

## National Report Beijing +25

### Introduction:

Development is an integrated process aimed at human beings advancement without distinction between different segments of society. Woman is an important element in society that contributes to various social, economic, cultural and sovereign areas and reflects the society's level of development and progress.

The royal patronage of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the main supporter of the development of women's potential and capabilities, together with the national legislations and laws on women rights, enable Omani women to play an important and pivotal role in sustainable development. This role could not have been achieved without government's interest in women's issues and its support for their progress and advancement to contribute to the development of society.

The Sultanate has achieved advanced levels of development in general. The achievements of the Blessed Renaissance, its successive fruits and its many gains in education, health, roads, electricity, water, telecommunications and other services have spread to every inch in all the governorates of the Sultanate without exception and aiming at achieving a prosperous society, where justice and balance have been distinctive features of the triumphant process of development over the past years. Omani women have the right to participate in sustainable development. In 2018, Sultanate of Oman was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among the Arab countries and 48<sup>th</sup> worldwide according to the Human Development Report 2018.

The national report of the universal review of the Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action is prepared while the Sultanate has made great strides in gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The report includes a universal review of what has been achieved for women in the Sultanate since 2014.

### Section I: Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Obstacles.

#### 1. What are the most important achievements, challenges and obstacles in the progress made towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past five years?

##### 1- Achievements

##### A- Legislative developments:

- The Sultanate not only acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2005, but also followed up on the subsequent procedures introduced to the Convention relating to Article (20), paragraph 1. The Sultanate ratified the withdrawal of the reservation to paragraph (4) of Article (14) which provides that States parties shall be accorded the same rights with respect to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their place of residence in connection with the meetings of the International Committee, by Royal Decree No. 3/2019.
- In order to preserve human life, Article (16) of the Law of Living Aquatic Wealth, issued by Royal Decree No. 20/2019, affirms the protection of human life and the inadmissibility of the use of artisanal or coastal fishing boats or vessels in the transport of goods or persons or for the purpose of recreation or tourism or for any other commercial purpose except under conditions determined by the competent authorities.
- In order to provide guidance, preparation and employment to job seekers and establish their database on the workforce in the Sultanate, the National Employment Centre was established by Royal Decree No. 22/2019. Among the most important functions of the Centre is the registration of job seekers, including their personal data, qualifications, practical experience and other relevant data; providing data on the national labour force in the labour market through electronic connectivity with the entire administrative apparatus

of the State, private sector establishment, etc.; following-up policies and programmes for the employment of jobseekers in the public and private sectors and report thereon to the Council of Ministers; providing the necessary information on the employment movement in the Sultanate to enable the planning authorities to formulate employment and recruitment policies and to guide educational and training policies in compliance with the outputs of various scientific and technical disciplines and professional skill levels with the actual needs in the labour market.

- Taking into account human rights obligations, gender equality, women's empowerment and intergenerational equity, Oman ratified Paris Agreement by Royal Decree No. 28/2019 which aims to strengthen the global response to the threat posed by climate change in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication efforts by several means. This Agreement is implemented in a manner that reflects equity and the principle of common responsibilities.
- The Media Training Centre was established by Royal Decree No. 3/2018, in order to develop the efficiency of the performance of journalists, media personnel in various units of the administrative apparatus of the State, and workers in all the print, audio-visual and electronic media. The Centre works to improve the practical level of students in higher education media institutions, strengthening cooperation and sharing training experiences in the media field with counterparties in other countries.
- In order to provide an investment environment and atmosphere in the Sultanate and to facilitate the establishment of investment projects, Royal Decree No. 11/2017 was issued defining the terms of reference of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and approving its organizational structure. Article (1) set forth its terms of reference, the most important of which is the work on developing relations in the field of trade and industry between the Sultanate and other States and relevant international organizations. Women have the same opportunities to establish business and investment projects.
- The Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Act promulgated by Royal Decree No. 30/2016 repealed the previous law (79/2010) and defines the crimes of money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It defines the obligations and expectations of financial institutions, non-financial businesses and professions, associations and non-profit organizations with regard to their application to the controls and provisions of this law. The law marks out the powers of the competent national committee for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism as well as the scope of international cooperation and penalties. It guarantees protection for individuals and civil organizations, including Omani women's associations, from money laundering and terrorist financing offenses.
- In order to bridge the technical gap between supply and demand in the labour market and build national competencies of both sexes capable of competing globally, the National Fund for Training was set up by Royal Decree No. 48/2016. A private institution of public benefit, the Fund works on evaluating the current state of training efforts in the Sultanate in order to bridge the gap between the requirements of the private sector and national projects of competencies and disciplines and the supply in the labour market, provide support and consultation to the concerned authorities from the government and the private sector in terms of training and employment policies and global standards of quality and accreditation, and work to build partnerships with local and global leading institutions in the field of training.
- In order to raise the efficiency of the performance of employees of both sexes in units of the administrative apparatus of the State at various levels of employment in the jobs they occupy, the Institute of Public Administration was launched by Royal Decree No. 28/2016. The Institute is specialized in providing administrative consultancy services to the administrative units of the State in order to achieve its objectives in administrative development, providing training, research and consulting services to the private sector and

qualifying employees in administrative and professional fields related to its various activities, in addition to cooperation and expertise change in the field of public administration with counterparts in other countries.

- In order to enhance cooperation among Arab countries in combating crimes of information technology, the Sultanate has ratified by Royal Decree No. 5/2015 the Arab Convention for Combating Information Technology Crimes, which aims at protecting the security of Arab countries and their interests and the safety of their societies and individuals.
- The Omani Citizenship Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 38/2014 affirms equality between men and women in terms of acquiring, retaining or changing nationality, without imposing the nationality of the husband or becoming stateless. Omani nationality may also be granted to a minor child born from an Omani mother and a foreign father if he meets the conditions stipulated in article (18) of the Citizenship Law. This law abolishes the Omani Citizenship Law issued by Royal Decree No. 3/83.
- The Regulations of Dar Al-Wifaq Centre of the Ministry of Social Development, issued by Ministerial Decree No. 104/2014, regulate the aspects of social and psychological care provided for those living in the Centre, and the primary treatment services to ensure that the victims are free of serious and infectious diseases through a number of necessary medical and laboratory tests in cooperation with health institutions, permit victims to contact their families and relatives by telephone, and provide appropriate means of transport while they are outside the Centre. Specialists in the Centre coordinate and cooperate with the competent authorities in preparation for the completion of investigations. It provides equipped rooms to engage in sports activities, cooking and handicrafts.

