

**National Review Report
on
the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**



Government of Nepal

**Submitted for the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women
and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

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Abbreviations

AFIC	Adolescent Friendly Information Center
BIPAD	Building Information Platform Against Disaster
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEONC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EPA	Environment Protection Act
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoN	Government of Nepal
GFP	Gender Focal Person
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budget
GRID	Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JC	Judicial Committee
LDC	Least Developed Country
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
LPI	Legatum Prosperity Index
MEDEP	Micro-Enterprise Development Programme
MEDPA	Micro-Enterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation

MIS	Management Information System
MoFAGA	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoFE	Ministry of Forest and Environment
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MoLCPA	Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation
MoWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPHC	National Population and Housing Census
NPR	Nepali Rupees
NRB	Nepal Rastra Bank
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
NWC	National Women Commission
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OCMC	One-Stop Crisis Management Centre
PLGSP	Provincial and Local Government Support Program
RMNCAH	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Policy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMS	Social Information Management System
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution

Section 1: Highlights

National Review Process

Nepal's firm commitment to gender equality, women's empowerment and sustainable development is manifested by its meticulous review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), which is led mostly by the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC), following the UN's Guidance Note. An inter-ministerial committee, chaired by the Ministry's Joint Secretary, initiated the process with representatives from various stakeholder ministries and expert practitioners outside the government domain to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive draft. This review involved consultations with all tiers of government, gender focal persons (GFPs) from all ministries and commissions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector entities, enriched by grassroots insights and development partners' viewpoints. A committee of professional experts provided specialized insights, enhancing the report's credibility. The process engaged GFPs, civil society, academia and UN agencies, adding depth and authenticity, creating a comprehensive picture of Nepal's progress and challenges in implementing the BPfA and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A detailed review of existing documents, particularly the Seventh Periodic Report on Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), aligned past findings with current progress. Official consent from federal ministries reinforced the report's authenticity.

The report, enriched with evidence-based information, accounts for Nepal's efforts, especially over the past five years. It highlights achievements in gender equality, women's empowerment, education, health and economic growth while integrating BPfA principles into national policies and aligning them with the SDGs for 2030. This process resulted in a robust document ready for scrutiny, providing a roadmap for future actions and offering insights that can be adapted by other countries. It highlights Nepal's efforts to advance gender equality, social inclusion, empowerment and meaningful participation of women.

Progress

The government has set the vision of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" in its Fifteenth Plan (2019/20-2023/24). This plan aims at graduating from the least developed country (LDC) category, achieving the agenda 2030 and becoming a middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2043.¹ The government's Sixteenth Plan (2024/25-2028/29) has incorporated the SDGs and committed to graduate from the LDC category by 2026.²

The National Population and Housing Census 2021 (census) shows that the literacy rate among women has increased from 57.4 percent in 2011 to 69.4 percent in 2021. Land or house ownership among women also increased to 23.8 percent in 2021 compared to 19.7 percent in 2011. The maternal mortality ratio significantly dropped from 239 to 151 per 100,000 live births between 2016 and 2021. Women held 34 percent of Federal Parliament seats in 2022. Women's entrepreneurship has been promoted through the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP) and Micro-Enterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation (MEDPA). School enrollment rates for girls have improved due to many factors including the accessibility of cost-free sanitary pads in public schools.

Challenges and set-backs in the implementation of the BPfA

The implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in Nepal has achieved notable progress, yet it has also faced significant challenges. Various factors have influenced these successes and shortcomings across critical areas, reflecting solutions for improving gender equality as well as obstacles that remain.

Insufficient financial support especially dedicated to gender equality programs impede progress. Economic disparities have intensified gender inequality. Socio-cultural barriers, deep-rooted cultural beliefs, social resistance to change and gender stereotypes continue to perpetuate discrimination against women. A lack of sex-disaggregated data makes it difficult to measure progress, understand women's contributions and identify gaps.

¹ https://www.un.org/ldc5/sites/www.un.org.ldc5/files/ipoa_review_report_final_npc_nepal_1.pdf

² Nepal LDC Graduation Smooth Transition Strategy, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, February 2024.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed a significant setback to gender equality efforts in Nepal. The economic downturn and increased caregiving responsibilities due to school closures and health crises have disproportionately affected women. The pandemic has also led to a rise in all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) and disruptions in essential health services, further compounding the unpaid care work and difficulties faced by women. The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed the reform efforts and many achievements made so far in realizing the BPfA.

Natural disasters, climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately impact women and have posed additional setbacks to gender equality efforts in Nepal. Just as the country was starting to rebound from the social and economic setbacks caused by the devastating 2015 earthquakes, it experienced two other earthquakes in Jajarkot and Rukum districts in 2023. With the destruction of infrastructure, displacement of communities and loss of lives and livelihoods, the earthquakes exacerbated pre-existing challenges in these remote regions, further complicating efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Nepal has made notable progress in implementing the BPfA, yet significant challenges and setbacks remain. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including strengthening legal protections, changing harmful practices, improving economic opportunities for women, and strengthening relevant institutions.

Three examples of good practices

Constitutional provisions promoting women's political representation and public sector reservation have yielded tangible results in women's empowerment. In 2022, women held 34 percent of seats in the Federal Parliament, while 27 percent of civil servants are women in 2024, indicating significant progress towards gender parity in these crucial spheres.

The pro-poor targeted scholarship programme³ has been implemented for the children of martyrs and conflict victims, *Dalits* and endangered indigenous communities. The number of students who benefitted from the scholarship programme in the fiscal year (FY) 2019/20 was 3,288,924 and in FY 2020/21 it was 2,604,262. To address high-risk pregnancies in remote areas, the Government of Nepal (GoN) started the “Air-Lifting

³ <https://www.cehrd.gov.np/infocenter/17>

of Pregnant Women” programme in FY 2018/19 under the President Woman Upliftment Programme. By the end of May 2024, 701 women had received services under this programme. Additionally, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) established a fund called *Bipanna Nagarik Ausadhi Upachar Kosh* (Deprived Citizens Medical Treatment Fund)⁴ to provide financial relief to people suffering from serious medical conditions such as cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, spinal injuries, head injuries, heart and kidney diseases, uterus prolapse and sickle cell anemia.⁵ In such cases, each patient is provided with NPR 100,000 for health-care expenses.

The Victims Relief Fund and hospital-based One-Stop Crisis Management Centers (OCMCs) are also operational in 94 federal, provincial and local level hospitals, offering free, round-the-clock services to victims of GBV. These services include medical treatment, psychosocial counselling, forensic services, legal aid, educational empowerment, livelihood support through seed money, protection and rehabilitation and reintegration support.

Areas where the country needs further support

- Strengthening specific institutions to protect and provide services to vulnerable groups such as women, children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities by establishing committees mandated by various laws, including the Act Relating to Children, 2075 (2018) and the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2064 (2007). To support this, infrastructure, human resource development and capacity building of federal, provincial and local level is essential.
- Addressing harmful traditional practices and promoting healthy social structures, values and norms through awareness-raising activities to change embedded harmful practices in knowledge and behaviour. Nepal welcomes partnerships to support these efforts, recognizing the time-consuming and complex nature of this process.
- Expanding the social protection coverage, health-care services, clean drinking water, clean energy and sanitation facilities, particularly for women and children

⁴ Department of Health Services, Annual Health Report, FY 2022/23, p. 224.

⁵ Destitute Citizens Health Treatment Fund Directives, 2018 (B.S. 2075)

from marginalized communities. Financial, infrastructure development, capacity-building and technological support and partnerships are welcomed to ensure equitable access to these services.

- Developing a central and comprehensive data collection and management system, including an integrated management information system with sex-disaggregated data on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). Skilled professionals as well as technology and financial resources are needed for the design, operation and management of social data compilation systems. Support is required for generating data on the SDG related indicators, especially those related to women's empowerment and gender equality.
- Building a climate-resilient society capable of responding to the impacts of climate change, including the ways in which it affects women and men differently. This requires easy access to the UN's Loss and Damage Fund, Green Climate Fund and Climate Adaptation Fund to mitigate the consequences of climate change and international collaboration for necessary climate actions for adaptation.

Section 2: Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks

1. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?

- 1.1 The Constitution of Nepal aims to build an egalitarian society based on proportional, inclusive and participatory principles. The Constitution further seeks to ensure economic equality, prosperity and social justice by eliminating all forms of discrimination, including those based on gender. Additionally, the Constitution allows the government to adopt special measures for the protection, empowerment and development of citizens to help fulfill their economic, social, cultural, administrative and political needs. The Constitution ensures women's participation in all state structures and bodies based on the principle of proportional representation.
- 1.2 The Constitution allocates executive and legislative powers among the three tiers of the government. International commitments are being implemented at all levels of government. The government plans, policies and strategies have given emphasis on strengthening coordination and cooperation among all tiers of the government. Such emphasis also promotes the spirit of the SDGs and Agenda 2030's principle to 'leave no one behind' (LNOB). Women's rights are embedded into Nepal's policies and laws including but not limited to health, education, skills development, employment and empowerment sectors. These policies and programmes have been implemented, internalized and mainstreamed at the federal, provincial and local levels.
- 1.3 The Provincial Center for Good Governance (PCGG), which falls under the Provincial Local Governance Support Programme (PLGSP), has enhanced the capacity of public representatives and staff members of provincial and local levels on GESI issues as well. As of 2023, 235 local levels have adopted capacity development plans, 161 local levels formulated periodic plans and 398 local

levels developed GESI strategies. Additionally, 533 municipalities have conducted gender audits.⁶

- 1.4 The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) has developed a model “Social Inclusion Policy for Local Level,” in 2022. Based on this model, several local levels have formulated their policies. These policies seek to end harmful traditional practices such as untouchability, discrimination, polygamy, child marriage, the *Kamlari*, *Chhaupadi* and GBV, which have already been criminalized by the laws, yet special targeted programs are needed to eradicate these social maladies.
- 1.5 The National Women Commission (NWC), a constitutionally mandated body, has been working independently and competently with enhanced roles and responsibilities⁷. Only women are eligible to hold the position of chairperson and members of the NWC. The NWC has been continuously working on protection and promotion of the rights of women and to ensure gender justice through the empowerment of women.
- 1.6 The GoN has adopted and is implementing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy, 2021. The MoWCSC, as a national steering and coordinating agency, has been undertaking capacity development initiatives for the gender focal units of different ministries in an effort to implement the strategy. Interaction programmes have been organized at the provincial and local levels to ensure effective implementation.⁸
- 1.7 The Ministry of Finance has institutionalized the Gender-Responsive Budget Committee, which is entrusted to execute the “Gender-Responsive Budget Formulation Guidelines.” The Ministry has also issued a “Model Guideline of Gender-Responsive Budget” for provincial and local-level governments.
- 1.8 The literacy rate of women has increased, according to the 2021 census. The male literacy rate is 83.6 percent, while the female literacy rate is 69.4 percent

⁶ The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration

⁷ Article 253 of the Constitution of Nepal

⁸ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Seventh Periodic Report submitted to CEDAW Committee by Nepal, 5 July 2023 available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FNPL%2F7&Lang=en

which was only 57.4 percent in 2011. Similarly, the 2021 census shows that women's land and house ownership has increased compared to the figures of the 2011 census. Overall, 23.8 percent of the total households own land, a housing unit or both in the name of a female household member. The percentage of households with female ownership of both land and housing units stands at 11.8 percent, which is an increase of 1.1 percentage points compared to 2011. The census also shows that there are 627,887 households (9.4 percent of total households in Nepal) operating small-scale enterprises other than agriculture, with no paid employees. These include cottage industries, trade and business, transportation-related services and other small-scale enterprise-related services. Out of the total enterprises, 45 percent are operated by women. In total, 31.6 percent of the total households (6,666,937) are headed by women, which is an increase of 5.8 percentage points from the 2011 census.⁹

- 1.9 The GoN has formulated and implemented the 'Roadmap to Goal 5 of SDGs 2030'. The monitoring framework of the roadmap has been aligned, and the National SDG indicators have been updated with national, provincial and local-level plans that capture the spirit of the LNOB principle. As the lead agency, the National Planning Commission (NPC) has set up a national SDG platform to track the progress of the government's SDG implementation.
- 1.10 The GoN enforced the Gender-based Violence Elimination Fund (Operation) Regulations, 2067 (2010). The Second amendment to this regulation in 2019 has provisioned to establish Gender-based Violence Prevention Fund at provincial and local levels. Following these amendments, the fund is operational in all seven provinces and more than 300 local level.
- 1.11 Nepal acceded to the UN Trafficking Protocol (Palermo Protocol) of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, which deals with trafficking in persons, especially trafficking in women and children, and the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking. Section 10 of the Act to Amend Some Acts on Prevention of Money Laundering and Promotion of Business Environment (2023) amended the Human Trafficking and

⁹ CEDAW, Seventh Periodic Report (n5).

Transportation (Control) Act, 2064 (2007) and also criminalized human smuggling.¹⁰ These legal instruments support prevention, rescue, protection and rehabilitation as well as legal remedies to address the increased risk of human trafficking, human smuggling, and physical, mental or sexual exploitation. Further amendment to this Act is in progress to provide comprehensive protection and support to victims.

- 1.12 Civil Society Organizations, community organizations and national and international NGOs have also been playing an important role in the economic and social development of women in Nepal.
- 1.13 Altogether, there are 94 OCMCs in operation and 88 Social Service Units (SSUs) in hospitals, targeting for 12 groups as mentioned in Social Service Unit (Establishment and Operation) Directives 2078 (2021). Free and/or discounted health-care services are provided to the poor, persons with disabilities, victims of GBV, those wounded in conflicts, disaster-affected people, health volunteers and prisoners.

Major Challenges and Setbacks

- 1.14 There are many challenges in making progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment despite robust legal provisions and institutional set-ups. One challenge is figuring out a way to harness Nepal's pluralistic social structure to achieve socio-economic transformation, social justice and equality through empowerment and inclusion. Shared or equal ownership of all classes, communities and genders is crucial for sustainable change and development. The formulation and timely reform of policies and laws and strengthening institutions to effectively implement them are top priorities.
- 1.15 There are certain challenges in institutionalizing a responsible governance system despite policy, legal and programmatic efforts to mainstream gender equality, social inclusion and justice. Ending traditional harmful practices in society and bringing about changes in social structures, values and norms is an intensive process. It needs continuous efforts from all levels, including the general public. Internalizing and mainstreaming the concerns of the targeted

¹⁰ The amendment came into effect on 12 April 2024.

group by enhancing coordination, cooperation and partnerships at the federal, provincial and local levels and ensuring meaningful results are still challenging in the current context. Though there have been positive improvements in many sectors, there are many more tasks to work on to attain the desired outcome.

- 1.16 UN Women's report "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023" identifies specific challenges Nepal is currently facing. The report, published in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, tracks gender equality across the 17 SDGs and highlights 11 key roadblocks. Some of the issues highlighted by the report are the lack of women in leadership positions; poverty and lack of economic opportunities; workplace discrimination and inequalities; an imbalance in unpaid work; social norms and cultural practices; inadequate access to education and health care; food insecurity; Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); inadequate funding for gender equality initiatives; legal barriers and poorly enforced legislation; and lack of access to clean energy and sanitation.
- 1.17 The GoN has prioritized strengthening institutions to deliver services also by mobilizing civil society and NGOs for the full implementation of a one-door system. These priorities aim at extending services to implement all critical areas of concerns of BPfA. There are also challenges in coordination and collaboration among the various agencies involved in controlling and preventing the changing dimensions, forms, methods and routes of GBV and human trafficking.
- 1.18 The development and implementation of the right strategy for institutionalizing an integrated management information system with disaggregated data on gender equality and social statistics is both a necessity and a challenge. Some of the challenges include inter-ministerial coordination, inadequate skilled professionals, the requirement to keep pace with ever-changing technology and financial management.
- 1.19 The government has made efforts to acknowledge women's contributions to the national economy. Despite this, more advanced plans and schemes are required for connecting women's knowledge, skills and labor with production and productivity and valuing women's unpaid care work. According to the World Bank's Gender Data Portal, the labor force participation rate among women in

Nepal was 28.7 percent in 2023, representing a slight increase compared to the 26.3 percent reported by the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18.

1.20 Insufficient financial resources dedicated to gender equality programmes impede progress. Economic disparities have intensified gender inequality. Socio-cultural barriers, social resistance to change and gender stereotype continue to perpetuate discrimination against women. Lack of sex-disaggregated data makes it difficult to measure the progress and identify gaps.

2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

According to Nepal's 15th and 16th Five-Year Periodic Plans (hereinafter called "15th Plan" and "16th Plan"), the government has identified the following as its priority areas for accelerating progress for women and girls:

2.1 Formulating sectoral policies, acts and programmes related to gender equality at all tiers and sectors of the government.

2.1.1 Policies and laws for gender equality have been formulated or are in the process of being formulated at the federal, provincial and local levels. Many of the existing laws and programmes have been reviewed and are being implemented to ensure gender equality.

2.1.2 The National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021) and its Implementation Action Plan, 2080 (2023) are being implemented with clear roles of each of the three tiers of government and other relevant stakeholders to ensure equality in opportunities, access, benefits and facilities in all sectors at the federal, provincial and local levels.

2.1.3 Governments at the federal, provincial and local levels are in the process of reviewing or formulating sectoral policies, laws and programmes related to gender equality. The GESI Strategy (2021-2023) has been prepared and implemented under the PLGSP. The PLGSP aims to strengthen provincial and local governance systems and inter-governmental relationships to mainstream GESI at every stage of development, from initiating the development of policies, laws and plans

to programme and project conceptualization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The government's existing GESI Strategy was amended in October 2023. Governments at all levels have adopted a gender-responsive budgeting system.

