and meteorological situation create favorable conditions for natural hazards. More than 80 % of Georgia's territory is mountainous, with around 20 % of its area located at 2,000 meters above sea level.²⁰⁶ These conditions facilitate the occurrence of floods, droughts, mudflows, landslides, and avalanches, especially in mountainous regions and along major rivers. In addition, the country is exposed to earthquake risks.

Under the Constitution of Georgia, "the state shall take care of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources."²⁰⁷ Article 29 of the Constitution regulates the right to environmental protection and states that "Everyone has the right to live in a healthy environment and enjoy the natural environment and public space, to receive full information about the state of the environment in a timely manner, to care for the protection of the environment. The right to participate in the adoption of decisions related to the environment, environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources shall be ensured by law, taking into account the interests of current and future generations.

2022-2024 National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) includes activity 3.2.9 "Promote environmental protection and ecology-related issues, including by organizing meetings related to climate change and its mitigation measures." Under this activity government takes responsibility to conduct at least one meeting per year on environmental issues, including climate change and its mitigation measures, with the participation of women and youth in IDP settlements and the villages adjacent to the ABLs. 5000 GEL has been allocated for the implementation of this activity.

Georgia is committed to implementing three pivotal UN agendas for gender-responsive, resilient and carbon-neutral development. By becoming a signatory to the SDGs, the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, Georgia has taken significant strides towards fostering the development of low-carbon and resilient societies. In addition, the EU-Georgia Association Agreement also underlines Georgia's commitment to mitigating and adapting to climate change in an inclusive way. In line with Georgia's global commitments, the 2030 Climate Change Strategy reflects gender aspects within certain sectoral priorities. Task 7.3 of the strategy outlines the development of a forest management system that adequately addresses climate change challenges and sets a goal for more than 50 % of sustainable forest management plans to be gender sensitive by 2030. In addition to the 2030 Climate Change Strategy, the related 2021–2023 and 2024-2025 Action Plans reflect a connection between the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the SDGs. 8 The action plan aligns with gender-related sustainable development objectives through specific activities, including raising public awareness of such topics as energy efficiency program implementation, the qualification and accreditation of experts in the energy sector, and the development of certification schemes. Additionally, the plan aims to provide educational and training programs for energy consultants' professional development.

Georgia's 2021 Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement acknowledges the gender dimensions of climate change. Chapter 6 of the Updated NDC emphasizes the NDC's alignment with Article 11 of the Constitution of Georgia as well

²⁰⁶ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia, 2023; pg. 102

²⁰⁷ Article 5; paragraph 5

as the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality, which enshrines the right to equality, in addition to Decision 21/CP.22 on Gender and Climate Change. Moreover, the NDC places importance on SDG Targets 5.1–5.6, 5.a and 5.b, which are directly related to the empowerment of women, reflecting the national commitment to achieving gender equality in climate change efforts. The NDC also underlines the need for women’s active participation in climate change processes and acknowledges their role as catalysts for change.²⁰⁸ Georgia’s first National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2017–2020 considers women’s vulnerability to disasters. Section 3.12. “Gender Equality in the Disaster Risk Reduction Policy” states that women, especially during pregnancy, belong to a group of the population that is vulnerable to disasters and their participation at all stages of the disaster management system is very important. Specific needs of women must be taken into account in disaster preparedness policy, as well as during the implementation of disaster prevention, assessment, preparedness, and response measures.

The Government of Georgia has been taking active steps in implementing initiatives to strengthen the country’s climate resilience and reducing CO2 emissions. For example, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Government is implementing a seven-year program dedicated to reducing the risk of climate-driven disasters in Georgia.²⁰⁹ The programme’s objective is to reduce the exposure of communities, livelihoods, and infrastructure to climate-induced natural hazards through a well-functioning, nationwide, multi-hazard early warning system and risk-informed local action. In addition to ongoing efforts, it is critical to develop and implement targeted climate and resilience initiatives that realize women’s transformative potential. Areas of intervention could include securing equal access to finance, insurance, services, infrastructure, resilient livelihoods, and business for climate and disaster resilience.

According to the information obtained from the government agencies’ webpages women are well represented in high-level positions across climate decision-making bodies in Georgia, such as the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture,²¹⁰ the parliamentary Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee,²¹¹ the National Environmental Agency,²¹² the Emergency Management Service, and the Environmental Information and Education Center²¹³

²⁰⁸ Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia, 2023; pg. 104

²⁰⁹ Ibid; pg. 106

²¹⁰ Five women including the first deputy minister and 4 department heads;

²¹¹ Four women including the chairperson of the Committee and three members

²¹² Five including two deputies and three department heads

²¹³ Five including the Director and Deputy Director; as well as 3 department heads