**B- National policies and plans, and procedures:**

- In order to keep abreast of the developments in the international development instruments, including the adoption of the sustainable development agenda, the Sultanate has committed itself to achieving these goals for sustainable development, and taking a set of measures among which: considering the 2030 Agenda as one of the five pillars of the Ninth Five-Year Plan of the Sultanate (2016-2020), integrating the objectives of sustainable development with the sectoral objectives of the Ninth Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2020), taking into account the objectives of sustainable development in the formulation of the goals and strategies for Oman Vision 2040.
- The Sultanate has formed a national committee for high-level sustainable development objectives, headed by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Planning Council, which includes members from all ministries and government agencies, Oman Council, representatives from the private sector and civil society organizations. The committee has many tasks, the most important of which is to follow up the integration of the objectives of sustainable development with the objectives of the five-year development plans of the Sultanate, Oman Vision 2040, and to oversee the establishment of an integrated system based on measurement indicators to monitor progress indicators at the level of goals and targets and to ensure that they are achieved according to national targets regularly.
- As part of the preparation of the Sultanate for its first voluntary review, the national technical team was formed. It includes a number of experts and senior officials from ministries and government bodies, representatives from the private sector and civil society, as well as a team from the National Centre for Statistics and Information to monitor and measure indicators of sustainable development goals.
- The Ministry of Social Development prepared the Social Action Strategy (2016-2025) and the National Strategy for Childhood (2016-2025) to promote sustainable development and to lay the foundations for new social policies based on family development and work to realize the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities and to give priority to

activating the role of youth, women, civil society and the private sector in development efforts.

- The social action strategy in its components included a number of strategic orientations on the realization of the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities. The approach based on human rights and the rights approach was adopted to ensure the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities, incorporated a gender perspective, where gender indicators and gender responsive budgets were the basis for the implementation plans of these strategies for the years 2016-2025.
- The National Strategy for Childhood (2016-2025) adopted a vision (to provide the optimal environment for all children in Oman to enjoy their rights to survival, development, protection and participation). Its mission includes providing policies, legislation, mechanisms, programmes and services to create a safe and supportive environment for development and child's development in the Sultanate. The strategy includes the rights of girl child and adult.
- The objectives of the Ninth Five-Year Development Plan of the Ministry of Social Development (2016-2020) include an item relating to the safe protection of women who are subjected to abuse prevention of marriage, or violence and the like, and the implementation of awareness programs on the practice of safe motherhood and responsible parenthood, the positive development of children and the commitment to the Child Law.
- The Sultanate worked on preparing Oman Vision 2040 and included three chapters (human and society, economy and development, and governance and institutional performance). The chapter of human and society focuses on promoting social welfare and developing national capacities and competencies. In this context, this chapter includes the development of women's role and empowerment, through the provision of an appropriate environment in the economic and social fields and participation in decision-making positions.
- Issuing the Regulation for Takaful Social Account, in accordance with Ministerial Decision No. (95/2018) issued by the Ministry of Social Development, serves as a fund to pay for alimony, support the services of disabled and aged persons, and bolster non-profit organizations (social, cultural or charitable). Beneficiaries of this Account include women, their children, the father and mother who are entitled to maintenance, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and non-profit organizations.
- Establishing child protection committees, in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 168/2015 issued by the Ministry of Social Development, is concerned with receiving reports from individuals and governmental and private bodies on any violations of the rights of the child. It works to monitor cases of children exposed to violence and to plan treatment and psychological and social rehabilitation for beneficiaries and their families. These committees are at the level of all the governorates of the Sultanate and its members are composed of representatives from a number of government agencies and civil society. The members of these committees are judicially disciplined in implementing the provisions of the Child Law.
- Setting up a protection hotline in 2017 by toll free number (1100). The telephone line receives and records the notifications of violence and abuse, transmits communications to the relevant parties and follows up the timely arrival of the service. The hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and it respects the principle of confidentiality and privacy.

### **C- Education**

- The Sultanate has adopted a policy of spreading education in all villages and cities. Education is the key factor that affects all dimensions of sustainable development, leading to greater welfare and prosperity, health improvement, gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and promotion of equality in society. The Constitution of the State

guarantees the right to education for all. The Child Law issued by the Royal Decree (22/2014) makes education compulsory up to the basic education.

- The Ministry of Education issued Regulations on Students Affairs Department in government schools by Ministerial Decision No. 234/2017 and the Regulations on Private Schools by Ministerial Decision No. 287/2017 to ensure that everyone has access to school education. All available means such as media and social media shall be used to enrol students in the first grade according to laws and regulations. The total admissions rate for females in primary level (1-7) was 102.0% in 2017, and in the lower secondary education level (7 - 9) 103.1% for general education, and the index of parity between males and females in education (1-7) was about 0.99%.
- The Philosophy of Education document in the Sultanate, which is a reference for the construction of educational policies and a guidance towards the continuous development of education in all its stages and pathways. Document 10 contains major sources and bases, including international treaties and conventions. It contains also 16 principles that will result in general educational objectives, including education on human rights and duties, education for sustainable development as well as education for peace, understanding and others. Adopting and working on this philosophy will play a role in disseminating and promoting human rights principles and values in general, and women in particular.
- The Regulations on Private Schools issued under Ministerial Decision No.) include a package of rights for students to comply with safety, security and health requirements.

**D- Women in public life and decision-making positions:**

- The political leadership and the government encourage the participation of women in jobs and employment in the public, private and civil sectors at all levels, enable women to participate in social, economic and political life, and build their leadership and decision-making capacities. Omani women have joined various fields of work, including military and security.
- Omani women are enjoying equal right as men to participate in civil society and the establishment of civil organizations, especially the Omani women's associations, which have reached (65) associations distributed in the Sultanate's governorates and provinces, this is in addition to their active participation in charitable and professional associations.
- The percentage of females in senior administrative positions in the civil service increased from 10% in 2012 to 21% in 2017 from the total number of senior, middle and direct managerial positions. Data indicate that Omani women participate in all professional groups in the private sector. The females accounted for 25% of directors of public and business administration in 2017.

**2- Challenges and how to address them:**

- Lack of women legal awareness of their rights guaranteed in national laws and legislation. In this regard, the Sultanate has introduced many measures to strengthen the women legal awareness through various awareness-raising programmes, as well as intensive programmes of cooperation between the Ministry of Social Development and the Higher Judicial Institute to train judges, prosecutors and police on the principles of human rights conventions (women, children, persons with disabilities).
- Although there is considerable interest at the government level to support and stimulate women's active participation in community development, their participation in political life still needs more support. In this context, the Sultanate is working to strengthen women's participation in leadership positions and decision-making by raising community awareness of the importance of their participation in elected councils and their vital role in the process of sustainable development, and taking supportive measures such as training and setting up election campaign sites.

- The low participation and withdrawal of women from the labour market, especially in the private sector, due to the lack of supportive facilities to reconcile duties towards work and family members through the establishment of nurseries and daycare centres in workplaces.