- 2.1.4 Local-levels have launched programmes to provide productive training focusing on self-employment to Technology Age Girls (TAG).
- 2.1.5 Provincial governments have adopted gender-mainstreaming policies, strategies and procedures. Examples include the Early Childhood Development Strategy, 2079 (2023) and the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy, 2078 (2022) prepared by Karnali Province.
- 2.1.6 The Ministry of Women, Children, Youth and Sports in Madhesh Province introduced the *Beti Padhau Beti Bachau* (Educate Daughter, Save Daughter) campaign to encourage parents to educate girl children. Under this campaign, the government has initiated the *Sikshya Beema* (Education Insurance) and Girls Cycle programme for girls studying in classes 8 through 10. The distribution of laptops to female students from marginalized communities has also been initiated in the province.
- 2.1.7 Since 2019, Karnali Province has run the campaign *Bank Khata Chhoriko Surakchya Jiwan Variko* (Bank Account for the Girl Child, Security for the Lifetime). Under this programme, a bank account is opened for girl children born after July 2019 and for the first month, the government deposits 1,000 rupees, followed by 500 rupees per month continuously until the girl child reaches the age of 20 years. The money will not be provided to the girl child if she is married before the age of 20 and/or does not complete her secondary-level education. To promote technical education among women, Karnali Province started the *Prabidhik Chhori Buhari Chhatrabritti* (Technical Scholarship for Daughter and Daughter-in-Law) programme in FY 2021/22.
- 2.1.8 Lumbini Province adopted the Gender Focal Persons Arrangements and Operational Procedures, 2077 (2020). According to the Procedures, all agencies and officers within the provincial government ministries are

responsible for appointing a GFP. The province also adopted the Chief Minister Educational Reform Programme (Operations) Procedure, 2078 (2021), which has provisions for the improvement of infrastructure and quality of academic institutions and for supporting students who are from marginalized backgrounds and have disabilities. The scholarship is provided to the most vulnerable students from marginalized backgrounds, such as freed *Kamaiya* and *Kamlari, Badi, Gandarva, Chidimar* and *Pasi*. Further, Lumbini Province, in Section 11 of the Province Civil Service Act, 2080 (2023), made special provisions in recruitments for women with disabilities and women from *Khas-Aarya*, indigenous, *Madheshi, Dalit* and *Tharu* communities; poor families; Muslim communities; disadvantaged classes or regions; marginalized groups; and sexual and gender minorities.

- 2.1.9 Likewise, other provinces have also adopted GESI policies and other instruments for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 2.1.10 The GoN developed a tool called "The Local Government Institutional Self-Assessment (LISA)" to assess the performance and efficiency of local government institutions. It aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in governance, service delivery, financial management, leadership, social inclusion and other key areas. The results of the assessment are used to guide improvements and capacity-building efforts in the local governance system.

2.2 Adopting and institutionalizing a gender-responsive governance system in all sectors and agencies of the state.

- 2.2.1 One of the GoN's priorities for accelerating the progress of women and girls in Nepal is to increase women's representation to at least 50 percent in all levels, structures and development processes of the state.
- 2.2.2 Further, increasing women's participation in policymaking at all levels and sectors of the state and ensuring women's substantial participation in programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and benefit-sharing is another top priority of the GoN.

2.2.3 Other priorities of the GoN for accelerating progress for women and girls in Nepal are:

- Encouraging the use of technology that saves women's labor and time.
- Ensuring the active participation of men and boys in the achievement of substantive gender equality.
- Adopting policies for spending a certain portion of the corporate social responsibility funds on women's empowerment.
- Adopting policies to make public agencies gender sensitive.
- Increasing the allocation of gender-responsive budget shares by institutionalizing a gender-responsive budget at the federal, provincial and local levels.
- Assigning a GFP at all levels of the state and including a provision for a mandatory gender-responsive budget.
- Formulating a code of conduct for the GFP and all concerned stakeholders.
- Implementing a gender audit system at all levels of government.

2.2.4 These priorities aim to adopt a gender-responsive governance system for all three tiers of government, as well as all sectors and agencies of the state. Provisions have been introduced to achieve women's significant representation at all levels, sectors and development processes. Women have 34.1 percent representation in the Federal Parliament (House of Representatives 33.5 percent and National Assembly 37.5 percent), 36.4 percent in Provincial Assemblies and 41.2 percent in local levels.¹¹ Gender-responsive budgets have been institutionalized at the federal, provincial and local levels. The web-based data collection platform, National Data Profile (NDP) (by the National Statistics Office) and Social Information Management System (SIMS) (by the MoWCSC) have been launched. Gender mainstreaming was implemented into the design of Nepal's 2001

¹¹ MoWCSC, Gender Equality in Nepal: Facts and Figures, 2024, pp 56-58.

census. The majority of statistical indicators are bifurcated by gender. The NPC conducted a study on women's contribution toward gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022.¹² Necessary policies have been enacted to make public institutions gender sensitive. The MoWCSC has conducted gender audits of different ministries. The Human Development Index has also been taken care of for inter-governmental fiscal transfers. The GoN has made the necessary arrangements to designate a GFP in every ministry.

2.3 Developing a data system to measure gender equality and women's empowerment.

Priorities related to developing this data system include the following:

2.3.1 Development of gender equality and empowerment measurement indicators to make the monitoring and evaluation system effective.

2.3.2 Compulsory collection of sex-disaggregated data in all types of surveys.

2.3.3 Preparation of periodic reports on gender issues by the MoWCSC based on provincial and local-level reports. The MoWCSC has published Gender Equality in Nepal: Facts and Figures 2024, Social Statistics of Nepal (biannually), National Report on Human Trafficking and Transportation (annually).

2.3.4 In 2022, the Federal Parliament passed the Statistics Act, 2079 (2022) to govern statistical activities. This has paved the way for a coordinated approach to managing statistical governance. The Statistics Act envisages the principles of a designated statistics system. The status of statistical authority has been upgraded. The chief statistician is the secretary of the NSO, GoN. Nepal was the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to gender mainstream its census process in the 2001 census. The gender mainstreaming process was also continually adopted in all the censuses after 2001. Besides the population census, Nepal had made a great effort to conduct the

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<https://npc.gov.np/images/category/221222120303नेपालको%20कुल%20गार्हस्थ्य%20उत्पादनमा%20महिलाले%20पुर्याएको%20योगदान.pdf>

nation's first economic census in 2018. The 2021 census is also a good example of including gender indicators in statistical activities. The NSO, which was formerly the Central Bureau of Statistics, conducts various surveys, and the data generated from these surveys is key to measuring gender disparities in different critical areas.

2.3.5 The MoWCSC has launched SIMS in 2023. This system will serve as a platform for highly granular data. Additionally, SIMS will be instrumental in preparing different reports at all levels of government. The NPC has conducted research on women's contribution to GDP in Nepal. A time-use survey is in the pipeline and will be conducted in Nepal's upcoming 16th Plan. It will evaluate women's time spent on both paid and unpaid household and care activities, highlighting their productive activities. The NSO is working on preparing a thematic report on gender equity and empowerment, primarily based on the 2021 census and other social and economic surveys.

2.4 Achieving economic empowerment and social transformation by giving special priority to economically poor and socially excluded women.

Priorities in this area include the following:

2.4.1 Carrying out livelihood enhancement programmes, including entrepreneurship support, for economically poor and disadvantaged women.

2.4.2 Measuring women's contribution to the national economy by setting economic values for unpaid household chores and care work performed by women.

2.4.3 Carrying out special programmes to ensure safe motherhood and reproductive health rights.

2.4.4 Carrying out programmes aimed at reducing the gender gap in technical education.

2.4.5 Expanding the President Women Upliftment Programme nationwide to support the economic and social transformation of poor and rural women.

- 2.4.6 Improving and institutionalizing the programs related to women's development and empowerment, and their good practices and achievements at the local level and mobilizing women's cooperatives in the sectors of productive businesses and self-employment.
- 2.4.7 Carrying out awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes to eliminate social discrimination against sexual and gender minorities.
- 2.4.8 Carrying out socioeconomic development programmes for income generation, capacity development and empowerment of women and adolescent girls from poor and excluded groups such as *Dalits*, indigenous groups, single women, women living with disabilities, *Badi*, *Kamlari*, *Kamaiya* and *Chepang*.
- 2.4.9 Providing concessional loans and access to finance facilities for women to help them become self-employed and develop entrepreneurship by running businesses or being engaged in income-generating activities.

2.5 Increasing access to justice through preventive and protective measures for ending all forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination against women.

Priorities in this area include the following:

- 2.5.1 Effectively implementing a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of VAWG.
- 2.5.2 Launching a social campaign to increase awareness at all levels and declaring a 'year against GBV' to end superstitions and harmful practices, like GBV, witchcraft allegations and *Chhaupadi*.
- 2.5.3 Operating long-term and short-term rehabilitation centers with integrated services at the provincial and local levels for women who have survived or been affected by violence.
- 2.5.4 Setting-up effective mechanisms to end GBV in all its forms.
- 2.5.5 Making the legal redress and remedy process accessible, simple and speedy to prevent and control all forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination against women.

2.5.6 Setting up the Gender-Based Violence Elimination Funds and Single Women Protection Funds at all local-levels to provide rescue, legal aid, medical treatment, psychosocial counseling, skills development programmes and self-employment for survivors of violence and single women.

2.5.7 Carrying out research studies on various dimensions of GBV and developing and using indicators for declaring gender-violence-free zones with strong institutional backing.

3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?

3.1 The GoN has adopted various strategies to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls. While some results are being realized, there is still a lot more work to be done to create sustainable, long-lasting change. Nepal was ranked 114th out of 167 countries in the 2021 Legatum Prosperity Index (LPI), an annual report that measures global prosperity across three domains: inclusive societies, open economies and empowered people.¹³

Three examples include:

3.1.1 **Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal (*Sashakta Mahila, Samriddha Nepal*):** The Government of Nepal has launched a three-year “*Sashakta Mahila, Samriddha Nepal* (Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal)” programme in Madhesh, Karnali and Sudurpashchim Provinces from 2023 to 2026 to realize the national vision of a Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali. As a collaboration between federal, provincial and local governments, this programme seeks to ensure equal rights and opportunities for both women and men. It aims to achieve this goal by engaging men, boys, families and communities to exhibit more gender-equitable behaviors and support positive social and gender norms that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, resulting in increased agency and voice for women and girls.

¹³ <https://nepaleconomicforum.org/nepals-performance-in-the-legatum-prosperity-index-2021>

The programme also aims to address the formal and informal barriers for the development of women and girls in Nepal. The programme acknowledges the intersecting vulnerabilities and formal and informal forces that combine to leave half of Nepal's vital forces behind. It further ensures that women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, have equal access to economic, labor and social rights. Jointly implemented by four UN agencies (ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women), the programme was designed following a collaborative, in-depth situation analysis and extensive consultations with a wide range of government bodies, CSOs and other stakeholders.¹⁴

3.1.2 Air Lifting: Ensuring Safe Motherhood: Airlifting programme for women with Life-Threatening Pregnancy and Postpartum women of Remote Areas is proving to be effective in the remote and mountainous districts of Nepal. Launched in 2019 as part of the President Woman's Upliftment Programme, the programme targets low-income, rural pregnant and postpartum women, with the goal of preventing their untimely death in the absence of safe motherhood services in remote, rural areas. Over the past five years, a total of 701 pregnant women and lactating mothers have been helicopter-lifted to health-care facilities, saving their lives and/or those of their babies.¹⁵ The programme has helped save the lives of many women with life-threatening conditions due to pregnancy and post-delivery-related health complications. Health posts in far-flung areas are not in a position to ensure safe delivery as they lack resources and the required facilities. Preventing maternal and neonatal deaths in the postpartum period has been a major challenge for agencies in the MoHP, as the number has remained stagnant for the past several years. The maternal mortality rate fell from 239 to 151 per 100,000 live births from 2016 to 2021.¹⁶

3.1.3 Interventions for Gender Equality: Women's representation in civil service has shown increasing trends over the past decade.¹⁷ The number of women in civil service increased to nearly 28 percent in 2022 from 9 percent in 2008.¹⁸ The Contribution-

¹⁴ <https://nepal.un.org/en/221902-empowered-women-prosperous-nepal>

¹⁵ <https://mowcsc.gov.np/progressfiles/हवाई-उद्धारको-विवरण-1706244843.pdf>

¹⁶ MoWCSC, Gender Equality Report: Facts and Figures, 2024, p. 21.

¹⁷ Eight percent in 2003, 15 percent in 2010, 18 percent in 2015 and 23.72 percent in 2018 (PSC 2018).

¹⁸ MoWCSC, Gender Equality Report: Facts and Figures, 2024.

Based Social Protection Act, 2075 (2017) provisioned for the Social Security Fund, which includes a medical and health protection scheme, a maternity protection scheme, an accident protection scheme, an old age protection scheme, a dependent family protection scheme and an unemployment protection scheme. The GoN made a provision of 25 percent concession in tax when the ownership of house or/and land is transferred to women. Such concession is 35 percent for single women. The number of female landowners in Nepal has reached 39 percent. Nepal also has Social Security Plan Operations Procedures, 2075 (2018), which include a maternity protection plan, operation, coverage of expenditure of children up to the age of three months, and coverage of expenditure of post-natal care (expenditure of one month).

3.1.4 Rights of gender and sexual minorities, including the right to same-sex marriage: Nepal has recognized same-sex marriage. Securing the rights of people with diverse sexual orientations, the Supreme Court of Nepal has ruled in favor of same-sex marriage on 29 June 2023 when it directed the government to establish a "separate register" for "sexual minorities and non-traditional couples".¹⁹ Transgender people in Nepal can change their gender identity through a self-declaration process, and be identified as the "other" category.

4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?

4.1 Multiple earthquakes have had devastating effects on Nepal over the past 10 years. The most recent earthquake in November 2023 hit the western belt of Nepal – the districts of Jajarkot, Western Rukum, Salyan and surrounding territories. Aid from the government and its partner organizations helped victims recover from the devastation caused by the aftershocks. The GoN also worked with development partners and CSOs to ensure the protection of women, children and senior citizens living in temporary shelters.

4.2 As a highly disaster-prone country, Nepal has been working to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). The GoN formulated

¹⁹ Sanjeev Gurung alias Pinky Gurung v. GoN Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, et. Al. (079-WO-1382)

and put into force the National Policy on DRR in 2018 under the principle of inclusive disaster risk management. This policy prioritizes a gender equality perspective in disaster risk management among all three tiers of government. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 (2017) is also in force.

4.3 The November 2023 earthquake destroyed health-care facilities, including a district hospital and four birthing centers in Karnali Province in western Nepal. The destruction of this facility increased health risks among pregnant women, mothers and newborn babies. However, in general, the quality and services provided by health-care facilities in Nepal are improving. While the maternal death rate and home delivery rate are higher in remote areas, the institutional delivery rate reached around 80 percent in 2023. More than 2,800 birthing centers are providing services through state-run health facilities throughout the country. The government is working to increase the number of institutional deliveries.

4.4 In February 2024, the Council of Ministers declared Jajarkot, Western Rukum and Salyan as earthquake-affected zones and decided to raise financial resources for reconstruction. It has decided to proceed with the construction of earthquake-resistant houses in the affected local levels. It has also passed a procedure of providing NPR 500,000 per family for the construction of earthquake-resistant permanent housing unit. The government will be using internal resources, external assistance, grants and loans to fund this reconstruction effort.

4.5 The aftermath of COVID-19, as well as international conflicts, have caused a downturn in the global economy. The global supply chain and inflation have also had a negative impact on women and girls in Nepal. In the absence of adequate industrial development and other economic activities in the country, more women are resorting to foreign employment. In 2022/23, women migrant workers made up approximately 8 percent of the total of more than 600,000 labor permits issued to Nepali workers by the Department of Foreign Employment for employment in countries other than India. While foreign employment can potentially empower women, countries like Nepal are also bearing the social costs of this development. Women play a crucial role in the social and economic fabric of many communities, and when they migrate abroad, their absence can lead to a deterioration of social cohesion. Creating needs-based employment opportunities in the country is a

challenge. Reducing the vulnerability of women workers and guaranteeing their safe and dignified migration is another. The GoN has prioritized G2G (government-to-government) agreements for the protection of the rights of Nepali migrant workers abroad.

5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

5.1 The GoN has declared the Prime Minister's Daughter Self-Reliance Programme as part of its policy and programme for the forthcoming FY 2081/82 (2024/25). This drive is meant to give skills development training and financial assistance to women nationwide, making them more self-reliant and empowered.

5.2 Nepal started adopting a Gender-Responsive Budget in the FY 2007/08 to fulfill its constitutional requirements and international commitments to gender equality. In recent years, the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting has become an important topic in the government's agenda to internalize gender equality in public finance meaningfully. The public budget expenditure is classified annually into three categories: directly responsive to gender, indirectly responsive and neutral across all sectors. In the last 15 years, there has been an almost four-fold rise in direct gender-responsive budgeting, from 11 percent in 2007/08 to 43.9 percent in 2024/25 (Budget Speech 2024/25). The GoN has made gender-responsive budgeting mandatory at the provincial and local levels to ensure commitments to women-focused and women-targeted programmes. The arrangement of the expenditure is currently very important, as it will directly ease the financing of strategies aimed at ending poverty. The GoN is also analyzing the state of fiscal space reality and its consequences for social justice and gender mainstreaming programmes.

5.3 The NSO's plans to measure women's engagement in unpaid care work underscores the government's newfound commitment to this issue. Additionally, the 15th and 16th Plans and prevailing labor laws advocate for decent employment. Promoting a green economy is an alternative to overconsumption and will provide ways to rethink resource scarcity, as well as environmental and human health.

5.4 Nepal has adopted the Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID)

approach. This policy approach addresses problems like slow domestic job creation; high vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation; large infrastructure gaps for long-term green growth and climate action and sustainable development for all. Having a diverse ecosystem, mountain environment and associated economy has an important impact not only in Nepal but also in the lowland areas of the South Asian region. It is important to recall the message of the UN Secretary-General while he was in Nepal in 2023. Speaking from the Mount Everest region, he issued an urgent message about the impact of the climate crisis in the Himalayas: “The world cannot wait.” The Himalayan climate crisis and the mountain economy are highly cross-cutting subjects. The GoN is giving high priority to these issues.

5.5 The government has come up with some transformational strategies to prioritize gender issues in its 16th Plan.

5.5.1 To internalize, mainstream and localize gender equality and social justice by:

- Including all levels of the state and thematic areas to address the concerns of women, with special priority in sectoral policies, laws, plans, programmes and institutional structures.
- Adopting measures to carry out a timely revision of national laws and policies and international commitments for controlling and discouraging inappropriate acts with the targeted class, community or gender related to GBV.
- Implementing programmes focused on empowerment, inclusion and mobilization based on affiliation, coherence and complementarity with national policies and priorities; applying the the principle of proportional inclusion at all levels and parts of the state based on demographic data; and adopting a strategy for Gender Empowerment, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) in every process of development.
- Developing a complete and step-wise sustainable empowerment programme for the identified target group or community.

5.5.2 To promote coordination, cooperation and partnership at all levels and agencies, the government prioritizes the following:

- Clarifying the roles, responsibilities and scope of the federal, provincial and local levels in terms of gender empowerment, social inclusion and mobilization based on the jurisdiction granted by the constitution; and developing and implementing targeted plans and programmes in coordination, cooperation and partnership capacity at the local levels.
- Increasing investment in social, economic and physical infrastructure in partnership with the private, cooperative and non-governmental sectors to economically empower and mobilize people from extremely poor and marginalized communities, as well as women with disabilities.
- Actively mobilizing men's participation networks at the federal, provincial and local levels to prevent discrimination, violence and exploitation based on gender.
- Spending budgets at the federal, provincial and local levels in the social sector with priority given to Madheshi, indigenous communities, *Dalits*, women, and marginalized communities for their economic empowerment.
- Institutionalizing a multi-sectoral nutrition plan from the local level to the federal level for the supply of nutritious food from the mother's womb for the overall development of children.