Section IV – National Institutions and Processes

The National Strategy on Human Rights for the years 2022–2030 was adopted and represents the second national strategy for human rights protection and covers the years 2022-2030.²¹⁴ It derives from the first national strategy (2014-2020), represents its logical continuation and its purpose is to strengthen further the systemic guarantees of protection of human rights and freedoms in Georgia. The UN Agencies, the representative of the European Union in Georgia, state agencies and the civil sector had been involved in drafting the 8-year Human Rights Strategy.²¹⁵

The National Strategy of Human Rights includes four priority directions:

- a) Increasing the effectiveness of civil and political rights, strengthening the rule of law, institutional democracy, and justice;
- b) Strengthening systemic safeguards by enhancing the protection of economic and social rights;
- c) Reflecting the constitutional guarantees of equality in the state policy, their implementation in practice, and the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms without discrimination;
- d) Protection of the rights and liberties of the population impacted by the illegal occupation of Georgian territory by the Russian Federation, including internally displaced people and refugees from those areas, residents of the villages adjacent to the line of occupation, and those who live in those areas.

The Human Rights Strategy has notable and progressive elements. Gender Equality, Women’s Rights, and the Fight against domestic violence are included under the third direction and the main tasks are:

- a) strengthening of state mechanisms promoting gender equality, including by improving coordination;
 - b) political and economic empowerment of women, including by strengthening an equal environment;
 - c) Strengthening of response to incidents of violence against women and domestic violence, protection of victims, and preventive mechanisms;
 - d) effective response to crimes committed on the grounds of gender discrimination; Strengthening of victim protection and rehabilitation mechanisms and access to shelter;
 - e) Increasing the participation of women in the implementation of the policy of establishing peace and security;
 - f) Elimination of harmful practices against women and girls and strengthening of preventive and response measures for cases of child marriage;
 - g) Raising public awareness on issues of gender equality and domestic violence.
- Subsequently to the approval of the Strategy, a multidisciplinary working group with the involvement of civil society representatives, started work on the Action Plan (AP) on Human rights protection for the period of 2024-2026.

²¹⁴ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5757268?publication=0>

²¹⁵ <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2022/3376#gsc.tab=0>

On 6-7 December 2023, the GoG organized a two-day meeting with the representatives of the international organization and civil society, as well as the relevant state agencies to discuss the draft 2024-2026 Action Plan for the implementation of the Human Rights Strategy, thus ensuring an open and inclusive process. **The meeting was attended by 80 people on the first day and by 60 - on the second day.**

On December 8, 2023, for the first time, a working meeting was convened with members of the Human Rights Localization Committee of the National Association of Local Self-Governments of Georgia and municipal leaders to acquaint them with the action plan for the protection of human rights (2024-2026). The meeting, conducted in a hybrid format, provided a detailed overview of the primary priorities outlined in the national action plan.

On December 19, 2023, the draft action plan for the protection of human rights of Georgia for 2024-2026 was presented to the Human Rights Protection and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. Representatives from the opposition political parties and the civil society attended the meeting, where they articulated their respective positions.

On 28 December, the Government adopted the 2024-2026 Action Plan for the implementation of the Human Rights Strategy.

It should be mentioned, that the GoG integrated multiple recommendations provided by the civil society during the development process of the action plan.

Regarding consolidation of efforts to achieve gender equality, the government and the Parliament adopted three strategic documents in 2022:

- ✓ 2022–2024 National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims/Survivors (NAP on VAW/DV);²¹⁶
- ✓ 2022–2024 National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (NAP on WPS)²¹⁷
- ✓ The State Concept on Gender Equality²¹⁸

According to Ordinance No. 286 of 12 June 2017 of the Government of Georgia, the Inter-Agency Commission is the body responsible for developing the NAP on VAW/DV and NAP on WPS. In addition, the Commission's duties include monitoring the implementation of the action plans and periodic reporting (Article 4 of the Statute of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence).²¹⁹

The process of drafting the 2022–2024 NAP on VAW/DV and NAP on WPS was coordinated by the Human Rights Department of the Administration of the Government of Georgia and the Adviser to the Prime Minister on the Protection of Human Rights. Both line ministries and municipalities, as well as the representatives of local non-governmental and international organizations, the Office of the Public Defender, experts, and other stakeholders, were actively involved in the development process. The areas, priorities, and activities to be considered in the NAP were identified through an inclusive and participatory process; working meetings

²¹⁶ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/violence-eng.pdf>

²¹⁷ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/NAP%20en%20web.pdf>

²¹⁸ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo216899.pdf>

²¹⁹ Ibid

were held with the representatives of civil society organizations. An initial working draft of the NAP was shared with the non-governmental sector and international organizations for their feedback. Relevant comments and opinions were thematically reflected in the final document.
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The Department studied reports of the Council of Europe’s GREVIO expert group on activities against violence against women and domestic violence, and it should be noted that while formulating the areas, goals, and objectives of the action plan, the main principles of the Istanbul Convention were taken into account.²²¹ In addition, in compliance with international legal instruments, the Constitution of Georgia, and national legislation both NAPs also align with the priorities stated in the 2021–2024 Government Programme “Towards Building a European State” regarding the realization of the right to equality and the implementation of appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination.²²²

The NAP on VAW/DV and NAP on WPS (2022-2024) are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically: Goal 5: Gender equality and Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions. NAP on WPS is also in line with Goal 10: Reduced inequalities.