**2. Which of the following were among the top five priorities to accelerate the progress of women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and / or programmes? (Please check the related options).**

- **Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice**
  - The commitment to achieve equality, justice and non-discrimination among citizens in the application of the provisions of the laws in force in the Sultanate derives from the statutes of the state, mainly Article (9) of which affirms that the governance in the Sultanate shall be based upon justice, Shura and equality. Article (10) affirms the guarantee of justice, tranquillity and equality for citizens, and Article (12) affirms that justice, equality and equal opportunities between Omanis are pillars of society guaranteed by the state. The State enacts laws for the protection of the employee and the employer and regulates the relationship between them. Every citizen has the right to engage in the work of his or her choice within the limits of the Law. It is not permissible to impose any compulsory work on anyone except by virtue of a law, for rendering a public service and in return for a fair remuneration. Public employment is a national service entrusted to those who carry it out. The state employees, while carrying out their work, shall pursue the public interest and service of the society. Citizens are considered equal in taking up public employment in accordance with the provisions stipulated by the Law.
  - Article (17) sets forth the equality of all citizens, which states that "all citizens are equal before the Law" and share the same public rights and duties. There shall be no discrimination amongst them on the ground of gender, origin, colour, language, religion, sect, domicile or social status".
  - Regarding work, under the Civil Service Law and the Labour Law, women and men have the same right to work, and what follows. The percentage of women working in the public sector is (41.5%) and in the private sector (24%). Women also made progress in senior, middle and direct managerial positions, with a (21%) increase in 2018.
  - In the field of educational policy, the Sultanate ensures the application of the principles of equality and non-discrimination both in public schools and private schools through the enjoyment of the right to education by all. There is no difference between citizens and residents, where they are admitted and enrolled in public schools. Curricula promote equality and non-discrimination through the establishment of the principles of coexistence with others of different nationalities. The Sultanate has also adopted the necessary policies to accelerate the process of gender equality in education. It has succeeded in increasing the enrolment of girls to (50%) in schools and (55%) in university.
  - **Quality of education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls.**
    - The Ministry of Education works to support women and girls in general, and those who live in remote and rural areas in particular. They are keen to follow up the regular attendance and stability of female students at school through continuous meetings with parents to encourage them to support their daughters to continue their education even if they are facing challenge in passing exams or due to early marriage in rare cases. There were no cases of female dropout in grades 1 to 9 during the past years, but in grades 10 to 12 the dropout rate is (0.16%) compared to (0.39%) for males in the same grades in the year (2016/2017). Female illiteracy rates are on a continuous decline, with literacy rate among females aged 15 and over (89.9%) in 2015 and (97.5%) among females aged 15-44 in 2017.

Table showing illiteracy rates among females

Year	Illiteracy rates among females	Number of females enrolled in literacy classes	Number of females enrolled in adult education centres
2014	11.31	9832	4714
2015	10.06	7949	5145
2016	9.08	6794	3788
2017	8.41	5064	2567
2018	7.69	5036	2260

Source: The Ministry of Education

- Employment and vocational counselling services are available for all male and female students in the Sultanate's governorates. Female students are counselled about the paths open to them when they are in tenth through twelfth grade (such as the higher education path, the entrepreneurial path and the vocational and technical training and qualification path) depending on the students' resources and aptitudes and the available opportunities. Workshops and introductory programmes are also held for female students in the schools each academic year. The workshops and programmes host female business entrepreneurs who have established enterprises after completing their studies in vocational training centres.
- The National Centre for Vocational Guidance in cooperation with the private sector implements many programmes, events and activities equally between the two genders without distinction between males and females in order to achieve the principle of equal opportunities, including the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme, which aims to develop participants' abilities and help them to acquire many skills in various fields. The Global Pioneer Programme focuses on improving students' different skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, communication, referencing, problem solving, event management, entrepreneurship, community service and career guidance.
  - o **√ Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security.**
- The indicators of poverty do not apply to the Sultanate, where the proportion of the population living below \$1.9 per day is 0%. The Sultanate has an integrated system of social protection to ensure the improvement of living conditions, especially for the most needy (widows, orphans, divorcees, senior citizens, unmarried females, abandoned females, prisoners' families, the disabled, and persons with disabilities).
- The Sultanate has given priority to the issue of food security and the provision of food. The government has put in place many plans and programmes that are concerned with this aspect to provide food to citizens and residents in the Sultanate.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has adopted the investment plan to ensure a secure and sustainable future for food production as the main basis of the food security system through which necessary measures are taken to complement the elements of this system, in natural and special cases. Since 2016, the Ministry prepared an institutional framework for the investment plan aimed at increasing food production and strengthening the food security system until 2040 in line with the contents and outputs of the strategy of

- sustainable agriculture and rural development (2040) and its successive investment plans and the strategy of developing the fisheries sector (2013-2020 and 2021-2040).
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is exerting efforts to preserve the area of agricultural land in order to preserve the agricultural land and provide the opportunity for citizens working in the agricultural sector of both sexes to settle in their villages, sustain agriculture and production to achieve food security and preserve the Omani environment from the danger of change and deterioration. The Ministry implements the protection wall projects for the citizens' farms located on the banks of the rivers to prevent their deterioration due to rain and heavy valleys to maintain the productivity and fertility of the agricultural land. The Ministerial Decision No. 10/2017 on the use of agricultural land was issued in order to preserve and regulate agricultural land.
  - The contribution of the value of domestic production from the agriculture and fisheries sectors to the total value of food consumption reached about 49% in 2018, while this percentage was 36% in 2011.
  - The Sultanate was ranked third in the Arab world and ranked 29th in the world out of 113 countries according to the annual report on the World Food Security Index 2018. The Sultanate was ranked the first Arab food abundance.
    - o ✓ **Eliminate violence against women and girls**
  - The Sultanate has made significant progress in the protection of women and the enjoyment of their rights guaranteed by the statute of the state and the national legislations whose provisions are consistent with this statute.
  - The Penal Code promulgated by Royal Decree No. 7/2018 protects women from all forms of physical violence, psychological violence, rape, defamation, insult and deprivation of the legitimate right to inheritance, forced prostitution and whoring. With the issuance of this law, the Omani Penal Code No. (7/74) was repealed.
  - The Ministry of Social Development prepared a series of publications on education and awareness of women's rights, including explanatory notes about the laws related to women. It works on publishing these memoranda in all the governorates of the Sultanate and including them on the website of the Ministry for easy access and reference, in order to empower women and improve their awareness of their legal rights. These memoranda are issued and distributed to a large segment of the community. The most recent of them include a number of laws such as the Trafficking in Persons Law, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Reconciliation and Reunification Act, the Civil Status Law, the Nationality Law, the Prisons Act, the Civil Transactions Act, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Judicial remedies for women in case of violation of any of their legally guaranteed rights are also defined. During the three years (2014-2018), the Department of Women's Affairs worked on the implementation of 20 workshops in several governorates of the Sultanate to disseminate these memoranda, targeting both sexes, and some students from schools and colleges. This approach is being pursued in future plans, as this programme promotes awareness of women's rights.
  - The Family Protection Department, the Family Counselling and Guidance Department and the Family Development Department are intensifying awareness programmes and campaigns in the governorates for women, girls and members of the community on combating violence against women and girls, as well as providing care, legal, health and living services for women and girls living in Dar Al-Wifaq centre who have been subjected to violence or abuse.
    - o ✓ **Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.**
  - The health sector has potentials to help spread health care in all governorates of the Sultanate through referral hospitals, clinics and health centres serving health communities, which has been reflected in a marked improvement in the main indicators of health such



as maternal and child mortality. The maternal mortality rate has declined from 26.4 per 100,000 live births in 2010 to 13.4 in 2016. The proportion of births attended by skilled health staff is 99.5 per cent in 2016. Under-five mortality rate has fallen to 11.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016, and the mortality rate for children under one year is 9.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016. Data from the Ministry of Health in the Sultanate indicate that the number of registered AIDS cases for Omanis in 2017 was only about 150 cases, more than 69% of them males in 2017.