5.5.3 To ensure meaningful mobilization and participation, the GoN is:

- Mobilizing social capital and organizations in the areas of national needs and priorities by enhancing the capacity and leadership of the targeted class, community, gender, and stakeholders at an inter-provincial and inter-local level for maintaining balanced and inclusive development.
- Ensuring the needs, demands, leadership and participation of stakeholders while formulating, prioritizing, implementing and conducting monitoring and evaluation on policies, plans, programmes and activities for the target group, community and gender.

5.5.4 To make the social security and service systems comprehensive and sustainable, the GoN is:

- Prioritizing the needs of the most deprived and excluded people, special social security programmes and delivery of public services by adopting alternative and cost-effective measures.

5.5.5 To enhance the use of the latest concepts and technologies, the GoN is:

- Ensuring a respectful living environment for every person by adopting a lifecycle-based multisector/multilateral concept while formulating and implementing policies, plans and programmes.
- Enhancing the access, availability and use of technology in the empowerment and mobilization of communities with special needs, including women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities.
- Taking necessary safety measures to avoid potential risks and violence that may arise from inappropriate use.

5.5.6 To develop an Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the GoN is:

- Developing an integrated management information system covering various aspects by determining the basis, criteria and indicators of the target group and community. This will support the policy, plan and programme formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the target group and community, including women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, etc. The MoWCSC has planned to implement the SIMS at all 753 local levels through training and monitoring.
- Equipping the NWC with resources for research and development.

5.5.7 To implement relief, rehabilitation and social integration programmes effectively, the GoN is:

- Conducting combined programmes for the rescue, protection, rehabilitation and social integration of victims and persons affected by GBV, human trafficking, child labor, sexual abuse, etc., and providing compulsory social integration services for the disabled, orphans and adolescents who need special protection.
- Ensuring gender mainstreaming in climate change-related policies, programmes and investments to reduce the impact of climate change on human

lives, as well as its negative impact on women's workloads, productivity, health and livelihoods.

- Establishing rehabilitation centers for GBV survivors at the provincial levels and long-term rehabilitation center at the federal level.

5.5.8 To reform the justice system, the GoN is:

- Reforming judicial sectors to promote access to justice through fast-track services for all kinds of violence, including domestic violence, discrimination, exploitation and human trafficking, sexual abuse and violence in general against children, adolescents, persons with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, senior citizens, etc.
- Making the judicial system victim-friendly and enhancing the capacity of the judicial committees of local levels.

Section Three: Progress Across the 12 Critical Areas of Concern

6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?

6.1 The Constitution of Nepal ensures proportional representation and special opportunities for women in education, health, employment and social security.²⁰ The Constitution also prohibits discrimination in wages and social security benefits on the grounds of sex.²¹ The Labor Act, 2074 (2017) ensures equal rights for women workers in terms of wages and social security provided by enterprises, in compliance with ILO Conventions.²² Section 6 of the Act requires employers to follow the non-discrimination principle.²³ During 2018/19, Nepal removed restrictions on women working at night.²⁴ The Right to Employment Act, 2075 (2018) guarantees productive employment opportunities for citizens.²⁵ Section 8 of the Foreign Employment Act, 2064 (2007) prohibits gender discrimination in foreign employment.²⁶ Similarly, the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2075 (2018) ensures obstetric leave with pay to working women for a minimum of 98 days before or after the delivery of a child and paternity leave for 15 days.²⁷

²⁰ Constitution of Nepal, Article 38(5), available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/नेपालको-संविधान.pdf>

²¹ Constitution of Nepal, Article 18(4).

²² ILO, C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), art. 2, available at https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_Ilo_Code:C100#:~:text=1._for%20work%20of%20equal%20value last accessed on April 20, 2024. The Convention is in force for Nepal following ratification on 10 June 1976.

²³ Labour Act 2017, Section 6, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/श्रम-ऐन-२०७४.pdf> [Unofficial English translation available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Labor-Act-2017-2074.pdf>]

²⁴ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 232.

²⁵ The Right to Employment Act 2018, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/रोजगारीको-हक-सम्बन्धी-ऐन-२०७५.pdf> [unofficial English translation available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Right-to-Employment-Act-2075-2018.pdf>]

²⁶ Foreign Employment Act 2007, Section 8, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/वैदेशिक-रोजगार-ऐन-२०६४.pdf> [Unofficial English translation available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms_300684.pdf]

²⁷ The Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act 2018, Section 13, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/सुरक्षित-मातृत्व-तथा-प्रजनन-स्वास्थ्य-अधिकार-ऐन-२०७५.pdf>

6.2 According to the Nepal Labor Force Survey, 2017/18, among the economically active population, the labor force participation rate for women is 26.3 percent.²⁸ Nepali employees earned an average (mean) of NPR 17,809 per month. Furthermore, the share of women in managerial positions was 13.2 percent.²⁹ The number of women in enterprises was 37.7 percent. Women in Nepal owned 247,880 enterprises, which is 29.8 percent of the total 923,356 enterprises in the country. The share of female managers is higher than that of male managers (83.6 vs. 68.6 percent) in small businesses with one to two employees.³⁰

6.3 The National Occupational Safety and Health Policy, 2076 (2019) has ensured a safe and healthy working environment for all workers, benefitting women in particular.

Three examples include:

6.4 The President's Woman Upliftment Programme,³¹ which was initiated in 2017, provides skills and entrepreneurship development to poor and marginalized women, enabling them to gain access to work and employment opportunities, thus promoting self-employment and independence. Under the programme, seven women entrepreneurs – one from each province – are awarded annually as the best women entrepreneurs of the year. An Entrepreneurship Development Fund was set up to give production loans to promising women entrepreneurs without any collateral. If the business is woman-owned, it receives a 35 percent discount for registration. A 20 percent discount is given for the registration of property-related businesses owned by women as well.³²

6.5 The Prime Minister Self-Employment Programme has been implemented as a national flagship programme at various local levels since FY 2018/19, with the

[Unofficial English translation available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Right-to-Safe-Motherhood-and-Reproductive-Health-Act-2075-2018.pdf>]

²⁸ Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Result of Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18, Press Release, p. 4, para. 6, available at <https://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Press-note-of-NLFS-III-results.pdf>

²⁹ Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Result of Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18, Press Release, p. 5, para. 16.

³⁰ MoWCSC, Nepal Gender Equality Report: Facts and Figures, 2024.

³¹ <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/oYQ3l49GrpwDH26ZwXIcC5MeZMZnHAPis5wX3fJV-1625474855.pdf> last accessed on April 20, 2024.

³² Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 91.

aim of creating 5 million new jobs in five years.³³ At the end of FY 2021/22, various local levels had employed a total of 163,708 people for an average of 75 days³⁴ and 91,685 were employed in 2022/23 for an average of 78 days.³⁵ In total, NPR 12.3 billion was allocated for the programme that year.³⁶ Of the people employed under the programme, female beneficiaries made up 45 percent in 2019/20, 48 percent in 2020/21³⁷ and 59 percent in 2022/23.³⁸ To provide evidence-based support to the programme, an Employment Management Information System was institutionalized in 2020.³⁹ The Budget Speech for Fiscal Year 2023/24 seeks to restructure the programme, with the goal of creating productive employment and improving labor market outcomes. There are also plans to upgrade employment service centers to provide comprehensive services, including labor, skills and entrepreneurship development at the local level.⁴⁰

6.6 Nepal introduced the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (Prevention) Act, 2071 (2014)⁴¹ and the MoWCSC endorsed and implemented the Anti-Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct at the Workplace.⁴² It is also encouraging other government mechanisms and ministries to develop codes of conduct to control workplace sexual harassment. The Federation of the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry has prepared workplace codes of conduct, which have

³³ The Prime Minister Self-Employment Programme Operation Directives 2019, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

³⁴ Prime Minister Self-Employment Programme, Annual Progress Report, FY 2021/22, p. 13

³⁵ Ibid. FY 2022/23.

³⁶ Prime Minister Self-Employment Programme, Annual Progress Report, FY 2021/22, Executive Summary, para. 6.

³⁷ Prime Minister Self-Employment Programme, Annual Progress Report, FY 2020/21, p. 11, available at <https://www.pnep.gov.np/uploads/publication/1644743108-Annual-Review-Report.pdf>

³⁸ Ibid. Annual Progress Report, FY 2022/23.

³⁹ Prime Minister Self-Employment Programme, Annual Progress Report, FY 2021/22, p. 29.

⁴⁰ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, p. 34, para. 170, available at https://www.mof.gov.np/uploads/document/file/1686554933_1685371031_Budget_Speech_2080-81_Final.pdf

⁴¹ <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/The-Sexual-Harassment-at-Workplace-Prevention-Act-2014-2071.pdf>

⁴² Para 75, Nepal's Seventh Periodic Report on CEDAW.

been implemented since 2022.⁴³ The Department of Labor and Labor Offices⁴⁴ are responsible for ensuring the implementation of labor law provisions. Labor Inspectors and Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors are deployed for regular inspection and monitoring, which includes ensuring the safety and security of female workers.⁴⁵

7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?

7.1 The 16th Plan recognizes the current size of Nepal’s informal economy as a challenge to redistributing unpaid care work, promoting work-life balance and strengthening the rights of paid care workers.⁴⁶ The Nepal Labor Force Survey 2017/18 observed the gender dimensions of unpaid or underpaid work that do not result in any visible income generation. Females were more likely to get involved in such activities, which are not regarded as employment (65.7 percent of females compared to 51.4 percent of males). These other forms of work included the production of goods and services for one’s own final use, such as household chores; caring for children, people with disabilities and the elderly; and volunteer work. While 90.7 percent of women participated in providing services for their own final use, only 47.2 percent of men participated in such work.⁴⁷ According to a study published by the NPC, women’s contribution to Nepal’s GDP was 36.8 percent in 2017/18.⁴⁸

Three examples include:

7.2 The GoN’s budget for FY 2023/24 seeks to create decent employment opportunities for Nepali citizens. The budget launched a campaign under the slogan, “Respect of

⁴³ FNCCI, Enterprise Code of Conduct against Workplace Violence and Sexual Harassment, 2022, available at https://fncci.org/uploads/publication/file/violenceandsexual_20221108060604.pdf last accessed on April 18, 2024.

⁴⁴ <https://dol.gov.np/en/content/labour-and-employment-office>

⁴⁵ Labour Act, 2017, Chapter 15.

⁴⁶ Nepal Planning Commission, 16th Plan, Concept Paper, FY 2024/25-2028/29, p. 3, para. 19

⁴⁷ Report on the Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2017/18, p. 39, available at https://cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Nepal-Labour-Force-Survey-2017_18-Report.pdf last accessed on April 18, 2024.

⁴⁸ Nepal Planning Commission, Study Report on Women’s Contribution to the Gross Domestic Product of Nepal, 2022, p. 4.

Labour, Nation’s Campaign,” which is focused on increasing productivity by establishing good labor relations and protecting the rights and interests of workers.⁴⁹ To this end, the government seeks to expand the services of the Labour Court to ensure workers' access to justice. The budget also proposes to strengthen the provision and implementation of labour audits in both government and private institutions.⁵⁰

7.3 The National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021) recognizes women’s contribution to the national economy, seeking to change the gendered division of labor and increase women’s participation in the labor market.⁵¹ The policy has introduced measures to bridge the gender pay gap in women’s unpaid or underpaid work. The GoN set a new minimum monthly wage for all workers at NPR 17,300, which has been effective since 17 July 2023. Similarly, the daily minimum and hourly minimum wages are set at NPR 668 and NPR 89, respectively.⁵² The previous monthly wage was NPR 15,000 in 2021 and NPR 13,450 in 2018.⁵³

7.4 The NSO addressed issues related to the gender pay gap through the NLFS 2017/18. The Office followed the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Reference Book 2021⁵⁴ to guide its process in designing the census in a way that ensured gender inclusion. Likewise, the NPC has set three indicators to assess unpaid care work and domestic chores in terms of women’s labor participation in comparison to men, average hours spent by women on unpaid domestic care work, and the proportion of time spent on unpaid care and domestic work by sex, age and location.⁵⁵ As mentioned, the NSO is planning to conduct a time-use survey to measure unpaid care work among women. The 2021 census also generated data needed to assess women’s unpaid care work.

⁴⁹ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, p. 34, para. 169.

⁵⁰ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, p. 34, para. 172.

⁵¹ The National Gender Equality Policy 2021, Objective 4, available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/IMG-1634795515.pdf>

⁵² Nepal Gazette, 17 August 2023 (B.S. 2080-04-32).

⁵³ Nepal Gazette, 03 May 2023 (B.S. 2078-01-20).

⁵⁴ <https://plgsp.gov.np/sites/default/files/2023-02/PLGSP%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Social%20Inclusion%20%28GESI%29%20Strategy%202021%E2%80%932023.pdf>

⁵⁵ Nepal Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals (Revised Indicators), 2023, pp. 20-21.

8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?

8.1 It is a key goal of the GoN to reduce and ultimately eliminate the digital divide in the country. The budget for FY 2023/24 lists the “promotion of digital and green economy” as one of its top priorities and proposes several programmes to achieve that goal.⁵⁶ This intention was further solidified under the 15th Plan, which lists additional action plans to be deployed in pursuit of a digital economy.⁵⁷ The government has formulated a Three-Year Plan of Action of the Use of Information and Communication Technology, 2018. Chapter 8 of the 16th Plan (2024/25-2028/29) assesses concerns and challenges regarding gender equality, social justice and an inclusive society. The plan has adopted a transformative strategy to expand access to and use of technology among people in need, including women.

8.2 First, the GoN seeks to mobilize the Rural Telecommunication Fund to develop the telecommunication sector and implement programmes or projects on Digital Nepal. Second, the government has formulated a Digital Nepal Framework, which, according to the federal budget speech, will be implemented with necessary modifications. Third, the concerned agencies will engage in campaigns to enhance citizens' digital literacy and awareness to reduce the digital divide and expand the use and accessibility of Nagarik (Citizens) App. Fourth, mass media will be transformed into a digital system. Fifth, public and private service delivery will gradually be provided through online systems. Finally, Information and Community Technology (ICT) infrastructure, including information highways, data centers, internet exchange centers, telephone-based modern technologies, online services and electronic payments (e-payment gateways) will be given priority.⁵⁸

9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?

⁵⁶ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, p. 7, para. 28.

⁵⁷ Nepal Planning Commission, 15th Plan, FY 2019/20-2023/24, available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_Plan.pdf [Unofficial English translation available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_plan_English_Version.pdf]

⁵⁸ Nepal Planning Commission, 15th Plan, FY 2019/20-2023/24, pp. 247-248.

9.1 Nepal has adopted national macroeconomic policies and sectorial development policies towards addressing the feminization of poverty, with a focus on mainstreaming gender, affirmative action and special measures for economic empowerment to end all forms of discrimination.

Three examples include:

9.2 Since 2012, the Gender-Responsive Budget Committee of the Ministry of Finance has led the institutionalization of Nepal's Gender-Responsive Budget (GRB) through directives of action. Gender mainstreaming programmes have also contributed to improve Nepal's ranking in the UN's Gender Inequality Index. The GoN intends to roll out the GRB system at multiple levels of government. Apart from the GRB Guidelines for the federal level, the Ministry of Finance has issued the Model Gender-Responsive Budget Directives, 2077 (2021) for Nepal's provincial and local levels in accordance with its federal structure of governance.⁵⁹ Also, all provinces and local levels are in the process of customizing the model guidelines in their respective budgeting systems.

9.3 Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), which is the Central Bank of Nepal, issued a directive requiring at least one female director to serve on the Executive Board of banks and financial institutions. Likewise, the Office of the Company Registrar has guaranteed the representation of female executives on the boards of registered companies under the Company Act, 2063 (2006).⁶⁰

9.4 To increase women's access to credit, NRB introduced the Women Entrepreneurship Credit and Educated Youth Self-Employment Credit, which has encouraged women (individuals or groups) to run businesses using bank loans and facilitated their access to credit. Moreover, the MoWCSC formulated the Women Entrepreneurship Facilitation Center Operation Procedures, 2077 (2021), which is being implemented at the local level.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Model Gender-Responsive Budget Directives for Provincial and Local levels, 2021, available at <https://www.mof.gov.np/site/publication-detail/2607>

⁶⁰ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 138.

⁶¹ MoWCSC, Women Entrepreneurship Facilitation Center Operation Procedures, 2021, available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/RLgTIZ79o51v0mRGPLkuqholmC6XjsGrRRcyf6Vn-1625476093.pdf> last accessed on 22 April 2024.

10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

10.1 The 15th Plan sets a vision of creating “a society free of poverty of all kinds,” with the overarching goal of reducing all forms of poverty. The objective is to carry out programmes targeting the poor, create employment for the poor, and increase equitable access of the poor to productive state resources.⁶² The 16th Plan has further focused on strengthening economic structures and promoting higher economic growth.⁶³

10.2 Nepal has been successful in narrowing the gender gap in many relevant indicators, as evidenced by revisions made to its targets associated with SDGs in relevant areas. The national poverty rate, which stood at 25.4 percent in 2015 and 20.1 percent in 2019, has come down to 16.2 percent in 2022. Over the years, there has been a significant reduction in the percentage of women of all ages below the national poverty line. The GoN intends to bring down the percentage to 5.8 by 2030.⁶⁴

10.3 Currently, the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (MoLCPA) is operating more than 50 poverty-targeted programmes. To properly ascertain the targeted population and implement the programmes more effectively, the ministry introduced a procedure to distribute identity cards to poor families in 2022/23.⁶⁵ By the end of 2022/23, it had identified 223,330 households under the poverty line in 23 districts as eligible for identity cards, and 2,71,460 poor households in 15 districts qualified as well.⁶⁶ According to the Policies and Programs of the Government (2024/25), the distribution of these identity cards will be completed by next year. The identity cards will be used as a basis for providing various government facilities, including through programmes such as "*Bisheshwor with Poor*."⁶⁷

⁶² Nepal Planning Commission, 15th Plan, FY 2019/20-2023/24, p. 323, section 10.2 et. seq.

⁶³ 16th Plan (2024/25-2028/29), p. 21.

⁶⁴ Nepal Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals (Revised Indicators), 2023, p. 4, available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/231120105017SDG%20%20Indicators_16%20Aug%202023%20update_d.pdf

⁶⁵ Procedure to distribute Identity Cards to Poor Families, 2022/23, available at <https://molcpa.gov.np/department/page/528>

⁶⁶ MoLCPA Annual Progress Summary, FY 2021/22, para 5.15, available at <https://molcpa.gov.np/department/page/523>

⁶⁷ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, p. 28, para. 131.