2022–2024 National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims/Survivors includes four scopes of activity:

Scope I - the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence;

Scope II - the measures necessary for the protection of and support for victims of violence;

Scope III - measures for the elimination of cases of violence against women and domestic violence; Scope IV - the implementation of an integrated policy regarding data collection.

- According to the 2023 report on the Implementation of the UN Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security for the years 2022–2024 action plan, 70% of the designated activities have already been executed by the responsible agencies.

One of the top priorities of the Government of Georgia is to protect the rights of women and girls affected by the conflicts, among them the internally displaced (IDP) women and those living in the occupied territories, as well as the areas adjacent to them.

2022–2024 National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security represents the Government’s unified approach to protecting the human rights of target groups, their access to services, and their economic empowerment, including the integration of a gender perspective into the security sector and decision-making processes as well as meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes. The 2022–2024 NAP combines three impact areas: Strengthening of Women’s Participation in Peace and Security Processes; Elimination and Prevention of Violence; and Women’s Empowerment and Protection.

²²⁰ 2022–2024 NAP on VAW/DV; pg. 6 and 2022–2024 NAP on WPS; pg.6

²²¹ 2022–2024 National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims/Survivors; pg. 5;

²²² Ibid; pg. 5

The creation of the **State Concept on Gender Equality** (adopted by the Parliament in 2022)²²³ is a highly progressive development, laying the groundwork for important commitments and gains for the rights of women and girls and their empowerment in Georgia.

The concept is the state's vision to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensure gender equality in civil, political, economic, social, and cultural spheres, both in public and private relations. The state acknowledges in the Concept that measures to achieve gender equality should be developed and implemented with the active cooperation of representatives of the public and private sectors working on gender equality issues.²²⁴

The State Concept on Gender Equality covers the following topics: political participation and public life; Economic empowerment, labor rights, and their protection; combating gender violence, violence against women and/or domestic violence; elimination of child marriage and other harmful practices; women, peace and security agenda; human trafficking and sexual exploitation; education; healthcare; Art, culture, and sport; awareness raising and gender mainstreaming.²²⁵ This is the first attempt to update the State Concept of Gender Equality since its adoption in 2006.

The main financial source for the implementation of the concept is the state and municipal budget, as well as international and local financial and technical support of organizations. To make changes to the concept, it will be systematically reviewed at least every 7 years. In addition, there will be an unplanned revision of the concept in accordance with the needs created in terms of gender equality.²²⁶

Gender-responsive Budgeting and the **Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)** methodology are being introduced and piloted primarily with the help of international development partners.

In 2022, the Parliament of Georgia adopted legislative amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Normative Acts introducing GIA as part of the lawmaking cycle.²²⁷ This was the first time that the GIA methodology was introduced to the Georgian normative framework, representing a significant step forward in terms of mainstreaming gender in policymaking processes in Georgia and realizing commitments under the BPfA. To further align Georgia's legislation with the EU standards and best practices and to ensure the consistent application of GIA across legislative processes, the next step is to gradually expand the legal reform and make GIA mandatory for all laws, as well as for all policies produced by the legislative and executive branches of government.

According to the legislative changes the assessment of the impact of the draft normative act on the state of gender equality (if such an impact is expected) should include the justification of the positive or negative impact and/or information about the positive or negative impact that, in the opinion of the author of the draft normative act, the adoption of the normative act may have on gender equality or on the state of equality. The adoption of a normative act is expected to affect the state of gender equality if new and/or specific rights, obligations or opportunities are determined, which will arise for a woman or a man in a differentiated and/or unequal way after the adoption of a normative act; changes are implemented that directly or indirectly derive

²²³ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo216899.pdf>

²²⁴ Ibid; pg. 3

²²⁵ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5664358?publication=0>

²²⁶ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo216899.pdf>; pg.11-12

²²⁷ Article 17; paragraph 1; subparagraph b²

from the draft normative act and unequally limit or promote for women or men differentiated or/and unequal access; and The draft normative act has other expected effects on the legal or actual equality of men and women.²²⁸

Budgets are the most comprehensive statement behind a government’s social and economic priorities. Mainstreaming gender in budgetary processes is therefore essential for improving the transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency of public expenditure management, and it provides for a more equitable distribution of public finances between women and men. The Government of Georgia makes efforts to mainstream gender within its budgetary processes, including via interventions in capacity development towards gender-responsive budgeting.