- Health services provided to pregnant mothers are available in all primary health care institutions in all governorates of the Sultanate, which are very close to pregnant women in their places of residence, whether in cities or remote villages. With an integrated referral system linking all levels of care, it is easy to provide specialized care for mothers with dangerous pregnancies.
- Reproductive and sexual health care services are strengthened to ensure access to these services for all, including family planning services and information and awareness, where significant efforts are being made to encourage pregnant women to register for prenatal care, which reflected in the proportion of pregnant women refer to the clinic four times or more before birth 77.1% in 2017.
- The birth spacing programme is one of the most recent programmes that contributed to the decline in the total fertility rate from 10% in 1980 to 4% in 2017. The percentage of women of childbearing age who showed a desire for family planning in modern ways was 82.2%, according to the results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2014 compared with 44% in 2008 (Reproductive Health Survey 2008). The husband's consent is not required to obtain the means of spacing between births. However, counselling is provided to the couple so that they can consult among themselves and choose the appropriate means for them.
- The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with an international association, trained a number of doctors to provide ultrasound services for pregnant women to detect early congenital malformations as the main cause of child mortality.
- Paragraph (5) of Article (15) of the Child Act stipulates that all competent State organs must take the necessary preventive and curative measures and procedures to provide mothers with appropriate prenatal and postnatal healthcare.
- Providing health services to women in the post-reproductive age at the level of primary health care and hospitals. The programme includes training of competent staff, counselling and health education on the symptoms and signs of the post-reproductive age, and the establishment of institutions with all services they need.
  - o **√ Participation and political representation.**
- The Law on the Election of Members of the Consultative Council, issued by Royal Decree No. 58/2013 concerns standing for and voting for the Council and makes no distinction between males and females.
- The representation of women in the diplomatic field has witnessed remarkable development in recent years. Omani women hold key positions in the diplomatic work as ambassador, delegate to the Sultanate of Oman to UN agencies and other diplomatic posts. Data indicate that the number of ambassadors increased from (34) men and (2) women in 2013 to (39) men and (3) women in 2017.
- The statistics of 2018 show that the number of members of the Cabinet is (30) members, 6.6% of them are females. Women constitute 9% of the members of the Council of Oman during the (2015-2019) term, and 17% of the members of the Council of State during the (2015-2019) term. Women account for 1% of the members of the Consultative Council during the (2015-2019) term, 3.4% of the members of municipal councils during the (2016-2020) term and 46% of voters in municipal elections during the (2016-2020) term.

- The data indicate an increase in the number of female members of the municipal councils between the first and second terms. The number of members during the first term (2012-2016) was (192) members, 188 males compared to (4) females, and increased during the second term (2016-2020) to reach (202) members, (195) males and (7) females.
  - o ✓ **The right to work and rights in the workplace (such as the gender wage gap, occupational segregation and career advancement)**
- The Civil Service Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 120/2004 and its executive regulations issued by the President of the Civil Service Council No. 9/2010 is the general legal system governing the general function of civil servants in the units of the State administrative apparatus, except those whose functional affairs are governed by special legal systems and on functional matters in which the text of the special legal system is contained.
- The basic salary, accommodation, electricity, water, telephone, transportation, and cost of living allowance shall be determined according to the financial grade. All employees, males and females, shall be equal. Employees of the same grade shall be entitled to the said financial allocations. The provisions of the system of classification and arrangement of jobs issued by the decision of the President of the Civil Service Council No. (10/2010) shall determine the degree of the job on the basis of the level of difficulty of its work, in such a way as to ensure justice in the determination of remuneration for work, as specified by the Royal Decree No. (78/2013) issued on the table of grades and salaries of Omani civil employees in the State. It has entered into force on 1 January 2014.
  - o ✓ **Women Entrepreneurship in Business and Women's Projects.**
- The Sultanate recognizes that the advancement of women's rights begins with their economic participation. Therefore, the Government has encouraged women's participation in the economic development process and provided them with various forms of support and encouragement, such as training, counselling, financial and marketing support. There are also women who run their own businesses from their homes.
- Launch of Tamkeen programme (2016), which aims to invest the energy of the individual and the family in order to participate in development, and turn the beneficiary families of the social security into productive families contributing to the development of the national economy. The number of beneficiaries of the programme is 258 males and 771 females in 2018.
- As part of the government's efforts to motivate women and to play a role in entrepreneurship and projects, Circular No. (12/2013) and (2/2016) on the regulations for allowing government employees who are interested in establishing and running their own institutions in accordance with the Cabinet resolutions No. (30/2013) and (2/2016). These regulations are based on the equality between male and female employees. They shall be equal in the application of these regulations and in obtaining cash, in-kind benefits or special leave without pay.
- The number of registered enterprises in the leadership is more than 31,000 institutions representing all vital sectors until the end of December 2017, 23% of them are owned by women.
- The percentage of the national workforce in projects supported by Al Raffd Fund is as follows: 71.6% male entrepreneurs, 28.4% female entrepreneurs and 88% craftswomen in 2017.
  - o ✓ **Unpaid care and domestic work / reconciliation of work and family life (such as maternity or paid parental leave and care services).**
- The provisions of the Civil Service Law seek to provide family care, by providing care for woman - the employee - by assessing the circumstances that require her to work for the family, as well as to reconcile these conditions and work, including the following:

- ✓ The female employee shall be entitled to a fully paid leave for iddat for four months and ten days from the date of death of the husband.
- ✓ The female employee shall be entitled to a fifty-day special leave for pre- and post-delivery period. This leave shall be salaried and shall not be taken for more than five times during the whole service period.
- ✓ The female employee shall be entitled to a non-salaried special leave for not more than one year for taking care of her child.
- ✓ The female employee shall be entitled to a non-salaried special leave to accompany her husband, for the duration of his stay abroad, if he is sent on a mission, scholarship, training course, study leave, assignment or he is delegated or seconded to outside the Sultanate.
  - Under the Labour Law, the employee shall be compensated for performing additional work with a remuneration or with a leave instead. The employee has the right to have a weekly break of not less than two days after five consecutive working days, an annual fully-paid leave not less than (30) days and six-days fully-paid leave in the year due to an emergency in accordance with Article (61) of the Law and Ministerial Decision No. (657/2011) on emergency leave.
    - ✓ **Gender-sensitive social protection (eg. comprehensive health insurance, cash transfers and pensions)**

#### **Comprehensive health insurance**

- Through the five-year development plans, the Government has worked to provide basic services for all in order to achieve the goals of development plans, meet the needs of people, promote gender equality, provide employment opportunities and the right to access to services for all without discrimination.
- The health sector has witnessed a remarkable development during the past years. Hospitals and health centres spread throughout the Sultanate's governorates. Specialized staffs and medical services have been developed. In 2017, there are (76) hospitals, (269) health centres, clinics and government medical centres and (1,215) private clinics. There is a 19.3% increase in the number of doctors from (7,673) doctors in 2013 to (9,155) doctors in 2017.