10.4 Further, the Ministry undertook a comprehensive study and published a report on the situation of *Kamaiya*, *Kamlari*, *Haliya* and *Harwacharwa* in 2021/22. The intention behind the report was to assess the effectiveness of the existing programmes in rehabilitating these groups of people who have historically been subjected to extreme poverty.⁶⁸

10.5 Likewise, the percentage of households having property/tangible assets in women's names increased from 25.1 (in 2019) to 29.2 percent (in 2022). The 2030 target is set at 40 percent.⁶⁹ Furthermore, there has been a substantial increase in women's ownership of land and property from 20 percent in 2011 to 24 percent in 2021.⁷⁰

Three examples include:

10.6 The GoN's Poverty Alleviation Fund has been implemented in 60 out of 77 districts in Nepal. The fund has reached 900,000 individuals so far, out of which 78 percent are women. The fund has also created 32,000 groups to reach needy populations. There is a provision stipulating that the key positions of each group, such as chair, vice chair and treasurer, should be held by women, indigenous groups and *Dalit* communities. In total, women lead 60 percent of the key positions.⁷¹

10.7 The GoN, in collaboration with UNDP, has been implementing the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation (MEDPA)⁷² since 2018. As of January 2020, through the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP) and MEDPA, a total of 172,514 micro-entrepreneurs have been supported, 76 percent of whom are women. The MEDEP has made a provision that 70 percent of its target beneficiaries must be women and/or people from socially marginalized communities.⁷³ The programme has conducted GESI/Management Information System (MIS) training at the local levels, in which 1,375 people participated, including 648 women.

⁶⁸ MoLCPA, Study Report on the situation of *Kamaiya*, *Kamlari*, *Haliya* and *Harwacharwa*, 2021/22, available at <https://molcpa.gov.np/department/page/577>

⁶⁹ Nepal Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals (Revised Indicators), 2023, p. 6.

⁷⁰ MoWCSC, Gender Equality Report: Facts and Figures, 2024, p. 62.

⁷¹ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 91.

⁷² <https://medpa.moics.gov.np/Home/About?infoId=11>

⁷³ <https://medpa.moics.gov.np/Home/About?infoId=1020>

10.8 The pro-poor targeted scholarship programme has been implemented for students whose parents were martyrs and/or conflict victims and students who are conflict victims, *Dalits*, or come from highly marginalized and/or endangered indigenous groups. The number of beneficiaries who received the scholarship in FY 2019/20 was 3,288,924, and 2,604,262 in FY 2020/21.

11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

11.1 The GoN operates a social security programme under the Social Security Act 2018. The government aims to extend social security protection to 80 percent of the population by 2030.⁷⁴ Currently, social security benefits, among others, single women, marginalized and excluded women and senior female citizens.⁷⁵

11.2 A total of NPR 157.73 billion was allocated for social security programmes in the federal budget for FY 2023/24. The programme provides social security allowances to single women, senior citizens above 68 years of age, *Dalits* who have reached age 60, the poor, marginalized groups and communities and children. The budget also introduced a “social security from womb to tomb” programme, which aims to incorporate all stages of the life cycle of a person under the social security regime.⁷⁶

11.3 The GoN has taken legislative measures that ensure access to social protection and benefits, including the right to basic health care. The Labor Act, 2074 (2017) is applicable to every entity, including informal sectors and domestic workers. Likewise, the Contribution-Based Social Security Act, 2075 (2017) covers employees in informal sectors and those who are self-employed, among others. Furthermore, both the Foreign Sector and Migrant Workers Social Security Plan Operation Procedure, 2079 (2022)⁷⁷ and the Informal and Self-Employed Sector Social Security Plan Operation Procedure, 2079 (2022),⁷⁸

⁷⁴ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals (Revised Indicators), 2023, p. 5.

⁷⁵ Social Security Act 2018, section 3, [Unofficial English translation available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Social-Security-Act-2075-2018.pdf>]

⁷⁶ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, p. 55, paras. 285-286.

⁷⁷ https://ssf.gov.np/list/act_regulation/foreign-employment-procedure

⁷⁸ https://ssf.gov.np/list/act_regulation/informal-and-self-employed-procedure

have been approved. These procedures cover the social security of migrant workers and informal sector workers, respectively. There are a significant number of women involved in the informal sector as self-employed workers. Hence, the Procedure stands to potentially benefit women workers.

12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

12.1 The right to safe motherhood and reproductive health services is enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal.⁷⁹ The Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act, 2075 (2018) and its Regulation of 2077 (2020) also consider maternal, reproductive and newborn health services to be fundamental rights of all people. Moreover, the Public Health Service Act, 2075 (2018) and its Regulation of 2077 (2020) consider safe motherhood, newborn health services and safe abortion as basic health services.

12.2 Nepal has revised its Safe Abortion Service Programme Procedure Directives, 2073 (2016)⁸⁰; Maternal and Neonatal Safety Programme Directives, 2078 (2022);⁸¹ and Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response Guideline, 2072 (2015)⁸² to ensure service accessibility and availability in all tiers of government. Moreover, The Skilled Health Personnel and Skilled Birth Attendants Strategy 2020-2025, Robson Classification Guideline 2021 and Maternity Waiting Home Guideline 2021 have been developed to ensure quality health services.⁸³

12.3 Nepal is sensitized towards providing inclusive service delivery. Thus, Nepal has endorsed the disability-friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Service Guideline, 2022 to ensure inclusive SRHR services to people with disabilities through health facility settings and beyond. Nepal has also committed to the FP2030 Strategy-Family Planning 2030, developing implementation strategies and plans accordingly.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Constitution of Nepal, 2015, art. 38(2).

⁸⁰ <https://fwd.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Safe-Aborsation-Guideline.pdf>

⁸¹ Family Welfare Division, Department of Health, Ministry of Health and Population.

⁸² <https://fwd.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MPDSR-Guideline-English.pdf>

⁸³ Department of Health Services, Annual Health Report, FY 2022/23, available at <https://hmis.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Annual-Health-Report-2079-80.pdf>

⁸⁴ <https://www.fp2030.org/nepal/>

12.4 To ensure a more gender-inclusive health financing system, the GoN introduced the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (2020-2023), which has planned for adequate resource mobilization to improve the health condition of target groups, thereby ensuring GESI in the health sector. Likewise, the Gender-Responsive Budgeting Guidelines in the Health Sector, 2019⁸⁵ and the Leave No One Behind Budget Marker have reinforced adequate public financing to achieve gender equality in Nepal's health sector. The policies, programmes and budgets of each fiscal year have prioritized the health sector to better achieve inclusive health in line with national and global commitments.

12.5 A Nutrition and Food Security Facilitation Committee has been established in all local levels through the Multi-sector Nutrition Programme and Nutrition-Friendly Local Levels Implementation Programme for food and nutrition security of pregnant and adolescent girls.

12.6 Keeping malnourished pregnant women, lactating mothers and infants in nutrition rehabilitation centers for the purpose of improving their health and weight gain is in practice.

Three examples include:

12.7 According to the federal budget (2023/24), pregnant and lactating women in rural and remote areas who are at risk will be provided with free emergency aerial rescue under the President's Woman Upliftment Programme.⁸⁶ The GoN had started the "Air-Lifting of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother" program in FY 2018/19 to address high-risk pregnancies in remote areas through a temporary special measure on safe motherhood and women's reproductive rights. A total of 701 pregnant women and lactating mothers have been provided this service over the last 5 years.⁸⁷ The MoHP has also established a fund called "*Bipanna Nagarik Ausadhi Upachar Kosh*"⁸⁸ to provide some financial relief to people suffering from serious and costly diseases where each patient will be provided NPR 1,00,000 as health-care expenses,

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<https://www.nhssp.org.np/Resources/GESI/Gender%20Responsive%20Budget%20Guideline%202019.pdf/>

⁸⁶ Budget Speech, FY 2023/24, para. 277.

⁸⁷ <https://mowcsc.gov.np/progressfiles/हवाई-उद्धारको-विवरण-1706244843.pdf>

⁸⁸ Department of Health Services, Annual Health Report, FY 2022/23, p. 224.

including medicines required for disease management.

12.8 Nepal developed the Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health Roadmap, 2030, which aims to ensure a healthy life and well-being for all mothers and newborns.⁸⁹ The GoN has expanded Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEONC) sites to all 77 districts of Nepal. There is a similar government provision stipulating that hospitals with more than 50 beds must develop and expand their services, and a ward must be established for senior citizens. Within two years, at least one health center must be established in each ward through coordination and participation at the local levels. There are plans to give NPR 4 billion to 1,200 wards across the country to invest in the first stage of establishing these health centers.

12.9 Nepal's maternal mortality ratio dropped from 239 to 151 per 100,000 live births over a five-year span between 2016 and 2021. The current target is to reduce it to 70 by 2030.⁹⁰ The MoHP has trained more than 11,014 skilled birth attendants and expanded safe delivery services. It has also continued to strengthen community-based interventions through the Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) programme. Local governments provide emergency contraception pills free of cost in public health facilities, along with other contraception methods.

12.10 The 2021 census, for the first time, included questions on maternal mortality using the verbal autopsy method. The Directives on the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities, 2022 and the Directives on Operation of Adolescent-Friendly Health Services Directives, 2022 have come into effect.

13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?

13.1 The GoN has made the education and training of women a top priority to foster gender-responsive human development, along with policies, strategies, legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms that recognize the constitutional provision on women's equal rights to obtain special opportunities in education.

13.2 The School Sector Reform Plan, the School Sector Development Program for 2016-

⁸⁹ Department of Health Services, Annual Health Report, FY 2022/23, p. 12.

⁹⁰ Nepal Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals (Revised Indicators), 2023, p. 11.

2024, the SDGs and the Nepal National Framework have all contributed to increasing school enrollment among girls. Today, gender parity for the net enrollment rate at the basic level is 0.99 and at the secondary level is 0.93, which marks notable progress in female education.⁹¹ Priority is given to women and girls in vocational education and technical training, which has made a positive impact on women's entrepreneurship and contributed to employment opportunities for women. The drop-out rate of girls in primary education (grades 1 through 8) for the academic year 2023/24 was 2.9 percent, which was 0.3 percentage points lower than that of their male counterparts. Similar patterns can be observed at the secondary level (grades 9 through 12), where the drop-out rate for girls was 1.8 percent and that of boys was 2.1 for the same year. In 2019, the discrepancies in drop-out rates between girls was 3.3 percent and 4.1 percent for boys at the primary level and 2.5 percent for girls and 3 percent for boys at the secondary level (grades 9 through 10).⁹²

13.3 The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategic Plan (TSSP 2023/2032), the Nepal School Education Sector Plan 2022/23–2032/32 and the National Education Policy, 2076 (2019) are in implementation. A consolidated Equity Strategy for School Education Sector, 2014 is being updated, and a Vision Paper for Education, 2022 was prepared. For the purpose of handling grievances in schools, the Grievances Handling Procedure, 2017 has been brought into effect.⁹³

13.4 The Adolescent Friendly Information Corners (AFICs) Operational Guidelines were developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and implemented to safeguard the operational standards of the AFICs. A total of 205 AFICs have been established. A total of 2,151 community learning centers are in operation. A mid-day meal is provided to all students from early childhood education and development to grade 5 across the country.

13.5 The net enrollment rate in primary education reached 95.1 percent in 2022/23, up from 91.0 percent in 2016/17. The 2030 target is set at 99.5 percent. The numeracy rate for the population aged 15 and above reached 62.2 percent, and the literacy rate

⁹¹ <https://www.cehrd.gov.np/infocenter/17>

⁹² IEMIS Flash Report 2023-24 & 2019-20, CEHRD, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

⁹³ Education and Human Resource Development Center, 2023.

for the population aged 15 to 24 reached 94.2 percent. Likewise, 99.9 percent of children attended Early Childhood Education programmes in 2022/23. Gender parity has been achieved at the primary level and has almost been achieved at the secondary level (at 0.99 percent enrollment). Likewise, During FY 2021/22, out of 36,559 people enrolled in vocational and technical education through the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), 48.36 percent were women, 51.5 percent were men and 3.14 were others.⁹⁴

Three examples include:

13.6 The mandatory allocation of female teachers in each school has helped increase the overall percentage of female teachers. The GoN has also made a provision for nursing teachers in schools to ensure health surveillance and prevent sexual violence against children in schools. The participation of female teachers at the primary levels (grades 1 through 5) are 54.1 percent and 43.2 percent (grades 1 through 8) and 19 percent at the secondary level (grades 9 through 12). In Nepal's Early Child Development programme, 99 percent of the educators and facilitators are women.⁹⁵

13.7 The Compulsory and Free Education Act, 2075 (2018) has made basic-level education free and compulsory, with the aim to declare a "Literate Nepal" (*Sakshar Nepal*) in coordination and collaboration with the provincial and local governments. The GoN has also introduced a school campaign programme called *Bidyalaya lya-aun, tika-aun and sika-aun* ("All children be brought to school, taught and retained in school") since FY 2018/19.

13.8 Girls' scholarship programmes (GSP) targeting girls and children from marginalized communities have been established. These include scholarships for *Dalits*, poor and talented students, disabled children, children of martyrs and/or victims of armed conflicts, students from marginalized communities, students from endangered indigenous groups and students from Karnali Province.⁹⁶ The GoN has also implemented a programme to provide educational loans at a 5 percent interest

⁹⁴ <http://ctevt.org.np/public/uploads/kcfinder/files/CTEVT%20Annual%20Report%20-2079.pdf>

⁹⁵ Education and Human Resource Development Center, 2023

⁹⁶ MoWCSC, A Progressive Journey to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Achievement of Nepal, 2021, p. 29.

rate to students from marginalized groups.⁹⁷

14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?

14.1 More than 41 percent of women lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. In response, UN Women Nepal and the Government of Finland implemented a programme to ensure these women gained access to food and nutrition through women-managed community kitchens across the country.⁹⁸

14.2 To ensure service continuation during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal developed interim guidelines for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Policy” (RMNCAH) services that used innovative approaches for social distancing, such as telemedicine, hotline services and home-based support for reproductive health care, including safe abortion services.⁹⁹

15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?

15.1 The 15th Plan seeks to transform Nepal into a “gender equality-based nation” by achieving specific goals, objectives and strategies. For accelerating equality between women and men, the Plan envisions gender-responsive governance that can ensure better conditions for women’s decent living. Likewise, it has made a commitment to end all forms of discrimination, violence and exploitation against women strategically.¹⁰⁰ The 16th Plan will continue to focus on promoting gender equality, ensuring social justice and fostering a more inclusive society.¹⁰¹

15.2 The NPC, in pursuit of meeting the SDGs, has set results indicators on reducing the proportion of the population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the past 12 months; the number of victims of human trafficking by sex, age and

⁹⁷ Point 67, Nepal’s Seventh Periodic Report on the Implementation of CEDAW, submitted in June 2023.

⁹⁸ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/8/feature-women-managed-community-kitchens-support-vulnerable-women-in-nepal>

⁹⁹ https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Interim%20guideline_SRMNCH_English.pdf/ last accessed on April 22, 2024.

¹⁰⁰ Nepal Planning Commission, 15th Plan, FY 2019/20-2023/24, p. 201, section 7.6.

¹⁰¹ Nepal Planning Commission, 16th Plan, FY 2024/25-2028/29, chapter 8.

form of exploitation; and reducing child trafficking and ending sexual violence against women and girls. Though the total number of reported cases against women increased from 18,843 in FY 2020/21 to 21,311 in FY 2021/22, incidents of crimes such as rape decreased from 2,532 to 2,380, attempted rape decreased from 735 to 655, polygamy decreased from 852 to 809, child marriage decreased from 84 to 52, cases of witchcraft decreased from 61 to 49, and cases of untouchability decreased from 39 to 15.¹⁰² One reason behind this uptick in reporting may be that more women feel empowered to report discrimination and injustices.

Three examples include:

15.3 The MoWCSC has made institutional arrangements for a dedicated team of staff to track and follow up on implementing CEDAW's Concluding Observations for Nepal, collaborating with different ministries, government agencies, constitutional bodies and NGOs.¹⁰³ The NWC has been implementing a specific project called "National Machinery on Monitoring the Implementation of CEDAW's Concluding Observations and Recommendations."¹⁰⁴ The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is responsible for monitoring the treaty implementation and has institutionalized a monitoring and evaluation system.

15.4 The National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021) entrusts the state with the responsibility of achieving gender equality through strategic preparedness, legal and institutional arrangements and programme budgetary systems.¹⁰⁵ The President Woman Upliftment Programme was initiated to establish and support gender-responsive governance. The programme is expected to develop women's entrepreneurship skills, carry out safe delivery services for pregnant women at risk and institutionalize a gender-responsive budgeting system at all three tiers of the government.

15.5 The GoN adopted the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in

¹⁰² Women, Children, and Senior Citizens Service Directorate, 26 Years of Crime Data Against Women and Children, available at: <https://cid.nepalpolice.gov.np/cid-wings/women-children-and-senior-citizen-service-directorate/>

¹⁰³ <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/FfBW5mqNviE2xWPFiENBhV5Vq9YskFz48xdnuJU2-1625476802.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ Executive summary, para. 5, available at <https://nwc.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/For-Website-Book-1.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/IMG-1634795515.pdf>

Persons (Palermo Protocol) on 16 June 2020. The GoN is also reviewing the implementation of the National Plan of Action (NPA) against trafficking in women and girls and carried out reforms outlined in the NPA to effectively implement strategies in prevention, protection, prosecution, capacity development and coordination. Since the NPA expired in 2022 and the state has also transitioned into a federal structure, the government is preparing to formulate the new NPA accordingly, which has already been drafted and is in the process of finalization.

16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?

16.1 The Plans and Policies of the Government for 2023/24 seek to end all forms of violence, discrimination and exploitation against women and girls. Under it, Nepali society will be freed from harmful practices like child marriage, polygamy, dowry, witchcraft and *Chhaupadi*. Relief, rescue, rehabilitation, free legal aid, psychosocial counseling, skills development and income generation programmes will be conducted for the safety of female victims of violence, including those who have experienced rape and acid attacks. Long-term and short-term rehabilitation centers with multisectoral services will continue to be established at the provincial and local levels for survivors.¹⁰⁶

16.2 The GoN has reviewed and amended discriminatory laws from a gender perspective. Each sector of the GoN has prioritized achieving gender equality by mainstreaming gender, eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, and developing the capacity to implement GESI strategies. To end VAWG, Nepal has passed, amended and implemented several legal frameworks on anti-trafficking, ending child marriage, controlling domestic violence and addressing workplace sexual harassment.

16.3 Nepal's law against rape was amended to increase the statute of limitations for victims to report a case: two years for adults and three years for minors after they reach age 18.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, p. 45, para. 119.