The Government of Georgia has committed to the principle of adequate financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through numerous international agreements and partnerships. In 2019, the World Bank designed the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) supplementary framework for assessing gender-responsive public financial management (GRPFM). The PEFA’s GRPFM is a set of nine indicators²²⁹ that collect information on gender-responsive public financial management practices. The GRPFM self-assessment of Georgia was carried out by the Ministry of Finance with technical support from UN Women. The first time a gender-responsive PFM assessment has been undertaken in Georgia; it sets the benchmark for future assessments. The assessment was carried out from December 2021 to May 2022. It is noteworthy, that together with the PEFA assessment public financial management was analyzed from a gender perspective for the first time. This report lays important groundwork for integrating gender-responsive budgeting in Georgia’s PFM system.

According to this assessment, 6 indicators out of 9 provided by the methodology were assessed by “D” score, and 3 indicators – by “C”²³⁰ score. Despite this assessment, some progress is observed in the following areas:

- ✓ The existing program budgeting system is a good opportunity to consider gender aspects;
- ✓ The program budget methodology recommends that budget institutions shall develop at least one gender-sensitive indicator to measure the expected intermediate/final results of gender-sensitive programs/subprograms. Gender-sensitive indicators are considered in the program budget of some ministries;
- ✓ Assessments of some major donor-funded investment projects include gender impact assessments, although the methodology at the national level does not include relevant requirements;

²²⁸ Article 17; paragraph 6;

²²⁹ GRPFM–1 Gender impact analysis of budget policy proposals; GRPFM–2 Gender responsive public investment management; GRPFM–3 Gender responsive budget circular; GRPFM–4 Gender responsive budget proposal documentation; GRPFM–5 Sex-disaggregated performance information for service delivery; GRPFM–6 Tracking budget expenditure for gender equality; GRPFM–7 Gender responsive reporting; GRPFM–8 Evaluation of gender impacts of service delivery; GRPFM–9 Legislative scrutiny of gender impacts of the budget

²³⁰ Gender responsive reporting; Sex-Disaggregated Performance Information for Service Delivery; Gender responsive Budget Proposal Documentation

- ✓ Significant progress has been made in terms of strengthening the capacities of civil servants, in relation to the reflection of gender aspects in the budget, with the support of the Academy of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia and donor organizations, etc.²³¹

Consideration of gender aspects is an important part of the PFM reform strategy in the medium-term period:

- ✓ Analysis of gender impact on changes in revenues and expenditures;
- ✓ The assessment of investment/capital projects will be carried out according to the methodology of management of investment/capital projects, which considers the analysis of the gender impact of the projects;
- ✓ The program budget methodology will be improved. The program budget will reflect gender-sensitive data, both at the planning and implementation stages;
- ✓ Through the policy classifier, the budget documents will reflect information on the amount of funding needed to implement the measures planned to ensure gender equality, as well as the links of programs/sub-programs with the sectoral strategies, climate change, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) approved by the Government of Georgia.²³²

In 2021-2022 as a result of cooperation between the Academy of the Ministry of Finance and UN Women a special course was developed. The goal of the online course "Gender-sensitive Budgeting" is to provide in-depth knowledge and information to the course participants about the main essence of gender-sensitive budgeting, legal bases, tools, and the importance of gender mainstreaming in the process of developing and implementing policy documents.²³³ The courses help public servants understand the relationship between gender equality, public finance management, and good governance, as well as the practical application of gender-responsive approaches during budget cycles.

The target audience of the online training course is those who are involved in the process of program budgeting at the central, autonomous, and municipal levels. The training course covers the following topics: International experience and good practices of gender budgeting; Legal bases of gender budgeting; and Gender budgeting tools. The course is accessible free of charge to everybody interested, and a certificate is issued to those who take the course. The online training module on gender-responsive budgeting is available on the web portal of the Academy of the Ministry of Finance.²³⁴

The training provided by the Academy of the Ministry of Finance covered the entire country. This includes training public servants from almost all 64 municipalities across Georgia. In addition to training public servants, at the initial stage, the selected trainers/experts were trained who became certified trainers of the Academy of the Ministry of Finance on gender-responsive budgeting.²³⁵

²³¹ Public Finance of Georgia Management Reform Strategy 2023-2026; Pg.149; available at: https://www.mof.ge/images/File/strategia/2023/30-06-2023/2023-2026%20PFM%20Reform%20Strategy%20_ENG.pdf

²³² Ibid; pg. 149

²³³ <https://e.mofacademy.ge/ka/OnlineCourses/Course?courseId=4>

²³⁴ Ibid

²³⁵ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/stories/interview/2023/01/interview-the-academy-of-the-ministry-of-finance-trained-357-civil-servants-in-gender-responsive-budgeting>

The **2023–2026 Public Finance Management Strategy**,²³⁶ developed and adopted by the Government of Georgia in 2023, integrates some key principles of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), contributing towards the institutionalization of GRB in Georgia and progress towards SDG indicator 5.c.1. These developments constitute an important policy shift in terms of mainstreaming gender in governance systems in Georgia.