#### **Cash transfers**

- The Civil Transactions Law issued by Royal Decree No. 29/2013 grants women legal capacity equal to that of men in respect of all civil transactions, including obtaining bank loans and real estate mortgages. Article (496) of the aforesaid law grants women the right to obtain loans on a par with men
- Considering the great success achieved by the Sultanate in supporting vulnerable and needy groups through social assistance programmes, political reforms and occasional interventions, it is in a position to provide conditional cash transfers programme to enhance the participation of educational attainment and manpower among beneficiaries of social assistance. Conditional cash transfers programme, in particular, helps to provide the demand-influencing factor among target groups to reduce human development gaps.
- The Banking Law issued by Royal Decree No. 114/2000 regulates the activity of banks in the practice of lending without distinguish between men and women.
- The Oman Vision 2040 establishes the principles and directions necessary to build a comprehensive system of social protection linked to macroeconomics while ensuring social integration and contributing to social stability. The Vision aims to achieve financial sustainability of all components of the system, turning the role of the current government from providing services and benefits for the needy groups to focus on enabling all Omani families out of the circle of need and poverty.

## **Pensions**

- The Pensions and Post-Civil Service Benefits Law for Omani government employees issued by Royal Decree No. 26/86 is the retirement system that regulates after-service pensions and benefits for all Omani employees of the State administrative system for which no special laws or decrees apply.
- The provisions of this law include the conditions and regulations that entitle those who are subject to the provisions of post-service pensions on the basis of availability of pension benefits from pension or end of service benefits without discrimination between men and women. Article (22) defines the conditions of entitlement to pension. Article (25) defines the settlement and calculation of pensions. Article (30) defines the employee's entitlement to end of service benefits if he is not entitled to a pension provided that his service period shall not be less than one full year. Article (32) defines the benefits, without discrimination between employees in the application of the rules referred to on the basis of sex (male or female).
- The Social Insurance Law issued by Royal Decree No. 72/91 and amendments thereto provide for two types of pensions. An age requirement must be met for entitlement to either types. For the old age pension, the insured is entitled to receive a pension according to his age and his periods of contribution. In this case, women become entitled to an old-age pension at age of (55), five years less than that for men. The contribution period required of women is 10 years compared to 15 years for a man. An early retirement old-age pension is paid upon attainment of the age of 45 years, for this purpose women must contribute for at least 15 years and men for 20 years.
- Under the Royal Decree No. (44/2013), the Social Security System was issued for self-employed Omanis and the like. The Minister of Manpower issues the necessary regulations and decrees covering self-employed workers and the like inside and outside the Sultanate.
  - o ✓ **Services and basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy, transportation, etc.)**
- The Sultanate attaches great attention to water resources. It has achieved remarkable progress, with 98% of urban households and 88% of rural areas having access to water supply, according to the 4014 Multi Indicator Cluster Survey.
- Sanitation and hygiene services cover more than 98% of the population in cities and 97% in rural areas.
- The percentage of the population benefiting from electricity in the Sultanate is 100% in 2017 and the percentage of the population who rely mainly on clean fuel is 98.9% in 2014.
  - o ✓ **Integration of women into digital technology and financial services**
- Technology is an essential tool for human development. The 2016 survey on access and use of Information and Communication Technologies by families and individuals indicated that 86% of families in the Sultanate have Internet access (79% in rural areas, 88% in urban areas), 99% have phones and 91% have a smartphone. Technology is available to both women and men and there are no gender restrictions on the right to access to the technology in the Sultanate.
- Many training opportunities in technology are provided for women through various projects and initiatives, including:
  - ✓ Digital Literacy where Information Technology Authority implemented a number of training programmes that resulted in the provision of 70,000 training opportunities in computer basics. Women benefited of these training opportunities. They accounted for 70% of the total trainees during 2018.
  - ✓ Training programmes for government employees, with about 89,500 provided training opportunities including 44,750 for females.

- ✓ Implementation of projects joining programme and train more than 350 citizens, 50% of them for females, and the provision of more than 7000 specialized training opportunities in different fields of information technology 4550 of them for females, including programmes for children and housewives in addition to workshops specialized in information security and awareness of digital citizenship.
- ✓ Centres for knowledge society reached 20 centres distributed over a number of governorates and states of the Sultanate, including 10 centres for women equipped with the latest technologies.
- ✓ The establishment of the SAS Entrepreneurship Centre in 2013, which aims at supporting the emerging Omani institutions in the IT sector. Since its inception, the Centre has supported 62 companies and contributed to provide 400 jobs for Omanis including 300 for females.
- ✓ The establishment of SAS for Virtual Reality in 2014, which provides the infrastructure for the development of virtual reality projects and multimedia content for the local and regional market, in addition to its role in the rehabilitation of young Omani on the mechanism of interactive content industry by providing training programmes. Its achievements include: providing 584 training opportunities, including 493 for women compared to 91 for boys, implementing 120 project models and 39 interactive projects for some governmental and private institutions.
- ✓ The launch of the National Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) initiative in March 2010, which helped train 2,700 trainees, 1215 of them were females.
- ✓ The establishment of the SAS Centre for the development of smart phone applications in 2016. To date, the Centre has provided more than 1,140 training opportunities for Omanis, of which 773 were for females.
- ✓ The National PC Initiative aiming to grant a computer to social insurance families with one or more students enrolled in the school and devices free of charge to students of higher education from social insurance families. It also includes a subsidization of the cost of a personal computer for students of higher education in the first year of study in the Sultanate and teachers who are graduates of the Government IT Training & Certification (GITTC) project. The aim of the initiative is to increase the number of computer users and enable access to the Internet for the delivery of electronic services. During this initiative, 120,343 computers were distributed, 50% for females, more than 85,000 Internet modem, 50% for females.
- The Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with government agencies such as the National Training Fund, the Ministry of Manpower and specialized training institutions addresses males and females disabled persons over the age of 18 who are enrolled at Al Wafa Rehabilitation Centres for Disabled Children as a first stage to achieve the physical independence of persons with disabilities, and to consolidate the principle of sustainable development for them by investing their energies as a productive force. The project mainly depends on on-the-job training method through:
  - ✓ External vocational on-the-job training for persons with minor disabilities.
  - ✓ On-the-job training with productive workshops at Al Wafa Rehabilitation Centres for Disabled Children for persons with mild disabilities
- ✓ **Changing negative social norms and gender-based stereotypes**
- In this context, the Government is keen to ensure that the change in negative social norms is linked to the qualitative development of awareness among members of society. For this purpose, the Government has adopted measures to strengthen the role and status of women

in the political and development process and is steering its coming plans and programmes towards the achievement of greater gains for women as a partner in development and life.