¹⁰⁷ An Act Amending Laws Against Sexual Violence, 2022, available at <https://hr.parliament.gov.np/uploads/attachments/ky1remr5lxbneoih.pdf>

16.4 Nepal's legal system prohibits child marriage, polygamy, *Deuki* and *Badi* customs, and the GoN has been running massive campaigns to raise awareness and effectively enforce these laws. Nepal's legal system considers the practice of *Chhaupadi* in the far western region of Nepal a serious violation of women's rights. To end it, the GoN has taken legal action and put on a participatory behaviour-change campaign for the public. During the campaign, more than 8,550 *Chhau Goths* (menstrual sheds where women and girls sleep during their period) were dismantled in a period of two months.¹⁰⁸

16.5 The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration introduced the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy¹⁰⁹ to mainstream and institutionalize gender equality and women's empowerment at the provincial and local levels of governance. As a national flagship programme of the GoN, the Province and Local Governance Support Program (PLGSP)¹¹⁰ was implemented to strengthen province and local governance systems to mainstream and institutionalize gender equality and women's empowerment through the multi-level government system. For effective implementation, the strategy has also enforced 'Guidelines for Mainstreaming GESI in Sub-National Governance.'

17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?

17.1 The NWC has developed and institutionalized the Integrated Platform for GBV Prevention and Response in Nepal to strengthen the commission's capacity to handle complaints and conduct advocacy and sensitization on women's rights in a collaborative manner. The NWC also started helpline services for female GBV victims to lodge their complaints through an online system. The NWC has also been implementing its third Strategic Plan aimed at ending GBV.

17.2 The GoN has established 21 safe houses, 10 rehabilitation centers for victims of human trafficking and two long-term rehabilitation centers. Ninety-four hospital-

¹⁰⁸ MoWCSC, A Progressive Journey to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Achievement of Nepal, 2021, p. 38.

¹⁰⁹ <https://plgsp.gov.np/sites/default/files/2023-02/PLGSP%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Social%20Inclusion%20%28GESI%29%20Strategy%202021%E2%80%932023.pdf>

¹¹⁰ <https://plgsp.gov.np/about>

based OCMCs have also been established in all district-level government hospitals to support GBV victims.

17.3 The GBV Elimination Fund exists at the national level. The MoWCSC has contributed NPR 100,000 to each fund set up at the local level. Through this mechanism, the GoN provides legal aid, health services, psychosocial counseling, emergency support and income-generating support to GBV victims. Since FY 2018/19 to 2022/23, 74 people have received relief funds from the GBV Elimination Fund.

17.4 The Gender-Based Violence Prevention Fund has been established at all provincial and local levels, with the required budgetary support from the government made a top priority.¹¹¹ Likewise, a Victims Relief Fund central bank account was set up by the Supreme Court, which acts as the secretariat for all Victim Relief Funds being operated in the country. All district courts in Nepal also have Victim Relief Fund accounts. Since 1 June 2020, 126 people have received relief funds from the secretariat.

17.5 Each year, the MoWCSC and other government agencies lead the UN's 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign, along with participation from political leadership and the public. The campaign has created an enabling environment to end all forms of discriminatory practices and gender stereotyping in the country.

17.6 To more effectively investigate GBV cases, the Nepal Police has been rendering its services through Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Centers, which are located at each district police office. The Nepal Police has also conducted awareness-raising programmes at the national, provincial and local levels.

18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

18.1 The 16th Plan adopted a transformative strategy to prevent violence committed through the misuse of technology by empowering the community and promoting the use of the latest concepts and technology.¹¹² With the rapid increase in internet

¹¹¹ <https://nepal.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/np-the-path-to-effective-implementation-english.pdf>

¹¹² National Planning Commission, 16th Development Plan, FY 2024/25-2028/29, Chapter 8, p. 167.

and social media use in recent years, technology-facilitated GBV is inevitably on the rise. There has been a steady rise in the number of ‘cybercrime’ complaints lodged at the Cyber Bureau. According to Nepal Police data, there were 2,389 women and 142 girls who were allegedly victims of cybercrimes in Nepal based on complaints made in 2021/22.¹¹³ To control such crimes, the GoN has enacted the Directives for the Management of Use of Social Media, 2023.

18.2 The GoN has now mandated all 77 district courts to hear cases involving cybercrimes.¹¹⁴ Earlier, only the Kathmandu District Court had the jurisdiction to hear such cases.

18.3 The Council of Ministers approved the National Cyber Security Policy, 2023 through a decision on 8 August 2023.¹¹⁵ It outlines goals, objectives, strategies and action plans related to cyber security, with its long-term vision centered on creating a resilient cyberspace. It aims to create legal and institutional frameworks to ensure a secure cyberspace, mitigate cyber-attack risks and safeguard critical national infrastructure. The policy sets out nine specific strategies and related action plans. Nepal also adopted the Gender-Based Violence Prevention (Second Amendment) Fund Operations Regulations, 2076 (2019).

18.4 The Council of Ministers also approved the Directives for Managing the Use of Social Networks, 2023 through a decision on 9 November 2023.¹¹⁶ The directives require social media platforms, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok and YouTube, to list with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology maintain a point of contact in Nepal. This requirement intends to allay concerns related to content moderation and platform engagement. The provision also aims to alleviate challenges faced by Nepali social media users when they request that platforms address their concerns, such as having objectionable (e.g. sexually explicit or abusive) content removed. The challenge was primarily due to

¹¹³ https://www.nepalpolice.gov.np/media/filer_public/bc/d0/bcd064f5-284a-492a-b424-def0a6800de2/fy-2078-79-annual-infographics-en.pdf

¹¹⁴ <http://rajpatra.dop.gov.np/welcome/book?ref=25331>

¹¹⁵ CoM Decision, 8 August 2023 (23 Shrawan 2080), available at https://api.giwms.gov.np/storage/22/posts/1691576888_29.pdf

¹¹⁶ CoM Decision, 09 November 2023 (23 Kartik 2080), available at https://api.giwms.gov.np/storage/22/posts/1699611205_83.pdf

the absence of social media company representatives within the country. A dedicated 'Social Network Management Unit' will handle complaints and advocate for legal frameworks, promote best practices and facilitate studies in the social media domain.

18.5 The directives also outline prohibited actions for users of social media platforms. The 19-point listed in Directives includes various restrictions, such as prohibiting the creation or use of fake identities for content posting; prohibiting content that promotes hatred against any group based on gender, community, caste, religion or profession; and preventing content that endorses or promotes unlawful activities, such as child labor, human trafficking, child marriage or polygamy.

18.6 The 2023 directives emphasize the prohibition of hate speech, disrespectful behavior and defamation through any media format, including text, audio, video or images. Activities such as distorting private images without consent, sharing vulgar or explicit content and promoting sexual exploitation, prostitution, narcotics, cyberbullying and content related to terrorism are strictly prohibited.¹¹⁷

18.7 The Nepal Police has established a GBV data management system to collect and analyze nationwide data on cases of VAWG. The Nepal Police has also established 232 Women, Children, and Senior Citizens Service Centers and more than 6,000 GBV Control Networks across the country.

19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women's organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?

19.1 Civil society has played a significant role in Nepal's social transformation over the past three decades. These CSOs, along with various NGOs and INGOs, work in collaboration with government institutions and the media to establish stronger links between policy and implementation. As of September 2022, a total of 230 INGOs and 54,035 NGOs affiliated with the Social Welfare Council were working in Nepal.

19.2 Since GBV and all forms of VAWG are considered serious violations of women's rights, national campaigns at the government, non-government and civil society

¹¹⁷ Directives for Managing the Use of Social Networks 2023, section 4.

level have been extensively launched with broader participation from all corners of society. An enabling environment has been fostered to support collaboration between the GoN and its partners from different sectors on protecting girl children from discrimination and exploitation, as well as for their overall educational, psychological and professional development.

19.3 The GoN publishes the draft policies on government websites, seeking consultation and input from CSOs and the NHRC. The GoN also organizes dialogues and focus group discussions with these concerned groups while drafting policies.

19.4 The MoWCSC has been conducting various GBV reduction and awareness programmes in coordination with the provincial and local governments. Also, various NGOs and INGOs are working on the issue of *Chhaupadi* in close coordination with the MoWCSC. The ministry has also formed a 'Male leader Network' to ensure the participation of men to reduce GBV.¹¹⁸ All seven provinces and 753 local levels have dedicated sections for women, children and social development and operate a GBV Prevention Fund.

20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?

20.1 The Mass Media Policy, 2073 (2017) is currently in place. It has the objective of increasing the participation of women in the mass media and building their occupational capacity. The policy also seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation through inclusive and participatory principles based on the effective use of ICT.¹¹⁹

20.2 Press Council Nepal is responsible for setting professional standards for those working in journalism, making the practice more ethical, accountable and responsible in accordance with journalistic principles, including those outlined in Nepal's Journalist Code of Conduct, 2016.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/eMGgvuK7c3BiP8tEwz7gC0k8M0CbCQ8mgUD5vTS-1625474548.pdf>

¹¹⁹ https://api.giwms.gov.np/storage/22/posts/1663070704_52.pdf

¹²⁰ <https://www.presscouncilnepal.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Code-of-Conduct-for-Journalist-and-Media-Houses-Nepal.pdf>

20.3 Those working in mass media are playing a constructive role in advocating for women's rights and promoting the elimination of gender stereotypes and harmful practices, such as *Chhaupadi*, child marriage, dowry, witchcraft allegations, GBV and gender-based discrimination.

20.4 Training and capacity development programmes for media professionals have been organized to improve gender sensitivity in reporting and news writing.

20.5 In Nepal, 25 percent of working journalists are women. The Federation of Nepalese Journalists, the umbrella organization of Nepali journalists, has 13,077 members, including 2,408 female journalists.¹²¹

21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?

21.1 As reflected in the Plans and Policies of the Government for 2023/24, the GoN intends to carry out economic and social development programmes with a view to support income generation, capacity development and empowerment among marginalized groups. These programmes will support the poor and disadvantaged, *Dalits*, indigenous people, single and women with disabilities, *Badi*, *Kamlari*, *Kamaiya*, *Chepang*, *Bote*, victims of violence, gender and sexual minorities, HIV-infected individuals, as well as deprived women and girls from all communities.¹²²

21.2 Section 6 (2) of The Local Level Election Act, 2073 (2017) reserves two seats for women, including one for *Dalits*, on each Rural Municipality and Municipality Ward Committee. There are a maximum of nine members on each District Coordination Committee. The members of the concerned District Assembly elect a Chief, a Deputy Chief, at least three women and at least one *Dalit* or minority to the committee.

21.3 The GoN initiated the Gender Action Learning System,¹²³ which aims to

¹²¹ <https://nepalnews.com/s/nation/women-journalist-friendly-policies-emphasized#:~:text=In%20Nepal%2C%20only%206%25%20of.members%2C%20including%202%2C408%20female%20journalists>

¹²² The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, para. 118.

¹²³ <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/news/gender-action-learning-systemgals-initiated-by-ifad-in-rerp>

empower women from disadvantaged communities economically. The Ministry of Finance has also provided nearly NPR 1,000,000 in credit to cooperatives and community production systems in *Dalit* communities at a 5 percent interest rate per annum.¹²⁴

21.4 The Program and Budget of the Fiscal Year 2022/23 includes provisions to provide housing to landless *Dalit* communities within the next three years; concessional loans to farmers, youth, *Dalits* and women for agriculture businesses and other enterprises at the local level; rehabilitating the *Kamaiya*, *Haliya*, *Kamlari* and *Harwa-Charwa* communities, who have yet to receive facilities under the rehabilitation programme, and giving those services under livelihood, job creation and capacity- building programmes; providing concessional loans (including seed capital) without collateral as an incentive for workers in *Dalit* communities who live below the absolute poverty line; disbursing loans at a maximum 5 percent concessional interest rate for rural enterprises focused on agriculture, animal husbandry and vegetable farming through cooperatives established by landless *Dalits*, squatters, *Raute*, *Bankariya*, *Musahar* and *Dom* communities; identifying low-income workers and poor families and distributing food security identity cards to them.¹²⁵ Out of 31,373 cooperatives, more than 3,100 are operated or run by women. The population of women on the executive boards of such cooperatives has reached 40 percent and the share of employees is 48 percent. The membership of women in such cooperatives is currently 56 percent.

22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

22.1 According to various constitutional and legal provisions, women have mandatory representation in local government positions. As a result, during the 2022 local-level elections, 38.4 percent of 145,013 candidates were women. Subsequently, 14,466 women were elected to 35,097 possible seats, bringing the total to 41.2 percent. The Election Commission has implemented a GESI Strategy to enhance the participation of women in elections and monitor the gender-responsiveness of

¹²⁴ Nepal's Seventh Periodic Report on CEDAW, paragraph 90.

¹²⁵ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, para. 51.

the local election system on matters of women's participation.

- 22.2 The Constitution of Nepal guarantees the representation of women and *Dalit* women through the principle of proportional representation in all bodies, with special provisions to ensure their mandatory participation in public services and other sectors of employment. The Provincial Assembly Members Election Act, 2074 (2017) includes a provision that at least 50 percent of the candidates on the party's shortlist must be women. Likewise, the Federal Parliamentary Election Act, 2073 (2017) ensures 33 percent of women's representation in federal bodies.
- 22.3 As a principal strategy of the National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021), temporary special measures have been prioritized in line with the constitutional provision of affirmative actions to narrow gender disparities and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The policy calls for special incentives in public-private partnership programmes run by women. The GoN has prioritized women's participation in international programmes as well. The Nepali Women's Global Network is also active; the group promotes networking, support and self-reliance among Nepali women through education, advocacy and collaboration with similar groups around the globe.
- 22.4 Article 54 of the Constitution of Nepal sets up a committee through the Federal Parliament to monitor and evaluate whether the state is making progress on advancing the constitutional right to equality and women's rights. After the federal election in 2017, 16 Parliamentary Panels were formed to act as a watchdog, controlling and monitoring the government's work. Among 16 of the Parliament's thematic committees, ten are from the House of Representatives, four are from the National Assembly, and two are from a Joint committee. The number and distribution of committees remained the same following the 2022 general election. Four of the committees are currently chaired by women.
- 22.5 In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Nepal ranked 116th out of 146 countries, with an overall score of 0.659. In terms of economic participation and opportunities, Nepal ranks 136th (0.476) and 127th (0.918) in educational attainment. In terms of health and survival, Nepal ranked 82nd (0.969) and 54th in political participation (0.276) among 146 countries.

22.6 Under the Plans and Policies of the Government for 2023/24, gender equality and women's empowerment policies will be implemented effectively. Leadership development of women will be emphasized while ensuring their meaningful participation and representation at the policymaking level. Women-focused programmes on education, health, employment, poverty alleviation, livelihood improvement, social security and access to infrastructure will be conducted.¹²⁶

23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

23.1 The Constitution of Nepal guarantees freedom of opinion and expression as fundamental rights. The GoN has consistently adopted policies to develop ICT. The Plans and Policies of the Government for 2023/24 is no exception; the government is working to increase citizens' access to ICT. The expansion of ICT usage will pervade education, health, development activities and service delivery. More research and information technology systems will be designed and carried out to promote a knowledge-based economy and good governance.¹²⁷

23.2 Furthermore, the government plans to develop a digital good governance by mapping the information systems of public agencies. Arrangements will be made for the integrated operation of tasks related to mapping, utilization, benchmarking and technical audits of information technology used in government and public service delivery.¹²⁸

23.3 The NSO is currently implementing its National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2019. The policy addresses 'social statistics,' with opportune space for integrating gender statistics in the national statistical system. The NSO took positive steps to coordinate with data users and integrate gender into the 2021 census. The MoWCSC developed a web-based platform, the Social Information Management System (SIMS),¹²⁹ to collect data from 753 local governments on 11 thematic areas (including information on women and

¹²⁶ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, para. 117.

¹²⁷ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, para. 95.

¹²⁸ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, para. 96.

¹²⁹ <https://sims.gov.np/>

minorities, human trafficking and GBV) quarterly.

23.4 The government's Digital Nepal Framework, formulated by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology in 2019, outlines how digital initiatives can help drive socioeconomic growth for Nepal. The framework will help and support the achievement of the SDGs, including increasing women's increased access to ICT, media and decision-making capacities.

24. Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country has taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.

24.1 The GoN enacted the National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021)¹³⁰ to guide the institutionalization of gender-responsive governance through legislative and developmental systems, with the goal of achieving gender equality in all spheres. The MoWCSC, as the national steering and coordinating agency, has been delivering capacity development initiatives for the GFPs of different ministries in an effort to implement the policy. Interaction programmes have also been organized at the provincial and local levels to ensure the policy's effective implementation.

24.2 Nepal's three tiers of government – the federal, provincial and local levels- have responsibilities to address gender issues and women's rights. At the federal level, the MoWCSC is the focal ministry responsible for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Nepal's constitutional commissions, like the NHRC and NWC, promote and monitor women's rights through legal frameworks and strategic plans. The NHRC has advanced its institutional strengthening process to protect women's rights with the implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan 2021-2026. The NWC is also advancing its own efforts to protect and promote women's rights and empowerment with its Third Strategic Plan 2021/22-2025/26 and through dedicated legal frameworks and action plans for programmatic interventions and institutional strengthening.

24.3 As entrusted by the Constitution of Nepal, the provincial and local governments have institutionalized a dedicated machinery for women's rights, development and

¹³⁰ <https://nwc.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Laingik-Samanata-Niti.pdf>

gender equality in the form of separate ministries, divisions and sections. Special committees in the federal and provincial parliaments guide, oversee and review women's rights and gender equality issues. Nepal's local governments are also taking on the practice of creating committees to oversee social development issues at the local level, including gender-inclusive governance.

24.4 The MoWCSC has continued conducting capacity development programmes for the GFPs of different ministries and agencies within the government, and it has also continued its effort of organizing network meetings to mainstream gender issues into policies and programmes effectively. The ministry also leads a steering and coordinating mechanism on gender equality and women's empowerment, anti-trafficking initiatives, ending GBV and protecting women's rights, along with conducting a joint review as well as monitoring and evaluation to pave the way for reforms to realize CEDAW and BPfA better. Likewise, the provincial and local governments are moving ahead with customizing similar mechanisms at their respective levels.

25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors?

25.1 According to Article 53 of the Constitution of Nepal, the GoN has to submit an annual report on the steps taken and achievements made in implementing directive principles, policies and obligations, which is presented before the Federal Parliament. This report also includes progress on implementing policies related to women's and children's rights. The Women and Social Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives monitors and evaluates the tasks performed by the GoN, including the implementation of CEDAW. The committee also conducts regular meetings with the MoWCSC on tasks being carried out related to women's and children's rights.