With the joint work of the Budgetary Department and LEPL - Financial and Analytical Service, in the electronic budget management system (ebudget), a policy classifier field has been added to the program budget section, through which spending institutions will be able to identify strategic/sectoral policy directions such as SDG, gender, climate change, human capital goals, etc. and link programs provided in the budget. The mentioned information is reflected in the program budget appendix of the 2023 state budget project.²³⁷

Ethnic and cultural diversity is the country's wealth and a significant asset for its democratic and sustainable development. According to the results of the 2014 census, ethnic minorities constitute 13.1% of the population of Georgia.²³⁸ Empowerment of ethnic minority women is one of the important aspects of civic equality and integration. The fight against gender discrimination, transformation of public opinion, and increasing women's participation in decision-making, political or social-economic spheres are the key priorities in the implementation of the **State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030**.²³⁹

For effective implementation of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030 a Government Commission was established. It aims at ensuring coordination among the state agencies regarding civic equality and integration. The Commission meets twice a year regularly. It organizes working sessions, meetings, and consultations as required. The Commission will convene meetings of thematic working groups to gather the representatives of state agencies, as well as civil society and persons interested in the issue. The major tool for the implementation of the Strategy is the Annual Action Plans designed by sector-specific agencies. The Strategy will be implemented within the budget, as well as financial support from donor organizations and partner countries.²⁴⁰ Since the Strategy covers 10 years, it will have two interim assessments to take place in 2024 and 2027, while the final assessment is planned for the end of its implementation period – in 2030.²⁴¹

The fight against gender discrimination, transformation of public opinion, and increasing women's participation in decision-making, and political or social-economic spheres, promoting gender equality, and combatting gender-based discrimination, are the key priorities in the implementation of the state policy for civic equality and integration. Consequently, the empowerment of ethnic minority women is one of the important aspects of civic equality and integration.²⁴²

²³⁶https://www.mof.ge/images/File/strategia/2023/30-06-2023/2023-2026%20PFM%20Reform%20Strategy%20_ENG.pdf

²³⁷ Annual Report on 2022 Public Finance Management Reform Action Plan; pg. 12; available at: <https://www.mof.ge/images/File/strategia/2023/06-03-2023/ENG%20Annual%20Report%202022.pdf>

²³⁸ State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030; pg.11

²³⁹ Ibid; pg.27

²⁴⁰ Ibid; pg. 43

²⁴¹ Ibid; pg.44

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https://smr.gov.ge/uploads/Files/%E1%83%98%E1%83%9C%E1%83%A2%E1%83%94%E1%83%92%E1%83%A0%E1%83%90%E1%83%AA%E1%83%98%E1%83%90/Concept_ENG21.12.pdf; chapter 3.8; pg. 26 & 35

Within the scope of this Strategy, women’s economic empowerment encompasses the protection of women’s economic rights, among them, equal access to land, property, assets or other resources, as well as the development of entrepreneurial skills. It is planned to carry out activities that will enable women to take an active part in the protection of their economic rights so that they make their contribution to the development of democracy. Women’s economic empowerment acquires great importance in the process of achieving gender equality as well.²⁴³

The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to businesses on how to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. Established by UN Women and UN Global Compact, the WEPs are informed by international labor and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and responsibility for, gender equality and women’s empowerment. WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The number of companies that have signed on to the WEPs in Georgia is already up to 223,²⁴⁴ which is quite an important result considering the existing scale of the private sector. The WEPs provide companies with a global blueprint on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2021-2030; pg.39-40

²⁴⁴ <https://www.weps.org/companies>

²⁴⁵ <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2023/12/gender-aspects-of-investing-discussed-at-annual-weps-conference-held-by-un-women>

Section V – Data and Statistics

The organization "Open Data Watch" has published the Gender Data Compass Assessment Report, which presents the global ranking in terms of production, availability, and openness of gender statistics data. According to the assessment, Georgia ranks 5th position out of 185 countries worldwide, in terms of availability and openness of gender data. Georgia outstrips all EU countries except Denmark. According to the above-mentioned report, Georgia is significantly ahead of such developed countries as the USA, Canada, Switzerland, Japan, China, Australia etc. Georgia has an overall score of 58 and ranks 5 globally and 1 in the region of Western Asia. The country scores are determined based on an assessment of the availability and openness of gender statistics data. In addition, the assessment was made according to several criteria, including the availability of gender-disaggregated data in the country, openness, capacity, and financing. Recommendations for Georgia include publishing more gender data to fill coverage gaps; publishing more gender data in open formats, publishing all data under an open license.²⁴⁶

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) conducts the census of the population, produces annual reports, conducts statistical surveys, publishes the data ensures its publicity, and secures equal access to the statistical data for all the users. In Georgia official gender-related data comes from three sources: administrative records, sample surveys (population or establishment-based), and censuses. GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report encourages the Georgian authorities to carry out regular population-based surveys to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence against women covered by the scope of the Istanbul Convention.²⁴⁷