- In the framework of ongoing efforts to develop education, the Government has sought to change stereotypes in school curricula and textbooks regarding the types of work that men and women perform. The Government treats in a balanced way the roles of men and women and boys and girls in subjects covered by school curricula and in pictorial representations of situations of daily life. The Ministry of Education has paralleled this with efforts to incorporate concepts of human rights and the rights of the child and women in education to provide integral educational curricula.
- Women's access to education and participation in the labour force and various areas of development have helped bring about change in society's understanding of the work of women.

**3. Over the past five years, have specific measures been taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who are subjected to multiple and complex forms of discrimination? (Please check the related categories)**

○ ✓ **Women living in rural and remote areas**

- Al Raffd Fund has an integrated financial programme exclusively for rural women. The loan interest rates within this programme have been reduced to 0.05% compared to other financing programmes with interest rates of up to 2%.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has a Department for Rural Development established by Ministerial Decision No. 346/2018. This department establishes equal policies for women and girls with the rest of the rural agricultural community and national plans for the empowerment of rural women, in addition to the studies and rehabilitation programmes and training and guidance of these groups as well as work with them in the establishment of cooperatives and in the creation of marketing outlets for their products supported by the government by 100%.
- Support systems for programmes, projects and services in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are working to achieve positive discrimination for rural women and girls, for example:
  - ✓ For the income-generating projects offered by the Ministry to enable farmers, it supports men by 50% and rural women by 100%. The Ministry guarantees all costs of the project and helps rural women to market their products through many marketing outlets.
  - ✓ For the ministry's support to farmers, men bear 50% of the costs, while women only bear 25%, to buy green houses, tillage machines, etc.

○ ✓ **Women and girls with disabilities**

- Early detection programmes for genetic diseases and congenital malformations at birth are among the interventions adopted by the Ministry of Health to provide the necessary care and reduce the complications of these diseases, as well as to strengthen hearing and sight screening activities for schoolchildren since 1999.
- Since 2013, the National Centre for Genetic Health has been providing genetic analysis and accurate genetic diagnosis of various diseases with the possibility of identifying those who are vulnerable to these diseases in order to support preventive treatment. Expansion of early detection services for genetic diseases and metabolic fluctuations is under consideration. A disability screening system has been established through the development of a congenital malformation and genetic disease reporting form to improve data collection on congenital malformations and genetic diseases to assess the burden of disease on the family and society.
- Early detection services for autism spectrum disorders were included in primary health care institutions in 2017. Cases diagnosed in specialized centres are referred to rehabilitation centres of the Ministry of Social Development.

- The Ministry of Health participates with other concerned parties in reducing the number of injuries that lead to disability as well as in alleviating the suffering underwent by those affected by preventive and curative services.
- In the field of health treatment and rehabilitation: The Ministry of Health provides various services for the disabled of both sexes, through physiotherapy centres located in a number of hospitals in the Sultanate.
- The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, provides all services related to the care and rehabilitation of disabled persons of both sexes, and in cooperation with the concerned authorities, trains the personnel who care for the disabled in these rehabilitation centres.
- Through the School Health Programme, the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, provides health care to students of Al Amal School for the Deaf and the School of Thought. The oral and dental health programme also provides dental examination and coating services to disabled children through mobile dental units.
- In order to ensure complementarity of the efforts of various parties and to coordinate them, a National Committee for the Care of the Disabled has been formed, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health and the other concerned sectors, to coordinate and strengthen plans and programmes related to the prevention of all types of disabilities and set programmes for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and their integration into society to achieve full participation with their peers in social life.
- The implementation of the multisectoral system for coordination, cooperation and referral for the protection of children, children with disabilities of both sexes and integrated early childhood development is being considered in collaboration with UNICEF.
- The National Campaign for Pre-Marriage Medical Examination was launched in 2017. The Ministry cooperates with the relevant sectors and the National Youth Committee in raising awareness of the importance of examination. Compulsory examination of genetic diseases and other life-threatening diseases is currently being studied.
- With regard to programmes for women and girls with disabilities, the Ministry of Education has endeavoured to achieve the principle of equality of opportunity between males and females:
  - ✓ Expanding the elective courses for 11th and 12th graders in the study plan for female students with visual and hearing impairments.
  - ✓ Accepting female students with disabilities in institutions of higher education, like their male peers.
  - ✓ Finding areas for vocational training and rehabilitation for students with disabilities in cooperation with private sector institutions.
  - ✓ Raising students' awareness in the field of entrepreneurship and launching student companies in various fields.
  - ✓ Participation of students in a series of educational competitions and educational programmes approved at the ministry level.
  - ✓ Training workshops and awareness programmes for the rights of persons with disabilities and the dissemination of their culture.
  - ✓ Literacy Project for Omanis (Persons with Disabilities): The Ministry of Education, due to its belief in the right to education for this group (male and female), coordinates with concerned persons and specialists in this category. The project was started during the current academic year (2018-2019) in some educational districts.
    - ✓ **Elderly women**
- The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development have jointly provided an Elder Care Programme since 2011. The programme is currently provided through special clinics staffed by trained medical teams. The clinics are present in most primary health-

care institutions in all governorates. They provide comprehensive services to the elderly (age 60 and older).

- A joint team comprising members of the two Ministries conducts periodic home visits to evaluate the situation of the elderly person, provide health and social services and furnish basic needs, including motorized wheelchairs, medical beds, etc...
- The Ministry of Social Development provides services to the elderly through the Social Welfare House, which is dedicated to the elderly who lack care providers. All services are provided to the residents. An Elder Affairs Department was established by Ministerial Decree No. 51/2015 to be concerned with the elderly. It works to strengthen the role and status of the elderly in society and enable them to participate in public social, political and economic life. The Department also works to consolidate partnerships and integration among Government and private entities and families of the elderly.