25.2 Article 217 of the Constitution of Nepal sets up a Local Judicial Committee (JC) in all 753 local levels; these committees are considered an integral part of the local governance system. To execute this provision, Sections 47 and 48 of the Local Government Operations Act, 2074 (2017) outlines jurisdictions and procedures for the JCs.

25.3 The major sectorial ministries (Agriculture, Education, Forest, Health, Federal Affairs and General Administration, Urban Development and Water Supply) of the government are implementing GESI policies, strategies and guidelines to promote gender equality from women's perspectives.

25.4 The Act Relating to Children, 2075 (2018) was amended with a provision to set up the National Child Rights Council as the specialized authority for the protection of children's rights in Nepal. Likewise, the Child Search Coordination Centre was set up to provide services for search and rescue, psychosocial counseling, family reintegration and rehabilitation services, and a 24-hour Children Helpline, which has now been extended to 17 districts.

25.5 To expedite first-information reports (FIRs), investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking cases, the Anti-Human Trafficking Investigation Bureau was set up under the Nepal Police through an amendment to the existing Police Rules. In 2021/22, there were 145 cases of human trafficking lodged in the Bureau, of which 94.7 percent involved female victims. The number rose to 157 in 2022/23.

25.6 All ministries at the federal level employ GFPs, who are tasked with working on gender equality and women's empowerment issues. Provincial and local governments also have GFPs, who are responsible for working on issues related to women, children and social development. Gender audits are conducted at all three tiers of government to identify and analyze the factors that hinder efforts to mainstream gender in government policies.

26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?

26.1 As an independent and autonomous body of the government, the NHRC plays a leading role in ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights and advising the government on formulating and implementing related laws and policies. The NHRC approved its Sixth Strategic Plan, 2021-2026, with seven priority areas. In terms of gender, the plan addresses the rights of women and children, ending caste-based discrimination, protecting the rights of female migrant workers, ending human trafficking and transportation and ensuring the rights of sexual and gender

minorities.¹³¹

26.2 The NWC has been given the specific responsibility of handling GBV cases. There is a constitutional provision for the mandatory appointment of a woman as Chairperson of the NWC, and all four of its members must be women as well. Currently, the Chairperson, three of its members and the Secretary are women. The NWC has been working independently and competently with enhanced roles and responsibilities, including strengthening its structural, financial and human resource capacity. The National Women Commission Act, 2074 (2017) and its Rules 2077 (2021) have been put into force to strengthen the working system of the NWC for protecting women's rights and empowering women. The NWC has also approved its Third Strategic Plan (2021/22-2025/26).¹³²

26.3 The NWC, through its Integrated Platform for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response (IPGBVPR) project, is operating a national-level 24-hour toll-free helpline (no. 1145) to support GBV survivors. The project is supported by the World Bank. This is a highly effective government-run helpline, as the NWC provides victims with multiple services such as a shelter, psychosocial counseling, child support and legal aid, among others.¹³³ In FY 2022/23, the NWC received 902 GBV cases, including domestic violence. The NWC provided psychosocial counseling in 461 cases, legal counseling in 292 cases, mediation in 260, and cases and court representation service in 42 cases in collaboration with CSOs.¹³⁴

27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda?

27.1 Section 2 (j) of The Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, 2014 lists rape and other forms of sexual violence as gross violations of human rights. Section 13 provides the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the power to investigate the complaints of alleged victims of

¹³¹ https://www.nhrcnepal.org/uploads/law/Strategic_Plan_021-26_English_for_Website_compressed_Eng.pdf

¹³² <https://nwc.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Womens-5-year-Strategy-final-web-version-new.pdf>

¹³³ <https://nwchelpline.gov.np/#>

¹³⁴ Source: National Women Commission, Nepal, May 2024.

armed conflict, which began in 1996 and ended in 2006.

27.2 A total of 2,613 police personnel in Nepal were trained to investigate and provide effective service delivery for GBV cases in FY 2021/22. Additionally, 201 more were trained in 2022/23. Moreover, the Nepal Army Conducts regular training on gender issues and UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820; approximately 3,500 Nepali Army Personnel have been trained so far.¹³⁵

27.3 The GoN has approved and is implementing its Second National Action Plan (NAP) for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security (2022/23-2024/25). The second NAP focuses on localizing strategies at the provincial and local levels, in line with the federalization of Nepal's administrative structure.

27.4 Nepal's Mediation Act, 2055 (1999) and Local Government Operations Act, 2074 (2017) set guidelines for resolving small disputes at the local level, which helps promote more peaceful and inclusive societies.

28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peace-building, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

28.1 So far, the Office of the Attorney General has established 'Victim-Friendly Rooms' in 68 of its District Offices (out of 77). The Nepal Police have been continuously making efforts to increase victims' access to policing services through the Women, Children, and Senior Citizen Directorate, as well as 232 Women and Children Service Centers at the national, provincial and local levels.¹³⁶ The Child-Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) Programme is in implementation to ensure the participation of children from all groups in governance, policymaking and decision-making. A model "GESI Strategy and Directive" has been sent to all local levels as a reference to adopt a similar instrument. Province-level trainings have been provided to all GESI focal persons

¹³⁵ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 47.

¹³⁶ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 23.

working in various ministries in provinces.

28.2 The GoN is currently implementing the Second NAP on UNSCR 1325 and 1820. Reflecting on the successes and challenges of the First NAP, the government is prioritizing protection for women survivors of conflict-related violence in the Second NAP, as well as women's meaningful participation in peace-building processes.¹³⁷

28.3 In 2019, a total of 5,615 women served in the Nepali Army, and now 8,840 women are serving, according to the latest figures from May 2024. Likewise, 186 female army personnel had participated in UN peacekeeping operations as of 2019, a figure that has since increased to 661 (as of May 2024).¹³⁸

29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

29.1 Formed in 2015 as non-judicial bodies, Nepal's Truth and Reconciliation Commission¹³⁹ and Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons¹⁴⁰ have been working to identify the truth relating to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law during Nepal's armed conflict.

29.2 Article 20, Sub-Article (10) of the Constitution of Nepal ensures citizens the right to free legal aid in accordance with law. The Legal Aid Act, 2054 (1997) is the main law that provides free legal aid to indigent persons, and it has been amended to comply with constitutional provisions and for effective enforcement. In addition to this, the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2064 (2007) and the Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act, 2066 (2009) ensure free legal aid to victims. To further enhance the free legal aid system, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs have implemented a comprehensive free legal aid

¹³⁷ Nepal National Adaptation Plan (NAP), 2021-2015, available at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NAP_Nepal.pdf

¹³⁸ Source: Ministry of Defense, Data Analysis and Disaster Management Section, 24 May 2024.

¹³⁹ <http://trc.gov.np/en/>

¹⁴⁰ <http://ciedp.gov.np/en/home/>

policy to reform the delivery system of free legal aid.¹⁴¹ The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) initiated a programme called “Government Advocate in the Community” to enhance access to justice among excluded populations in local communities.¹⁴²

29.3 The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs implemented a project called “Enhancing Access to Justice through Institutional Reform” (A2J) to improve Nepal’s existing legal aid system, with a focus on enhancing access to justice at the local level. So far, the project has given legal aid services to 50,000 people and training to 120 Judicial Committees of the local governments in 12 districts of three provinces.¹⁴³

29.4 The District Court Rules, 2075 (2018) provides a legal basis for courts or judges to grant continuances in hearing GBV cases. The Supreme Court has also been implementing several programmes to increase the capacity of relevant court officials to receive continuances.

29.5 Several outreach mechanisms exist under the judiciary to increase access to justice, especially among women and other marginalized communities. An integrated legal aid policy, pro-bono guidelines and provisions for court-paid lawyers and various commissions (including the NWC, Dalit Commission and others run by NGOs) are also jointly working on strengthening access to justice.¹⁴⁴

29.6 The Constitution of Nepal recognizes women’s rights, with special provisioning for social, cultural and economic rights, which are enforceable through laws enacted by the Parliament. With regard to civil and political rights, Nepal has also made considerable efforts in reforming legal and institutional frameworks. This has ensured equal lineage rights to every woman without gender-based discrimination and the right to obtain special opportunities in education, health, employment and

¹⁴¹ Unified Legal Aid Policy, 2020, available at <https://www.moljpa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/एकीकृत-कानूनी-सहायता-नीति-२०७६.pdf>

¹⁴² https://ag.gov.np/storage/postFile/Annual%20Report%2007980_1706021784.pdf, p. 26.

¹⁴³ https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=319042#:~:text=General%20The%20%27Enhancing%20Access%20to.national%20efforts%20of%20reform%20and

¹⁴⁴ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 24.

social security on the basis of affirmative action and positive discrimination.

29.7 In many cases involving women's human rights violations, the judiciary has set landmark decisions based on protecting and promoting gender equality based on human rights principles.¹⁴⁵

30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?

30.1 Several policies, programmes and legal arrangements address equality and empowerment issues for girl children. In 2021, the GoN formulated and put into force the National Ten-Year Strategy Against Discriminatory Sex Selection 2018/28, with the goals of eradicating sex selection in society and ending all discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes that lead to it.¹⁴⁶

30.2 Gender issues and the rights of women and girls are being incorporated into the national school curriculum. Affirmative action has led to more female teachers being hired, and it has also created a positive educational environment, especially for girl children. As previously mentioned, 43.2 percent of teachers at the primary level (grades 1 through 8) are women, and 19 percent at the secondary level (grades 9 through 12). Women also make up 99 percent of the educators and facilitators in Nepal's Early Childhood Development Programme.¹⁴⁷ The construction of separate toilets for girls at schools, other gender-friendly facilities, more scholarships under various schemes (including cash and non-cash incentives to female students and their parents), and the distribution of sanitary pads and day meals are creating a better school environment for girls from marginalized communities or rural and remote areas attend school and continue to higher levels of education.¹⁴⁸

30.3 The GoN issued the Sanitary Pad (Distribution and Management) Procedure, 2019 to

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, Nepal Judicial Academy, available at <https://www.njanepal.org.np/public/reports/21040752654-landmark-decision-english.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ National Strategy Against Discriminatory Sex Selection, 2021-2031, available at <https://moHP.gov.np/uploads/Resources/National%20Strategy%20on%20Gender%20Biased%20Sex%20selection.pdf>

¹⁴⁷ Center for Education and Human Resource Development, 2080 (2023).

¹⁴⁸ MoWCSC, A Progressive Journey to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Achievement of Nepal, 2021, p. 28, available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/downloadfiles/0Cz7iCOxqikIdQNpREjhO2pbqXiIaQlz4BhM5scc-1625557539.pdf>

provide free sanitary pads for adolescent girls studying in public schools. The government is encouraging a philosophy of “dignified menstruation” through its menstruation campaign “Menstrual Talk, Dignity First,” in which individuals and families are encouraged to challenge menstruation stigma, taboos and discrimination.¹⁴⁹

30.4 Nepal’s National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage, which was adopted in 2016 to end all forms of child marriage by the year 2030, has had positive impacts in improving access to education among girl children.¹⁵⁰ The provincial governments have also formulated policies and strategies to end all forms of child marriages.

30.5 Aligned with the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child, Nepal’s Act Relating to Children, 2018 provides legal protection, institution building and programmatic interventions in pursuit of safeguarding, promoting and fulfilling children’s rights.¹⁵¹

31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?

31.1 The BPfA pinpoints three strategic objectives for government action regarding gender and the environment. These include (a) involving women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, (b) integrating their concerns and perspectives into policies and programmes and (c) establishing ways to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.¹⁵²

31.2 The GoN has incorporated these objectives in its laws, policies and programmes concerning environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation. Nepal is party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)¹⁵³ and the

¹⁴⁹ MoWCSC, A Progressive Journey to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Achievement of Nepal, 2021, p. 38 et seq.

¹⁵⁰ National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage, 2016, available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/VRTXhT6sttna3TCjjxW8UzzTsl75bK5TZhrGJjZc-1625469299.pdf>

¹⁵¹ The Act Relating to Children, 2018, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/बालबालिका-सम्बन्धी-ऐन-२०७५.pdf>

¹⁵² Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, pp. 158-164, available at https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA_E_Final_WEB.pdf

¹⁵³ <https://unfccc.int/process/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties-convention-and-observer-states>

Paris Climate Change Agreement 2015.¹⁵⁴ In 2019, the government enacted the Environment Protection Act (EPA) and the Forest Act, replacing existing environment laws. Under the EPA, all three tiers of government (federal, provincial and local) must provide special priority to women and other marginalized groups while formulating and implementing adaptation plans to tackle climate change.¹⁵⁵ The act further establishes an “Environmental Protection and Climate Change Management National Council’ under the Chairpersonship of the Prime Minister. At least three women must be represented on the council: one professor in forestry and/or environmental science and two experts working in forestry and/or environmental science.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, the Forest Act, 2076 (2019) requires the local government-sponsored Community Forest User Groups to spend a set amount from their annual income on poverty alleviation, women’s empowerment and entrepreneurship development activities.¹⁵⁷

31.3 A 2021 report published by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) entitled “Vulnerability and Risk Assessment and Identifying Adaptation Options; Sectoral Report: GESI, Livelihood, and Socio-Economic” underscored that the impacts of climate change in Nepal are not gender-neutral and therefore, adaptation responses must be gender-responsive and inclusive.¹⁵⁸ Such an approach would be in alignment with Nepal’s commitments to the SDGs, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and CEDAW.

31.4 Integration of gender-responsive approaches can be seen in a number of current plans and policies, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2021-2050; National Agroforestry Policy, 2076 (2019); Ten-Year Strategy and Action Plan on Climate Change-Related Gender and Social Inclusion (2020-2030); and the

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/04/parisagreementsingatures/>

¹⁵⁵ The Environment Protection Act 2019, Section 24, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/वातावरण-संरक्षण-ऐन-२०७६.pdf>

¹⁵⁶ The Environment Protection Act 2019, Section 32.

¹⁵⁷ The Forest Act 2019, Section 22, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/वन-ऐन-२०७६.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ MoFE, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment and Identifying Adaptation Options; Sectoral Report: GESI, Livelihood, and Socio-Economic, available at <https://www.mofe.gov.np/uploads/documents/vulnerability-repnew1630571413pdf-2940-766-1658827788.pdf>

National Climate Change Policy, 2076 (2019).¹⁵⁹ Interestingly, the GoN developed a manual for addressing gender issues in Environmental Impact Assessments as early as 2005.

31.5 The Climate Change Policy, 2076 (2019) aims to strengthen climate mitigation and adaptation measures by integrating relevant actions into all cross-cutting sectors and building a climate-resilient society capable of responding to all emerging environmental challenges. The policy is supported by other laws, plans and policies to ensure the role of women and other groups as active participants and beneficiaries in the risk management process.¹⁶⁰

32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?

32.1 Nepal sits high on the scale of climate vulnerability, and natural disasters are endemic in the country. Disaster preparedness is always a national priority. The primary legislation governing this matter is the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 (2017) and the Disaster Risk Reduction Rules, 2076 (2019). The act's approach to disaster is comprehensive, and it recognizes both risk reduction and management as integral parts of the task. The act envisions a clear multi-tier institutional structure of disaster risk management (at the national, provincial, district, local/municipal and community levels) and prioritizes a gender equality perspective in disaster risk management. It establishes a Disaster Management Fund at the federal, provincial and local levels as well.¹⁶¹

32.2 To enhance the nation's resiliency against natural disasters, the GoN adopted the National Disaster Response Framework, 2013, which allocates roles and responsibilities between and among government agencies and establishes national coordination mechanisms.¹⁶² The GoN recognizes the urgency in addressing

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.mofe.gov.np/resources/policy-and-strategies-9446>

¹⁶⁰ National Climate Change Policy, 2019, available at <https://www.mofe.gov.np/uploads/documents/climatechangepolicyenglishpdf-9975-841-1660734867.pdf>

¹⁶¹ Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, Chapter 9, available at <https://lawcommission.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/विपद-जोखिम-न्यूनीकरण-तथा-व्यवस्थापन-ऐन-२०७४-१.pdf>

¹⁶² National Disaster Response Framework (NDRF), 2013, available at <http://drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/113.pdf>

climate change concerns and has initiated policy changes and adaptation programmes accordingly.

32.3 Nepal has been implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) due to the highly disaster-prone nature of the country. Nepal formulated and put into force the National Policy on DRR in 2018, under the concept of inclusive disaster risk management (i.e. access, representation and meaningful participation of women and marginalized communities).¹⁶³

32.4 Since Nepal is disproportionately affected by climate change and nearly 77 percent of all Nepali women are engaged in agriculture and forestry-related occupations, it is clear that the impact of climate change is and will continue to fall heavily on women.¹⁶⁴ As such, the GoN is committed to adopting gender-inclusive management and better mitigation strategies to address climate change risks, particularly those associated with women and marginalized communities. The Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Action Plan, 2024 aims to foster inclusive resilience by integrating GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion) into disaster management.

32.5 Nepal's Plans and Policies of the Government for 2023/24 announced the establishment of an Emergency Medical Treatment Center, which will provide emergency and specialized health-care services to the injured and sick during major natural disasters and pandemics.¹⁶⁵ Further, the GoN seeks to establish and operate a National Integrated Emergency Service System, which will mobilize ambulances, fire engines, security personnel and health workers to immediately rescue and treat people severely injured by fires, accidents and criminal activities.¹⁶⁶

32.6 Currently, the government is building and managing a disaster-related information platform known as "BIPAD" (Building Information Platform Against Disaster-

¹⁶³ National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2018, p. 14, section 7.21, available at <http://drrportal.gov.np/uploads/document/1476.pdf>

¹⁶⁴ Nepal, CEDAW Seventh Periodic Report, 2023, para. 200.

¹⁶⁵ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, p. 63, para. 173.

¹⁶⁶ The Plans and Policies of the Government of Nepal, 2023/24, p. 42, para. 110.

Related Data or Information).¹⁶⁷ BIPAD is being developed by pooling all credible digital and spatial data on disaster management from different government bodies, NGOs, academic institutions and research organizations and publishing it on a single platform. The targeted users of BIPAD will be those working at Emergency Operation Centers at the federal, provincial and local levels as well as the Nepal Police, who often act as first responders during disasters.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ <https://bipadportal.gov.np>

¹⁶⁸ <https://bipadportal.gov.np/profile/>.

Section Four: National Institutions and Processes

33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

33.1 Nepal adopted the Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021) and its Action Plan 2080 (2023) for the Implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy, 2021. The objectives of the Action Plan include: developing policies and mechanisms for the social and economic development of women and girl children; ensuring equality by ending gender-based discrimination, violence and exploitation; fostering positive social norms that promote gender equality in society; implementing gender-responsive governance; supporting women's economic empowerment; clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government; introducing gender-accountable governance at the local level; developing gender-sensitive behaviors in the public, cooperative and non-government spheres; and fulfilling commitments outlined in the Constitution of Nepal and international laws.