In recent years, Geostat has undertaken significant steps towards mainstreaming gender in its work. The effort includes establishing the gender data portal,²⁴⁸ developing the annual publication 'Women and Men in Georgia',²⁴⁹ conducting the National Study on Violence against Women in 2022²⁵⁰ and the Time Use Survey in 2022.²⁵¹

GeoStat took its work on gender statistics to another level by launching an electronic **Gender Data Portal** at the end of 2018. The portal is bilingual (English and Georgian) and can be accessed from GeoStat's official web page (geostat.ge) as well as directly available at <http://geostat.ge/gender/index.php?lang=ka>. Gender Statistics Portal represents a centralized, user-friendly, web-based database on gender statistics. The Gender Data Portal presents key gender statistics and in recent years expanded the fields covered under main statistics, which includes gender data on population, health, education, social security, household, employment and unemployment, incomes and expenditures, ICT, business sector, agriculture, crime, influence and power, sport. The Gender Data Portal not only presents data in a user-friendly format, but also allows visitors to access relevant GeoStat publications, national legislation related to gender equality, domestic violence, and human trafficking as well as international conventions Georgia is party to for further scrutiny and elaboration. In addition, the Portal provides definitions of terms (glossary), an explanation of gender, and the importance of gender

²⁴⁶ <https://gdc.opendatawatch.com/country-profiles/GEO>

²⁴⁷ GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report; paragraph 83; pg. 24

²⁴⁸ <https://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php>

²⁴⁹ <https://gender.geostat.ge/gender/index.php#publications>

²⁵⁰ https://www.geostat.ge/media/59556/VAW-ENG-WEB4-2_28.12.pdf

²⁵¹ <https://www.geostat.ge/media/50118/GTUS-Report-ENG.PDF>

statistics and infographics of main gender-related data. User Satisfaction with Gender Statistics²⁵² Survey respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the Gender Statistics Portal. The level of detailing of indicators (the level of disaggregation of the data by age, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.) is the portal's most highly valued characteristic.²⁵³

'**Women and Men in Georgia**' publication has been produced every year since 2017.²⁵⁴ "Women and Men in Georgia" is a statistical publication dedicated to gender equality challenges. The publication is aimed at raising public awareness of gender-related problems and developing targeted state policies in the field of gender equality. The data are retrieved from the surveys conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia and other administrative sources. The publications are PDFs available online. It comprises tables of data with little analysis or interpretation. The topics covered in the publication are population, health care, education and sports, social security, labor force and earnings, living conditions, information and communication technology, business statistics, agriculture, crime, influence and power, asset ownership and entrepreneurship, violence against women, domestic tourism and ICT. Since 2018 GeoStat has provided linkages between its gender data and the relevant gender indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals under the publication of "Women and Men in Georgia". According to the user satisfaction survey the users of gender statistics are very satisfied with the annual statistical publication "Women and Men in Georgia". This publication is valued for its timeliness, clarity, and the variety of topics covered.²⁵⁵

The Geostat implemented Georgia's first-ever **Time Use Survey** in 2020-2021. The survey aimed at generating statistically reliable and internationally comparable time use data in Georgia, improving gender statistics, estimating indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and informing policies focused on gender equality. The survey was based on Eurostat's methodological guidelines, thereby ensuring international comparability of the produced indicators. The survey collected data about the time spent by the population on various activities, including paid and unpaid work, domestic work, childcare, travel, studies, leisure, and so on. For the survey, 3,680 households were selected by random sampling across the country and included persons from the age of 15 and above who, in their time use diaries, described the activities they conducted over 10-minute intervals for two preassigned full days.²⁵⁶

Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". The indicator recommended for monitoring progress in achieving this target is SDG indicator 5.4.1, defined as the "proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location". To ensure a coordinated approach and national ownership of the Time Use Survey among national stakeholders, the Time Use Survey Reference Group has been established. The Reference Group brought together national partners from the government, the development sector, civil society, and academia and provided a consultative forum for inputs, ideas, and perspectives for the survey implementation.²⁵⁷

²⁵² <https://www.geostat.ge/pdf/User-Satisfaction-with-Gender-Statistics-Study-Report.pdf>

²⁵³ Ibid; pg. 15

²⁵⁴ "Women and Men in Georgia" was published every two years since 2000.

²⁵⁵ User satisfaction Survey; 2021; pg. 13; available at: <https://www.geostat.ge/pdf/User-Satisfaction-with-Gender-Statistics-Study-Report.pdf>

²⁵⁶ Women and Men in Georgia; 2022; pg.131; available at: https://www.geostat.ge/media/51156/Women_And_Men_In_Georgia_2022_ENG.PDF

²⁵⁷ Ibid

Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention obliges Parties to collect disaggregated, relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention. It also establishes that Parties shall endeavor to conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention.