**4. Has the growing number of humanitarian crises - caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events - affected the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in your country?**

Yes/ No

- Weather crises did not affect the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. When the Sultanate was exposed to some climatic conditions in 2017 and 2018, the needs of women and girls were met through the provision of accommodation and basic needs and support and assistance through the formation of national task forces working in this framework.
- In accordance with the Social Assistance Regulations promulgated by Ministerial Decision No. 72/2014 of the Ministry of Social Development, temporary cash and in-kind assistance, special case assistance, emergency assistance and disaster assistance for families and individuals in need are provided. Temporary monetary and in-kind assistance are paid to needy families and individuals who do not receive a pension under the provisions of the Social Security Law and assistance in special and emergency cases. Such assistance is also paid to citizens who are exposed to special circumstances that require help and assistance in case of individual and collective disasters and catastrophes and to individual or family that has experienced an unexpected social or economic situation.
- The number of beneficiaries of relief assistance for individual and collective disasters provided during the year 2018 was (148) cases with an amount of RO (62633.5), along with various in-kind assistance.
- It also provides emergency assistance for cases that are subject to unexpected social and living conditions and which could harm them and prevent them from being able to cope with them. During the year 2018, emergency assistance was provided (1125) cases in which the amount of RO 98,765 was disbursed.
- The Omani Charitable Organization contributes to providing a variety of therapeutic, study, food, money, housing, orphan assistance and relief assistance to people affected by natural disasters inside and outside the Sultanate.
- Associations and charitable organizations in the Sultanate support many needy Omani families. It should be noted that the Sultanate seeks to activate the contribution of the private sector to work on the development of local communities.
- The local social development committees are one of the pillars of voluntary social work. They work to help social services stakeholders achieve their goals. They also contribute to raising social and developmental awareness and fostering a spirit of cooperation and social solidarity. These committees are headed by the governors and the members are officials of government institutions related to social work, representatives of the people and the private sector. The number of committees is 61, covering all the states of the Sultanate.



**5. Which of the following is your country among the top five priorities for accelerating the advancement of women and girls in your country over the next five years through laws, policies and / or programmes? (Please check the related categories)**

- **Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice**
- The principles of non-discrimination and equality have acquired constitutional protection under article 17 of the Basic Law of the State (Constitution) and after the accession of the Sultanate to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention became national law in accordance with Article (80) of the Basic Law of the State. Thus, the principles of non-discrimination and equality have been embodied in legislation and laws and are being introduced in the formulation of policies, the development of national strategies, plans and programmes.
- **Quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls**
- The Ministry of Education has formulated the Ninth Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) to complement the achievements of the Ministry to improve the education sector based on the principle of quality in education, training and learning for all its beneficiaries through its mission of "preparing a generation that achieves the economic and social development of the society by improving the teaching and learning processes in the administration and provide quality human resources, curricula, buildings and evaluation tools of quality and care for different segments of the students in the years of schooling with the use of technology in line with the digital community of Oman and greater activation of the role of the private sector and the community in promoting education service ".
- The Ninth Five-Year Plan of the Ministry of Education included (27) general goals, (109) detailed objectives and two general chapters, which fall under a range of fields (the first chapter: institutional capacity, its areas: governance and administrative accountability, information technology and data management, human resources, material and financial, community partnership), (the second chapter: the efficiency and effectiveness of education, its areas: teacher, learner, curriculum, teaching methods and educational evaluation).
- **Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security**
- The social action strategy of the Ministry of Social Development (2016-2025) is based on three guiding principles: social integration, equity and empowerment. It aims at providing an effective, efficient and sustainable social protection system. It contributes to the social and economic empowerment of the most vulnerable groups through an integrated partnership between government, private and domestic sector.
- The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy 2040 works to promote the sustainability of the agricultural sector, increase economic returns, create employment opportunities for citizens of both sexes, and empower rural communities.
- The Sultanate adopts a comprehensive strategy for food security (2020-2040), which includes a set of objectives that aim at improving the food security system in Oman in terms of production, import, storage and distribution through three main chapters: food demand, local food production, imports.
- **Eliminate violence against women and girls**
- The Ministry of Social Development is developing a national framework that defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in defining and coordinating protection and service policies for prevention and response, protecting and rehabilitating women and children facing violence, exploitation or abuse, developing service quality standards and professional standards for staff working with children and women.
- There is also a trend to build an electronic system linking sectors to monitor cases, referral and follow-up, which will facilitate knowledge of the size of the problem and the development of future plans to address it.

- The Ministry of Health is involved in the study of the implementation of the multisectoral system for coordination, cooperation and referral for the protection of children, children with disabilities and integrated early childhood development in collaboration with UNICEF.
  - ✓ **Access to affordable health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights**
- The Ninth Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) of the Ministry of Health aims to improve the quality of health services provided to women and children, implement strategies to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity, and promote antenatal care, birth spacing and pre-marital testing.
- The health system in the Sultanate until 2040 includes many programmes and projects aimed at woman's health during her life. It includes three objectives: elimination of avoidable maternal and neonatal mortality, improvement of the quality of health services and creation of an environment conducive to the health of women and children.
- In its five-year plans, the Ministry of Health adopts the development of human resources to provide high-quality health services. All reproductive health services are provided by a trained medical staff based on national evidence founded on international references.
- Working to raise the efficiency of medical staff in the field of pregnant care and anaesthesia to deal with emergencies during pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium to reduce the morbidity and mortality of mothers and children. A national workshop to train national trainers was held in 2018 to train health professionals at all levels of health care.
- Holding training courses for medical staff in primary health care institutions to provide birth spacing and counselling services.
  - ✓ **Participation and political representation**
- To promote the participation of women through family policies that support working women in balancing their work with the requirements of family life.
- To empower women towards greater participation in social, economic and political life. Building women's capacities for leadership, decision-making, participation in elections for municipal councils, Consultative Councils and others, in partnership with organizations and NGOs.
- To direct the efforts of charitable organizations to motivate women to participate in volunteer work and to create community initiatives to highlight women's issues and their role in the development of society.
- To ensure the representation of women at the central level and levels of directorates, governorates and states, especially in decision-making positions
  - ✓ **The right to work and rights in the workplace (such as the gender wage gap, occupational segregation and career advancement)**
- The right to work is guaranteed by the Basic Law of the State and the national labour legislation. The Sultanate guarantees this right through non-discrimination in the rights of workers of both sexes and freedom of choice of employment, as well as the right to continuous training and career advancement.
  - ✓ **Women entrepreneurship in business and women's projects**
- Among the priorities of the work to reduce the gender gap in the social action strategy, the focus is on the category of women who support the family, especially divorced women and widows, in economic empowerment programmes (entrepreneurship projects) and their impact on women's exit from the social security system and enable them to change the prevailing culture and social attitude towards them.
- Focusing on identifying the needs and providing the potential to the families of social security for their development and empowerment, especially women, by providing them with a range of professional and educational skills to become active, productive and self-sustaining sources by cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors

to establish private projects and granting them soft loans to help them improve their conditions, or facilitating employment opportunities according to their potential.