33.2 There are various strategies in the Action Plan, one of which includes amending existing laws and making new ones in a gender-friendly manner, creating policies for positive discrimination and continuing affirmative action.¹⁶⁹ This particular strategy is also in line with Target 5.C of SDG 5 to “adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.”¹⁷⁰ There are various actions and expected outcomes relating to this strategy. One specific action includes amending discriminatory laws to better protect gender equality, with the expected outcome being the formulation of gender-friendly laws. This strategy also requires improving mechanisms for implementing laws to ensure more effective service delivery. The strategy focuses on a campaign to boost awareness among the public, emphasizing proportional representation for

¹⁶⁹ Action Plan for the Implementation of National Gender Equality Policy, 2021, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/rules/>

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Development Programme, Sustainable Development Goals available at <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

women in all mechanisms of the state and the creation of equal opportunities. Other actions include enhancing women's capacity to meaningfully participate in state mechanisms, promoting a gender-friendly curriculum in primary and secondary education and ensuring the participation of men in supporting gender equality.¹⁷¹

33.3 The Action Plan also includes a strategy to eliminate GBV by changing social norms through preventive, remedial and regulatory measures.¹⁷² This strategy aligns with the Target 5.2 of SDG 5 to “eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.” Specific actions required to implement this strategy include initiating discussion programmes to reduce GBV and sexual abuse; generating more research and data on GBV; establishing short-term service centers and long-term rehabilitation centers for women, children and sexual minorities affected by violence; ensuring psychosocial counseling, legal aid and healthcare along with reintegration in families and societies; establishing a helpline to get information in cases of VAWG; controlling the increasing trend of cybercrimes; and ensuring access to reproductive health to uphold the idea of dignified menstruation. With another action centered on eliminating harmful social practices like child marriage, polygamy, dowry and others by implementing existing laws, the Action Plan also supports Target 5.3, which seeks to “eliminate all harmful practices.” Furthermore, the strategy prioritizes reproductive health in line with Target 5.6.

33.4 Another strategy in the Action Plan is to develop a gender-accountable governance system in all tiers of government through effective laws, improved mechanisms and capacity development. The actions for this strategy include developing the capacities of all three tiers of government to implement the Action Plan; prioritizing women's empowerment in public policies; institutionalizing gender-friendly budgeting; conducting capacity building for GFPs; creating gender-friendly workplaces; maintaining a database of

¹⁷¹ Action Plan for the Implementation of National Gender Equality Policy, 2021, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens.

¹⁷² Ibid.

disaggregated data related to gender and granting public access to it; and ensuring proportional representation of women in public office.

33.5 The Action Plan also includes labour-related strategies, such as changing gender roles within the existing labour market, increasing the number of women in the labor market and assessing women's contributions to the national economy.¹⁷³ Specific actions for this include conducting an analysis on the economic value of women's contribution to household chores and care work; promoting 'co-parenting' responsibilities in families; reducing the domestic workload on women and involving them in formal sectors; motivating women to learn ICT skills; enhancing women's access to technical education; and ensuring dignified labor.¹⁷⁴ These actions line up with Target 5.4 on recognizing and valuing "unpaid care and domestic work" and Target 5.B on enhancing the use of "enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology"¹⁷⁵.

33.6 The Action Plan also emphasizes the economic empowerment of women through a unified programme for self-employment, employment and entrepreneurship. These actions focus on making women self-reliant by promoting their meaningful participation in the decision-making processes and equal access to and control over resources. Specific actions within this domain include enhancing women's land and property ownership; creating a programme on skills development and entrepreneurship; managing concessions and discounts on registration, loans, and insurance for women-run businesses; creating a "Women Entrepreneurs Facilitation Center; setting up lactation centers and childcare centers in workplaces; and providing space for women to establish their businesses in the industrial estate, special economic zone and industrial village, among other activities.¹⁷⁶ These actions align with Target 5.A on giving women "equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control

¹⁷³ Action Plan for the Implementation of National Gender Equality Policy, 2021, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Development Programme, Sustainable Development Goals available at <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

¹⁷⁶ Action Plan for the Implementation of National Gender Equality Policy, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens.

over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.”

34. Please describe your country’s system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.

34.1 As the focal ministry responsible for ensuring the rights of women, children and senior citizens, the MoWCSC has undertaken efforts to analyze its budget, in order to ensure it is allocating the necessary resources towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

34.2 The government has adopted a gender-responsive budgeting system since 2007/08. The share of gender-responsive budgets in the total budget surged from 11.3 percent in FY 2007/08 to 39.5 percent in FY 2021/22. Furthermore, in terms of the gender responsiveness of the budget for FY 2022/23, 40 percent of expenditures were considered to directly benefit women, another 35 percent were considered to indirectly benefit women, and 25 percent were considered neutral toward women.¹⁷⁷ As per NRB data, women’s participation in banking and the financial sector is higher than in other sectors.¹⁷⁸

34.3 Out of NPR 1860 billion budget for FY 2024/25, the Ministry of Finance allocated NPR 1.6 billion (0.1 percent) to the MoWCSC for FY 2024/25.¹⁷⁹ In the Budget Speech of 2024/25, the GoN committed to addressing violence, exploitation and discrimination in all areas by ensuring equality and creating a respectful environment for women and children.¹⁸⁰ The GoN further declared that the upcoming fiscal year will be celebrated as the year of “investment in women.”¹⁸¹

34.4 Furthermore, the budget speech of FY 2024/25 allocated the budget for the Prime

¹⁷⁷ Nepal Administrative Staff College and UN Women Nepal, Gender Responsive Public Finance Management in Nepal, A diagnostic and forward-looking strategy, available at <https://nepal.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/GENDER-RESPONSIVE%20PFM%20report.pdf>

¹⁷⁸ Women in Data: Nepal available at <https://nepaloutlook.com/women-nepal-gender-data/> last accessed on May 25, 2024.

¹⁷⁹ Budget for FY 2024/25, p. annex 4.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. Note 206, p. 45.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Minister Daughter Self-Reliant Programme to develop women's entrepreneurship and self-employment in coordination and collaboration with provincial and local governments.¹⁸² The GoN has also expressed plans to implement emergency child rescue and rehabilitation activities at the federal and local levels. Implementation of awareness and empowerment programmes to promote the dignity of gender and sexual minority communities is another significant plan of the GoN, and it will be carried out in FY 2024/25. Likewise, the GoN will provide vocational and skills trainings to freed ex-*Kamlari* and support their economic empowerment.¹⁸³

35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

35.1 Nepal ratified CEDAW in 1991 and has been implementing policies and programmes accordingly. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action has played a significant role in guiding the GoN, civil society and the general public in achieving gender equality, advancing women's rights and promoting women's empowerment.

35.2 According to the Government of Nepal (Allocation of Business) Regulation, 2018, the MoWCSC is responsible for formulating, implementing and monitoring, policies, plans and programmes related to women's empowerment and gender equality. The MoWCSC undertakes efforts to implement and monitor the BPfA and SDGs and has thematic sections: the Human Trafficking Control Section, the Women Development and Gender Mainstreaming Section, the Gender-Based Violence Prevention Section and the Statistical Analysis and Publication Section, all of which are under the ambit of the Women Empowerment Division.¹⁸⁴ The GoN assigned Section Officers of all 77 of the District Coordination Committees as focal persons of the MoWCSC to facilitate and coordinate activities related to women, children and senior citizens. The GoN is actively implementing the National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021). The MoWCSC has continued to conduct capacity development programmes for the GFPs of different ministries

¹⁸² Budget for FY 2024/25, p. 45.

¹⁸³ Budget for FY 2024/25, p. 46

¹⁸⁴ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/uploads/organogram-darbandi.pdf>

and agencies within the government. It has also continued its effort of organizing network meetings to effectively mainstream gender issues into policies and programmes, facilitate implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy and conduct a joint review as well as monitoring and evaluation to pave the way for reforms to better realize CEDAW and BPfA.¹⁸⁵

35.3 The NWC has been operating autonomously and effectively, taking on expanded roles and duties while also bolstering its organizational structure, financial resources and human capital.¹⁸⁶ The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has an International Law and Treaties Division, which focuses on legal reviews to align such policies also with the SDGs and BPfA.¹⁸⁷ The Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) has a Human Rights and International Treaty and Agreement Division as well. This division works to implement recommendations from international treaty bodies and charter-based bodies.¹⁸⁸

35.4 The Ministry of Finance (MoF) established the Gender-Responsive Budget Committee, responsible for implementing the Gender-Responsive Budget Formulation Guidelines. Additionally, the MoF has released a Model Guideline for Gender-Responsive Budgeting tailored for provincial and local levels.¹⁸⁹ The NRB introduced the Women Entrepreneurship Credit and Educated Youth Self-Employment Credit to encourage women to run businesses using bank loans and facilitate their access to credit. The MoWCSC developed the Entrepreneurship Facilitation Centre Operation Procedures 2021, which are in line with the SDGs.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, available at <https://mowcsc.gov.np/en/pages/31/49633572/>

¹⁸⁶ National Women Commission, available at <https://nwc.gov.np/en/about/our-introduction/>

¹⁸⁷ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, available at <https://www.moljpa.gov.np/en/organizational-structure-of-the-ministry/>

¹⁸⁸ Government of Nepal, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, available at <https://www.opmcm.gov.np/en/%e0%a4%aa%e0%a5%8d%e0%a4%b0%e0%a4%ae%e0%a4%95%e0%a4%be-%e0%a4%aa%e0%a4%b0%e0%a4%bf%e0%a4%9a%e0%a4%af/> last accessed on May 25, 2024.

¹⁸⁹ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Finance, available at <https://old.mof.gov.np/en/gender-responsive-budget-76.html>

¹⁹⁰ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Seventh Periodic Report submitted to CEDAW Committee by Nepal, 5 July 2023, available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FNPL%2F7&Lang=en

35.5 The NSO is currently implementing its National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), 2019. The policy addresses ‘social statistics,’ with opportune space for integrating gender statistics in the national statistical system. The NSO took positive steps to coordinate with data users and integrate gender into the 2021 census.¹⁹¹ The MoWCSC developed a web-based platform, the Social Information Management System (SIMS), to collect data from 753 local governments on 11 thematic areas (including information on women and minorities, human trafficking and GBV) quarterly.¹⁹²

35.6 OCMCs have been established in 94 hospitals in 77 districts. As mentioned, these centers offer GBV victims with referral linkages, treatment and support services to improve protection and access to services. The GBV Prevention Fund has been established at all provincial and local levels.¹⁹³ The Department of Labour and eleven Labour Offices are responsible for ensuring the implementation of labour law provisions. Labour Inspectors and Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors are deployed for regular inspection and monitoring, which includes ensuring the safety and security of female workers.¹⁹⁴ Special committees in the Federal Parliament and Provincial Assemblies oversee and review women’s rights and gender equality issues.¹⁹⁵ The Anti-Human Trafficking Investigation Bureau of the Nepal Police has been institutionalized to tackle cases of human trafficking and transportation.¹⁹⁶

36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

36.1 To explain the current situation in Nepal, this report includes the input of all relevant stakeholders. The MoWCSC took the lead in preparing the report. An

¹⁹¹ Government of Nepal, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Statistics Office, available at <https://data.nsonenepal.gov.np/about>

¹⁹² Government of Nepal, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Social Information Management System, available at <https://sims.gov.np/>

¹⁹³ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Seventh Periodic Report submitted to CEDAW Committee by Nepal, 5 July 2023 (n 23)

¹⁹⁴ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, available at <https://moless.gov.np/en/page/work-area-of-ministry>

¹⁹⁵ House of Representatives, Women and Social Affairs Committee, available at <https://hr.parliament.gov.np/en/committees/Women-And-Social-Affairs-Committee>

¹⁹⁶ Nepal Police, Anti-Human Trafficking Investigation Bureau, available at <https://ahtb.nepalpolice.gov.np/about-us/introduction/>

inter-ministerial committee, chaired by the ministry's Joint Secretary, initiated the process with representatives from various ministries and experts to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive draft. Information provided by all ministries of Nepal, including the GFPs of various ministries; provincial and local government representatives; the NHRC; thematic commissions; experts; UN agencies; private sector representatives; and CSOs was important in preparing this report. The information was collected through consultations with the focal persons of the women, children and social development sections of the local governments and provincial ministries. During these consultations, representatives of government agencies, OCMCs and CSOs as well as human rights defenders, gender experts, lawyers, academics, private sector representatives and women's rights activists were present. Their opinions played a significant role in preparing this report.

36.2 The GFPs in all ministries collected relevant information regarding the protection of women's rights, gender-responsive budgeting and actions taken to promote women's empowerment, providing the information to the MoWCSC for this report. An inter-ministerial level meeting was conducted to understand the position of the ministries regarding the data to be included. Furthermore, a national consultation was conducted to accommodate concerns and perspectives from CSOs.

37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.

37.1 The MoWCSC has made institutional arrangements for a dedicated team of staff to track and follow up on implementing CEDAW's Concluding Observations for Nepal, collaborating with different ministries, government agencies, constitutional bodies and NGOs. The NWC has been implementing a specific project titled 'National Machinery on Monitoring the Implementation of CEDAW: Concluding

Observations and Recommendations'.¹⁹⁷ The National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021) and the ongoing 15th Plan and upcoming 16th plan (FY 2024/25-2028/29) of Nepal act as the baseline for implementing recommendations from CEDAW, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other UN human rights mechanisms.¹⁹⁸ The Fifth National Human Rights Action Plan of Nepal (2018/19-2023/24) incorporates the plans to give effect to the provisions of the Constitution of Nepal, laws made to implement the Constitution, periodic plans, judgments and directives of the Supreme Court, recommendations of the NHRC, recommendations received from the UPR and recommendations received from committees under conventions to which Nepal is party, including CEDAW.

37.2 The GoN has mandated gender-responsive budgeting at all levels of governments to ensure fair distribution from a gender perspective and to increase funding commitments to programmes targeting women.¹⁹⁹ Over a span of three years, approximately 40 percent of the total budget has been allocated towards enhancing gender responsiveness in programmes. The NPC has established three indicators for evaluating unpaid care work and household chores concerning women's labor participation relative to men, the average time women spend on unpaid care work and the distribution of time spent on unpaid care and domestic tasks by gender, age, and location.²⁰⁰ The Labour Force Survey conducted by the NSO served as a foundation for evaluating women's unpaid care work, while data from the 2021 census provided essential insights as well.²⁰¹

37.3 A review of Nepal's SDG Roadmap shows a reduction in sexual violence and child trafficking cases. The rates of sexual violence against married women aged 15 to 19 reduced from 24.5 percent in 2015 to 19.3 percent in 2019, with a target set for

¹⁹⁷ National Women Commission, Key Resources Related to Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, available at

https://nwc.gov.np/Publication_file/5f8e774dc3713_English1%5B1%5D.pdf

¹⁹⁸ National Planning Commission, The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20 – 2023/24), available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_plan_English_Version.pdf

¹⁹⁹ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Finance, available at <https://old.mof.gov.np/en/gender-responsive-budget-76.html>

²⁰⁰ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Seventh periodic report submitted to CEDAW Committee by Nepal, 5 July 2023, available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FNPL%2F7&Lang=en

²⁰¹ National Statistics Office, available at

https://npc.gov.np/images/category/231120105017SDG%20%20Indicators_16%20Aug%202023%20update.pdf

4.1 percent by 2030. Similarly, a review of Nepal's SDG Roadmap also shows an increase in the number of households having property or tangible assets registered in women's names. There was a 26 percent increase in 2019 compared to a 19.7 percent increase in 2015. The national target to be met by 2030 is 40 percent.²⁰²

37.4 Nepal's federalization process has granted all three tiers of government – the federal, provincial and local levels – with the responsibility of addressing gender issues and women's rights. At the federal level, the MoWCSC has been the apex government agency. Nepal's constitutional commissions, like the NHRC and NWC, deliberate strategies to advance women's rights through legal frameworks and strategic plans. The NHRC has enhanced its institutional capacity to safeguard women's rights through the implementation of its Sixth Strategic Plan 2021-2026.²⁰³ The NWC is intensifying its efforts to protect and empower women through its Third Strategic Plan, 2021/22-2025/26, along with specific legal frameworks and action plans for programme interventions and institutional strengthening.²⁰⁴

37.5 Special committees in the Federal Parliament and Provincial Assemblies are responsible for reviewing women's rights and gender equality issues.²⁰⁵ Local governments also have committees that oversee social development issues, including gender-inclusive governance, at the local level. At the central level, the MoWCSC conducts capacity development programmes for the GFPs of all ministries and agencies within the government to mainstream issues of gender into policies and programmes.²⁰⁶ The MoWCSC leads a steering and coordinating mechanism on gender equality and women's empowerment, anti-trafficking initiatives and the promotion of women's rights, as stipulated in the recommendations of CEDAW and UPR.

²⁰² National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Revised Indicators, June 2023, available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/231120105017SDG%20%20Indicators_16%20Aug%202023%20update_d.pdf

²⁰³ National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, Sixth Strategic Plan 2021-2026, available at https://www.nhrcnepal.org/uploads/law/Strategic_Plan_021-26_English_for_Website_compressed_Eng.pdf

²⁰⁴ National Women Commission, Five-Year Strategic Plan (FY 2021/22–2025/26), available at <http://nwc.gov.np/en/resources/plan-policy/>

²⁰⁵ House of Representatives, Women and Social Affairs Committee, available at <https://hr.parliament.gov.np/en/committees/Women-And-Social-Affairs-Committee>

²⁰⁶ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Provincial and Local Government Support Programme, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (2021 -2023), November 2021, available at <https://plgsp.gov.np/sites/default/files/2023-02/PLGSP%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Social%20Inclusion%20%28GESI%29%20Strategy%202021%E2%80%932023.pdf>

Section Five: Data and Statistics

38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

38.1 Nepal has made considerable progress over the past five years in terms of gender statistics. Legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor gender equality under the SDG indicator that measures VAWG.