The National Study on Violence Against Women (VAW) in Georgia was conducted in 2022²⁵⁸ by UN Women. The quantitative survey was conducted in collaboration with Geostat, and the qualitative component was provided by the team at WeResearch. This is the second national study to respond to the data-collection obligation stated in Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention.

This second national study on VAW relied upon two surveys: the Women’s Health and Life Experiences Survey and the Men’s Life Experiences Survey Questionnaire. The 2022 Women’s Health and Life Experiences Survey was designed to measure the nature and extent of four different types of VAW: Intimate partner violence; non-partner violence; Sexual harassment and Stalking. Each of these types of VAW was operationalized in the questionnaire using a range of behavior-specific questions. The survey did not attempt to measure an exhaustive list of acts of violence but instead focused on a number of questions about specific acts that commonly occur in violent and abusive intimate relationships, marriages and families, as well as acts that women and girls commonly experience in the workplace and in public spaces. The 2022 Women’s Health and Life Experiences Survey was developed in keeping with international best practices and ethics and safety guidelines for research and data collection on VAW.

To better understand how these gender statistics products meet the needs of users, Geostat conducted the **user satisfaction survey**²⁵⁹ in 2021, with technical and financial support from UN Women. The study combined quantitative and qualitative methods and aimed to explore users’ attitudes towards, and perceptions of, data production and dissemination, as well as the quality of services provided by Geostat to enhance user service.²⁶⁰ The survey covered all institutional sectors (the Business sector, the Public sector, Local government /self-government, the Educational sector, Research, Think-tank organizations, Media, International and foreign organizations, the Non-governmental sector, and Individuals). Up to 600 respondents aged 15 and above participated in the survey. The qualitative study entailed focus groups and in-depth interviews with different groups of people who regularly use gender data and aimed at better understanding and addressing the specific needs of gender statistics users in Georgia.²⁶¹ Information was obtained to see how frequently and for which purposes gender statistics are used, which gender statistics are used more often, and how users evaluate the quality of the gender statistics available.

Almost the same amount of respondents reported using gender statistics for research purposes (60 %) as for obtaining general information (59 %), while 40 % of users used gender statistics for market analysis.²⁶² The survey showed that the vast majority of users are satisfied with Geostat’s gender statistics products such as the Gender Statistics Portal, the Statistical

²⁵⁸ https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/updated_vaw_eng_web4-2.pdf

²⁵⁹ <https://www.geostat.ge/pdf/User-Satisfaction-with-Gender-Statistics-Study-Report.pdf>

²⁶⁰ User Satisfaction with Gender Statistics, 2021; available at: <https://www.geostat.ge/pdf/User-Satisfaction-with-Gender-Statistics-Study-Report.pdf>; pg.3

²⁶¹ Ibid; pg. 4

²⁶² Ibid; pg. 8

publication “Women and Men in Georgia”, and Infographics.²⁶³ The users are least satisfied with the available gender statistics in the fields of crime, education, and social protection.²⁶⁴

The Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) of Georgia serves as a comprehensive national-level analysis of the status of gender equality in the country. Based on quantitative and qualitative analysis of data, the CGEP provides strategic analysis of progress, trends, challenges, and priorities around gender equality in Georgia and serves as a blueprint for targeted interventions, policy reforms, and institutional improvements to advance gender equality and women’s rights in the country. CGEP has been conducted twice in Georgia in 2021 and 2023 with the support of UN Women and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The CGEP describes and analyses the present situation in Georgia mainly based on the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while at the same time considering the BPfA and CEDAW frameworks.

Aligned with the corporate guidelines on developing a CGEP and the critical areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), the CGEP covers such subjects as poverty and social protection; women’s economic empowerment; health; education; violence against women; women, peace and security; women in power and decision-making; and climate and natural disasters. The analysis presented in the CGEP is complemented with time series analyses of gender-specific SDG indicators.

The Government of Georgia has adopted all 17 SDGs and nationalized the objectives and indicators. Georgia has nationalized 199 of the 231 unique global indicators. The Government of Georgia has developed a National Document on the Sustainable Development Goals, which has nationalized the global indicators and established baseline data. The 17 SDGs include 169 global objectives and 231 global indicators, of which Georgia has nationalized 93 and 200, respectively (54% and 57%).²⁶⁵ The latter 24 tasks and 32 indicators relate to gender segregation or are specifically related to women.²⁶⁶

Important to mention that in June 2019 the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Strategy for Supporting and Monitoring of Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals - a national multi-sectoral strategy for the period 2019-2030. Its main goal is to encourage the implementation of a sustainable development agenda by effective supervision and law-making.²⁶⁷ The key coordination body for the implementation of the national SDG targets is the Sustainable Development Goals Inter-Agency Council (SDG Council), Chaired by the Head of the Administration of the Government of Georgia. The Sustainable Development Goals Council has four thematic working groups for the monitoring and efficient coordination of SDG implementation. The monitoring process requires high-quality statistics as a decisive means to implement the SDGs and monitor the progress that Georgia is making in achieving its targets. The Agenda 2030, therefore, insists on the need for “high quality, timely, and

²⁶³ Ibid; pg. 11

²⁶⁴ Ibid; pg.12

²⁶⁵ National Document for the Sustainable Development Goals” of the Georgian Government; pg.12; available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26390VNR_2020_Georgia_Report.pdf

²⁶⁶ Gender Statistics Strategy; pg. 14; available at: https://www.geostat.ge/media/42622/Gender-Statistics-Strategy_ENG.PDF

²⁶⁷ <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo212891.pdf>

reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location”

The 2020–2023 **National Strategy for the Development of the National System of Official Statistics of Georgia**²⁶⁸ was approved in 2019. The National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia 2020-2023 defines the main directions of official statistics production in Georgia and provides general rules of conduct for the statistics-producing agencies. The production of high-quality statistics based on users’ needs, the creation of modern systems for data collection and dissemination, and capacity building are the priority areas, on which the activities of GEOSTAT and the entire National Statistical System of Georgia (NSS) will be based over the next several years.

The strategy indicates the need to increase the availability of gender statistics in an internationally comparable form. Strategic Objective 1 is to produce high-quality official statistics based on user needs pointing to gender statistics. Specifically, the document notes that new indicators are needed in such areas as energy, construction, people with disabilities, culture, sports, the informal sector, social protection, and so on, most of which require gender-disaggregated statistics.²⁶⁹

Geostat’s 2021–2023 **Strategy for Gender Statistics**²⁷⁰ has been developed with the technical support of UN Women. It is based on the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and its logical part, which deals with the production of gender statistics. The strategy includes three goals:

1. Producing high-quality and demand-oriented gender statistics;
2. Improving the coordination and funding opportunities for the production and use of gender statistics;
3. Improving the use and dissemination of gender statistics

The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy for Gender Statistics is coordinated by the Department of Social Statistics. Monitoring is carried out once a year.

Along with Geostat, the National Statistics System includes administrative sources of gender data, including the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Ministry of Defence; and other agencies that regularly generate sex-disaggregated data.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/659/national-strategy-for-the-development-of-statistics-in-georgia-2020-2023>

²⁶⁹ Ibid; Section 2.4

²⁷⁰ https://www.geostat.ge/media/42622/Gender-Statistics-Strategy_ENG.PDF

²⁷¹ Gender Statistics Strategy; pg. 8; available at: https://www.geostat.ge/media/42622/Gender-Statistics-Strategy_ENG.PDF

Section VI – Conclusion and next steps

Over the past five years, Georgia has made commendable strides in enacting legislative reforms aimed at promoting gender equality and combatting violence against women and children. The adoption of various policies, action plans, and strategies underscores the government's commitment to addressing these pressing issues. However, despite these advancements, there remain areas that require attention and further action to fully align with international standards and effectively safeguard the rights of vulnerable populations.

One of the noteworthy achievements during this period is the establishment of Government Decree No. 523, allowing victims of gender-based violence to access state-funded compensation. This initiative demonstrates a significant step towards providing support and redress to survivors, yet the implementation of such measures must be closely monitored to ensure equitable access and effectiveness.

Moreover, amendments to laws and regulations, such as the removal of official victim status requirements and the introduction of gender impact assessments, reflect a commitment to integrating gender perspectives across various sectors. However, there is a need for ongoing evaluation to assess the impact of these changes and identify areas for improvement.

Despite progress, shortcomings persist, particularly in meeting the standards outlined in the Istanbul Convention. The shortage of shelter facilities and perpetrator behavioral correction programs underscores the need for expanded infrastructure and intervention strategies. Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach, including the development of standard operating procedures for state institutions and comprehensive training for personnel involved in responding to gender-based violence and domestic abuse cases.

Awareness-raising campaigns targeting societal attitudes and gender stereotypes are essential for fostering cultural change and promoting gender equality. Encouraging women and girls to pursue non-traditional fields of education and employment, can empower individuals to make informed choices and assert their rights.

To bolster the judiciary's capacity to apply international conventions and interpreting national legislation in alignment with human rights standards, systematic capacity-building initiatives for judges and law enforcement officials are imperative. Additionally, integrating gender impact assessments into legislative processes and promoting gender-responsive budgeting can foster inclusive policy development and resource allocation.

In addressing maternal health disparities, ensuring access to obstetric care and skilled birth attendants is paramount, particularly for disadvantaged and rural populations.

In conclusion, while Georgia has made significant progress in advancing gender equality and combating violence against women and children, sustained efforts are needed to address the remaining challenges comprehensively. By prioritizing the implementation of evidence-based policies, strengthening institutional capacities, and fostering societal change, Georgia can continue its journey toward creating a more equitable and inclusive society for all its citizens.

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