38.2 As per the 2021 census, the literacy rate of the population age five years and older is 76.2 percent. The male literacy rate was 83.6 percent, while the female literacy rate stood at 69.4 percent. The overall literacy rate was 65.9 percent in 2011, while the male literacy rate was 75.1 percent compared to the female literacy rate of 57.4 percent.²⁰⁷ Gender parity for the net enrollment rate at the primary level (grades 1 through 8) is 0.99 and 0.93 at the secondary level, respectively, signaling notable progress in female education.²⁰⁸ Sixty-four districts have been declared as all-literate districts. Recent data also reveal the growing number of women working in the civil service. According to data from the Department of National Personnel Records (Civil) published in July 2021, out of the total number of civil servants, which was 88,657, 26.6 percent were women, but 10 years ago, only 13.8 percent were female.²⁰⁹ In 2023/24, the presence of female civil servants reached 28.6 percent.²¹⁰

38.3 In the local-level elections held in May 2022, a total of 55,698 female nominees participated in various posts. Out of the total nominees, 14,465 women were elected. Two Rural Municipalities and one Municipality have women elected in both the positions of Chairperson/Mayor and Vice Chairperson/Deputy Mayor. There was one female Mayor in each of 6 Metropolitan Cities and 11 Sub-Metropolitan Cities whereas women Deputy Mayors were 4 and 6 respectively. In 460 Rural Municipalities, 12 women were elected as Chairperson (2.6 percent) and 335 as Vice Chairperson (72.8 percent); 11 were Mayor (4 percent) and 224

²⁰⁷ Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Statistics Office, National Population and Housing Census 2021, National Report, available at <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/downloads/national>

²⁰⁸ <https://www.cehrd.gov.np/infocenter/17>

²⁰⁹ Department of National Personnel Records (Civil), available at <https://nijamati.pis.gov.np/pages/downloads>

²¹⁰ National Registry (Civil), Annual Report, 2024, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration.

as Deputy Mayor (81.2 percent) in 276 Municipalities. Sixty-six women were elected as Ward Chairs.²¹¹

38.4 The share of women's representation in local levels by province is given below.²¹²

Position	Men	Women	Total	Women %
Mayor & President	728	25	753	3.3
Dy Mayor & Vice President	184	569	753	75.6
Ward President	6677	66	6743	1.0
Ward Member (open)	13044	442	13486	3.3
Total Ward members	20633	1102	21735	5.1
Total representatives	20632	14465	35097	41.2

38.5 Women's representation increased from 40.96 percent in 2017 to 41.23 percent in 2022 in the local-level elections. Similarly, 33.83 percent of women were elected to the Federal Parliament and 36.36 percent of women were elected to the Provincial Assemblies during the General Election of November 2022.²¹³

38.6 Both the number and the share of female judges have increased over the past five years, as shown in the table below. (Source to be inserted as footnote)

FY	Total	Male	Female	Female %
2018/19	407	389	18	4.4
2019/20	398	372	26	6.5
2020/21	421	384	37	8.8
2021/22	404	371	33	8.2
2022/23	374	338	36	9.6

²¹¹ Election Commission, available at <https://result.election.gov.np/>

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

38.7 The 2021 census shows that out of the total 12,976 female deaths from fertility-age groups (15 to 49 years) in the last 12 months preceding the day of enumeration, 653 deaths (5 percent) were related to pregnancy. The maternal mortality ratio is 151 deaths per 100,000 live births and has reduced significantly over the past five years.

38.8 The 2021 census shows that 23.4 percent of Nepali citizens are living abroad. Out of the total absentees living abroad, 82.2 percent are male and 17.8 percent are female. The percentage of women living abroad increased from 12.4 percent in 2011 to 17.8 percent in 2021. Similarly, 31.6 percent of the total households are headed by women, which is an increase of 5.8 percentage points since 2011. As per the 2021 census, 23.8 percent of the total households own land, a housing unit or both (land and housing unit) in the name of a female household member. The percentage of households with female ownership of both land and housing units was 11.8 percent in 2011.

38.9 The 2021 census shows that the median age at first marriage is 21 years for males and 18 years for females. A total of 34.4 percent (male: 32.6 percent and female: 35.9 percent) of the ever-married population aged 10 years and older had their first marriage between the ages of 18 and 20. Similarly, 22.3 percent (male: 12.3 percent and female: 30.4 percent) of them got married for the first time between ages 15 and 17. Further, 7 percent (male: 3.0 percent and female: 10.2 percent) of them got married for the first time between age 10 and 14.²¹⁴

38.10 Status of registration of doctors for the practice in the Nepal Medical Council (NMC) by the end of December 2023²¹⁵ is as shown below.

NMC Doctors	Male	Female	Total	Female %
MBBS	19954	10073	30027	33.5
BDS	1727	3156	4883	64.6
Generalist Total	21681	13229	34910	37.9

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Nepal Medical Council, available at <https://nmc.org.np/>

MD/MS	7063	2760	9823	28.1
MDS	404	361	765	47.2
Specialist Total	7467	3121	10588	29.5
Grand Total	29148	16350	45498	35.9

38.11 Data on women in security forces:

Security Force	December 2017	December 2022	Increase (%)
Nepal Army	4,094	6,772	65.4
Nepal Police	5,467	8,393	53.5

38.12 The representation of women in the security forces is increasing due to a provision stipulating that 20 percent out of the 45 percent of seats set aside for marginalized groups should go toward women.

39. Over the next five years, what are your country’s priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?

39.1 The GoN enacted the National Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021) to guide the institutionalization of gender-responsive governance, with the goal of achieving gender equality in all spheres.²¹⁶ This policy has been envisioned as the state’s policy in the 15th and 16th Plans of Nepal.

39.2 Nepal will prioritize reviewing existing laws and enacting new legislations in a gender-responsive manner, making policies on positive discrimination and continuing affirmative action, improving mechanisms for the adequate implementation of laws, emphasizing proportional representation in all mechanisms of the state, enhancing women’s capacities to meaningfully participate in public life and ensuring the participation of men in campaigns for gender equality.²¹⁷ The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has approved the

²¹⁶ Action Plan for the Implementation of National Gender Equality Policy, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens.

²¹⁷ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Seventh Periodic Report submitted to CEDAW Committee by Nepal, 5 July 2023 available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CEDAW%2FC%2FNPL%2F7&Lang=e%20n.

Ten-Year School Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2031/32, which prioritizes female education and gender equality in school curricula as key intervention areas.²¹⁸

39.3 Eliminating GBV by changing social norms through preventive, remedial and regulatory measures is vital. To make “zero-violence zones” more widespread, massively, various steps will need to be taken, including the establishment of adequate rehabilitation centers and service centers for violence affected women, children, and sexual and gender minorities. These centers should ensure their protection, safety and rehabilitation through psychosocial counseling, legal aid and health care, along with reintegrating them into their families and society. It will also be crucial to enhance the capacity and functioning of the OCMCs and expand them to all provinces.

39.4 Development of a gender-accountable governance system in all tiers of government through effective laws, improved mechanisms, and capacity development through the development of the capabilities of all 3 tiers of government for the implementation of the Action Plan on Gender Equality, maintenance of the database of disaggregated data related to gender, ensuring accessibility to the database, ensuring the proportional participation of women in the post of public office, increasing the number of women in the labor market, and accessing the contribution of women in the economy.²¹⁹

39.5 Through the Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021), the GoN will carry out actions assessing the impact of unpaid care work on the economy; promoting a culture of co-parenting; reducing the domestic workload on women and involving them in productive work; motivating women to learn ICT skills; enhancing women's access to ICTO education; and ensuring dignified labor.²²⁰

39.6 Through the Gender Equality Policy, 2077 (2021), the GoN will promote the

²¹⁸ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, School Sector Education Plan for the Nepal School Education Sector (2022/23 – 2031/32), available at https://moest.gov.np/upload_file/files/post/1668690227_1997409338_Nepal%20School%20Education%20Sector%20Plan%20final%202022%20.pdf

²¹⁹ National Planning Commission, The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20 – 2023/24)

²²⁰ United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Seventh Periodic Report submitted to CEDAW Committee by Nepal, 5 July 2023, available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FNPL%2F7&Lang=en

economic empowerment of women through a unified programme on self-employment, employment and entrepreneurship for women; enhance women's ownership of property; establish a 'Women Entrepreneur's Facilitation Center;' and set up lactation and childcare centers in workplaces. The Entrepreneurship Development Fund has been set up in 46 districts to give production loans to promising women entrepreneurs without any collateral. If the business is woman-owned, it receives a 35 percent discount for registration. A 20 percent discount is also given to register property-related businesses owned by women.²²¹

39.7 The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration introduced the GESI Strategy²²² to mainstream and institutionalize gender equality and women's empowerment at the provincial and local levels. As a national flagship programme of the GoN, the PLGSP was implemented to strengthen province and local governance systems to mainstream and institutionalize gender equality and women's empowerment through the multi-level government system. For effective implementation, the strategy has also enforced 'Guidelines for Mainstreaming GESI in Sub-National Governance.' The major sectorial ministries (Agriculture, Education, Forestry, Health, Federal Affairs and General Administration, Urban Development and Water Supply) are implementing GESI policies, strategies as well.

39.8 The GoN has made the system of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) a prioritized intervention. To roll out the GRB system at multiple levels of government (apart from the GRB Guidelines for the federal level, the GoN), the Ministry of Finance has issued the Model Gender-Responsive Budget for Province and Local Level Directives, 2077 (2020), for Nepal's province and local levels under its federal structure of governance. Also, all the provinces and local levels are in the process of customizing the model guidelines in their respective budgeting systems. Similarly, the Ministry of Finance has a Gender Responsive Budget Committee to look into gender issues in development programs,

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Government of Nepal, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Provincial and Local Government Support Programme, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (2021 -2023), November 2021, available at <https://plgsp.gov.np/sites/default/files/2023-02/PLGSP%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Social%20Inclusion%20%28GESI%29%20Strategy%202021%E2%80%932023.pdf>

budgeting, and their implementation.²²³ Moreover, all the ministries and their departments will have GFPs at every decision-making level.

39.9 The GoN will adopt ‘gender-inclusive management’ and better mitigation strategies to address climate change risks, particularly those associated with women and excluded communities. So far, the GoN has formulated and put into force the Climate Change Policy, 2076 (2019), which is supported by the Gender-Responsive Local Adaptation Plan of Action and National Adaptation Plan, along with the Gender and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, to ensure the role of women as active participants and beneficiaries in the risk management process.²²⁴

39.10 The GoN will implement the “Roadmap to Goal 5 of Sustainable Development Goals 2030.” The monitoring framework of the roadmap has been aligned, and the national SDG indicators have been updated with national, provincial and local-level plans that capture the spirit of LNOB. As the lead agency, the NPC has set up a national SDG platform to track the government’s SDG implementation.²²⁵

39.11 Women will be encouraged to participate in the development of reliable, affordable and accessible local infrastructure, as stated in the 15th and 16th Plans. The strategy includes making local governments self-reliant by ensuring inclusive participation in the formulation and implementation of local-level policies.²²⁶

40. What gender-specific indicators has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

23.1 The GoN has developed gender-specific indicators, which have been used by sectoral ministries of the government to monitor progress. According to the mandate of MoWCSC, it will ensure that these goals are implemented by the

²²³ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Finance, available at <https://old.mof.gov.np/en/gender-responsive-budget-76.html>

²²⁴ Ministry of Health and Population, National Climate Change Policy, available at <https://climate.mohp.gov.np/31-acts/153-climate-change-policy>

²²⁵ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Revised Indicators, June 2023, available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/231120105017SDG%20%20Indicators_16%20Aug%202023%20update.d.pdf

²²⁶ National Planning Commission, The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20 – 2023/24), available at https://npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_plan_English_Version.pdf

respective ministries and carefully monitored by the MoWCSC. The NPC has developed a distinct platform to monitor the SDGs, along with an extensive study module to monitor their implementation and gender-specific indicators. The specific gender-based indicators are listed below.²²⁷ This includes both global and national indicators

Target 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.²²⁸

5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, with annual monitoring by the MoWCSC.
1. Wage equality for similar work (ratio of women’s wages compared to those of men)
2. Gender Inequality Index
3. Gender Empowerment Measurement

Target 5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.²²⁹

5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age.
1. Lifetime Physical and/or Sexual violence (%)
2. Children aged 1-14 years who experienced psychological aggression or physical punishment during the last one month (%)
5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age

²²⁷ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030, available at [https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category/SDG_Status_and_Roadmap_\(2016-2030\).pdf](https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category/SDG_Status_and_Roadmap_(2016-2030).pdf)

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030

and place of occurrence
Women aged 15-49 years who experience physical / sexual violence (%)
Number of women and girls who experience human trafficking

Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.²³⁰

5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.
1. Women aged 15-19 years who are married or in union (%)
5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age

Target 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.²³¹

5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
1. Ratio of female and male participation in the labour force
2. Average hours women spend doing household chores or care work

Target 5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.²³²

5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) Federal Parliament, (b) Provincial

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030

²³² Ibid.

Parliament and (b) local government bodies.
1. (a) Federal Parliament (%) (b) Provincial Parliament (%) (c) Local government bodies (%)
5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions
1. Women in decision-making roles in the private sector (%)
2. Women in decision-making roles in the cooperative sector (%)
3. Women in decision-making positions in the public sector (% of total employees)
4. Ratio of women and men in professional and technical roles (%)

Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Beijing Platform for Action, and the outcome documents of their review conferences.²³³

5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.
1. Awareness about reproductive rights among girls and women (%): proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.
2. Poor, discriminated and marginalized groups receiving specific support and service provisions related to sexual health care (%)
5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access of women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education.

²³³ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030

Target 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.²³⁴

5. a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.
5.a1 Number of enterprises owned by women
5.a2 Women’s property ownership (land and houses)
5.a.2 Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women’s equal rights to land ownership and/or control

Target 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.²³⁵

5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
5. b1 Use of internet by women aged 15-24 years (%)

Target 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.²³⁶

5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment

41. Which data dis-aggregations are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

41.1 The National Population and Housing Census provides data decennially on the

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ National Planning Commission, Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030

²³⁶ Ibid.

population of male, female and sexual and gender minorities; the number of households; average household size; ownership of housing units; ownership of housing and land; the number of households operating small-scale enterprises other than agriculture; a household's headship; marital status; disability; literacy rates; education level completed; fertility status; maternal mortality; the number of children ever born alive, children still alive or children who have died; the sex of the children and the age group of the mother; economically active populations; and other demographics.²³⁷

41.2 The National Economic Census (NEC) provides data by Nepal Standard Industrial Classification (NSIC) on the percentage distribution of persons engaged, the ratio of female managers, the number of establishments, and the sex of the owner and manager, along with other details. Thus, the NEC assesses the participation of women in the formal economic sector.²³⁸

41.3 The National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS)²³⁹ provides a range of disaggregated data, including housing characteristics, household population, educational attainment of the female household population and male household population and school attendance ratios. Characteristics of respondents (disaggregated by sex) are also included such as educational attainment, literacy, exposure to mass media, internet usage, employment status, exposure to specific health programmes through radio and television, occupation and type of employment.

41.4 The NDHS provides detailed data on domestic violence including experiences of physical violence by any perpetrator, persons committing physical violence, experiences of violence during pregnancy, experiences of sexual violence by any perpetrator, persons committing sexual violence, experiences of sexual violence by any non-intimate partner, age at first experience of sexual violence, experiences of different forms of violence, forms of controlling behaviors and

²³⁷ Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Statistics Office, National Population and Housing Census 2021, National Report, available at <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/downloads/national>

²³⁸ National Planning Commission and Central Bureau of Statistics available at cbs.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/National-Economic-Census-2018-National-Profile-3-pdf

²³⁹ Ministry of Health and Population, National Demographic and Health Survey available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR379/FR379.pdf>

intimate partner violence, controlling behaviors of husband/intimate partner by background characteristics, intimate partner violence by background characteristics, forms of emotional violence in the household, help-seeking behavior to stop violence, experiences of physical violence during pregnancy by number of living children, forms of intimate partner violence, intimate partner violence by province and intimate partner violence by husband's/intimate partner's alcohol consumption, along with other details. The NDHS also provides data on disability by type and age for both men and women.²⁴⁰

41.5 The NDHS also has a section on women's empowerment, with data disaggregated by sex. It covers employment and cash earnings of currently married women and men; house and land ownership, as well as documentation of ownership; control over women's cash earnings and the relative magnitude of women's cash earnings; control over men's cash earnings; ownership and use of mobile phones and bank accounts; participation in decision-making by background characteristics; attitudes toward physically abusing wives; attitudes and ability to negotiate sexual relations with husbands; control over women's earnings; ownership of assets; and women's participation in decision-making.²⁴¹

41.6 Regarding marriage and sexual activity, the NDHS provides data on current marital status, marriage registration, age at first marriage and other details. Disaggregated data on fertility, teenage pregnancy, menopause, median age at first birth, induced abortion rates, desire to limit childbearing, mean ideal number of children, fertility planning status, actual fertility rate vs. desired fertility rate, birth intervals and other details are also included in the NDHS.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Ministry of Health and Population, National Demographic and Health Survey, available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR379/FR379.pdf>

²⁴¹ Ministry of Health and Population, National Demographic and Health Survey (n231)

²⁴² Ibid.

Section Six: Conclusion and Next Steps

The review process of the implementation of the BPfA has provided with the insights to the government on the status of gender equality in the country. In assessing various government initiatives, the review process evaluated achievements and discovered areas of improvement that are critical for the BPfA. The GoN has been trying to mainstream and harmonize all policies, programmes and activities to effectively implement the BPfA together with achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG 5. In this context, the GoN will prioritize the following actions to achieve gender equality in Nepal:

1. Policy and Legal Reform:

- Reforming policies and laws as required.
- Formulating new policy and legislative measures at subnational level.

2. Institutional Strengthening and Governance:

- Enhancing institutions at the federal, provincial and local levels to ensure effective implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment programmes.
- Ensuring effective delivery of services and good governance.

3. Elimination of Harmful Practices:

- Eradicating harmful traditional practices and VAWG and transforming in social structures, values and norms through legal reforms.
- Ending social stigma and discrimination based on sociocultural practices.

4. Gender Justice through Judicial Capacity Building:

- Enhancing the capacity of the judicial sector to advance gender justice.
- Strengthening the capacity of judicial committees of local levels to promote gender equality and gender justice

5. Women's Empowerment:

- Addressing the feminization of poverty by increasing economic opportunities and promoting women's entrepreneurship and livelihoods, making market links and conducting value chain analyses.
- Promoting women's leadership through the effective implementation of constitutional and legal provisions in terms of women's participation in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.
- Devising and implementing targeted capacity building training programmes for women, focusing on knowledge enhancement, technical skills and digital innovation.

6. Social Development of Women:

- Increasing access to education and skills development trainings for girls, especially in higher education for women by increasing scholarships.
- Increasing health-care services, facilities and birthing centers, especially in remote districts, while improving the quality of services and strengthening the capacity of human resources.

7. Others:

- Expanding financial support programmes.
- Building a climate-resilient society capable of responding to all emerging environmental challenges.
- Promoting collaboration with CSOs, the private sectors, development partners and UN agencies to achieve the SDGs and implement international human rights obligations.

During the last five years, Nepal has achieved significant progress in protecting and promoting Women's rights through the implementation of the BPFa. The GoN is committed to strengthening the MoWCSC with adequate human and financial resources to effectively implement the BPFa as well as other relevant international obligations. All other relevant ministries and agencies at national and subnational level will be equipped with adequate resources and necessary measures to ensure effective implementation of the BPFa.