√ **Unpaid care and domestic work / family and work reconciliation (such as maternity leave or paid parental leave, care services)**

- National laws and legislations guarantee the rights of working women, such as paid maternity leave. Efforts will also be made to strengthen cooperation between government agencies and civil society organizations in awareness campaigns and programmes that highlight the role of women in society, gender concepts and promote participation and support for parents with regard to their responsibility for the upbringing of children and to promote shared responsibility within the household and the family.
- National laws and legislation guarantee the rights of working women, such as paid maternity leave. Efforts will also be made to strengthen cooperation between government agencies and civil society organizations in awareness campaigns and programs that highlight the role of women in society, gender concepts and promote participation and support for parents in their Children and promote shared responsibility within the household and family.
  - √ **Gender-sensitive social protection (eg comprehensive health insurance, cash transfers and pensions)**
- The pension regulations guarantee the social protection of the pensioners and their dependents under the umbrella of social insurance by obtaining a pension that ensures and provides the employee with a decent life after the end of his service and the entitlement of his dependents to receive his pension in case of his death. Among the laws to which civil service employees are subject is the Law of Pensions and End of Service Benefits for Omani Nationals employed in the Government sector referred to.
- In accordance with the provisions of this law, the conditions of entitlement to receive pension and the transfer of the pension right to the beneficiaries after the death of the pensioner shall be determined according to the Staff Regulations (male or female) based on gender equality. If there is difference, it is due to difference in the length of service or salary - the contributions paid - of the employee at the end of service on which the pension is calculated.
  - √ **Integration of women into digital technology and financial services**
- Working through the national Digital Oman Strategy (e.oman) to provide the necessary infrastructure and develop the skills of members of the community of both sexes and the development of the ICT industry as well as promoting entrepreneurship and providing the elements of protection and cybersecurity.
  - √ **Mainstreaming a gender perspective in disaster risk prevention and building resilience**
- Work is ongoing to strengthen existing disaster risk prevention systems by taking into account the needs of women in the event of disaster, and to train those who meet these needs in line with the gender perspective.
  - √ **Changing negative social norms and gender-based stereotypes**
- The Sultanate will continue to raise awareness of the community and launch awareness-raising and education campaigns to raise women's awareness of their legal rights, disseminate the values of participation and complementary roles for women and men, and promote family-friendly policies that buttress a balanced life for parents.

## **Comprehensive development, common prosperity and decent work**

Critical areas of concern:

A. Women and Poverty

## F. Women and Economics

### I. Human Rights of Women

#### L. The Girl-child

#### **6. What actions have your State taken in the past five years to promote gender equality in relation to the role of women in paid work and employment?**

- √ **Promotion / enforcement of laws and policies and practices in the workplace that prohibit discrimination in the employment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and legislation on equal pay:**

#### **Actions taken:**

- Women have the same opportunities for employment and recruitment procedures. Job opportunities are advertised by the competent authorities, both in public and private sector, and are offered to citizens of both sexes. Women are free to engage in the work of his choice, and have the same opportunities for promotion and job security, the advantages and conditions of the service, the right to receive training, vocational retraining, advanced vocational training and repeated training. Laws and regulations do not discriminate between men and women in remuneration, including benefits and equal treatment.
- There is no distinction or discrimination in the wages of workers of both sexes when the terms and conditions of work between them are equal. In order to achieve this, the Government created the Inspection Service to monitor the employers' compliance with the law and the violation of laws and practices in the workplace, where many violators are continuously monitored and penalized and obliged to correct them.
- The Basic Law of the State (Constitution) issued by the Royal Decree (101/96), regulates the relationship between the parties of work under Article (12), which affirms that "the State enacts laws for the protection of the employee and the employer and regulates the relationship between them. Every Citizen has the right to engage in the work of his choice within the limits of the Law. It is not permissible to impose any compulsory work on anyone except by virtue of a law, for rendering a public service, and for a fair remuneration".
- The Civil Service Law No. (120/2004) grants equal rights and duties to all public servants, whether Omani or non-Omani, male or female. The law also regulates the relationship between the employee and the administrative unit of the employee by ensuring a minimum wage commensurate with the living situation, as well as many other basic rights related to the professional employee's career and the nature of the environment in which he or she works.
- The Omani Labour Law (35/2003) and its amendments guarantee equality between men and women in the right to work and its compensations, such as wages and other financial benefits. The law provides protection to women against unfair dismissal of work due to illness, pregnancy or childbirth.
- The restructuring of the Social Dialogue Committee by Ministerial Decision No. (72/2014) issued by the Ministry of Manpower includes representatives of the three parties involved in the production process (the government - employers - workers) to study proposals that will contribute to regulate the labour market, promote and strengthen labour relations between the parties of production, to examine developments in Arab and international labour standards, as well as to co-operate to guide the efforts of social partners in the labour market, to promote competitiveness and to balance the interests of workers and employers in a way that enhances the national effort to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development.

- The Ministry of Manpower issued a Ministerial Decision No. (294/2014) amending certain provisions of Ministerial Decree No. 570/2012 concerning the system of formation, operation and registration of trade unions, labour unions and the General Federation of Workers of the Sultanate. The trade union has the right to represent its members and defend their interests before the judiciary under this Decision.
- Taking special measures to employ persons with disabilities, including disabled women. The Ministry of Manpower and the Ministries of Labour and Employment identified 2% to accommodate persons with disabilities in institutions and private companies.
- Organizing the labour market through the continuous inspection and follow-up of private sector establishments to ensure their commitment and application to the provisions of the Labour Law to protect the rights of workers, by the Ministry of Manpower.

#### **Achievements:**

- Women have joined many disciplines and in many fields. In the last three years (2015-2018), there has been a qualitative development in the percentage of female participation in the labour force. The percentage of women working in the public sector reached 41% and 47% in the civil service, almost equal to that of men. This shows the extent of women's active participation in the work and the building of Omani society.
- The percentage of females working in the private sector was 24% of the total workforce in 2017.
- The percentage of females in senior administrative positions in the civil service increased from 10% in 2012 to 21% in 2017 from the total number of senior, middle and direct management positions.
- Data indicate that Omani women participate in all occupational groups in the private sector, and females accounted for 25% of managers of public administration and business in 2017.
- In all, (4869) establishments were inspected to ensure their compliance with the provisions of the Labour Law regarding the employment status of the labour force (national and expatriate) and the applicability of payment of wages during 2017.
- Increasing the membership of working women in the trade union councils. She participated in the representative labour committees, the membership of the trade unions and the membership of the board of directors of the general union of the workers of the Sultanate. Working women also participate in a number of training programmes carried out by the General Union of Workers of the Sultanate, in cooperation with some international bodies.
- The percentage of women with disabilities working in the public sector in 2017 was (11%) of Omani employees with disabilities. The Social Security Act grants the right to persons with disabilities of both sexes without discrimination to receive a social security pension.
- According to the statistical indicators issued by the Ministry of Civil Service, the percentage of females in the civil service sector exceeds the percentage of males on the basis of the application of the terms, conditions and substantive rules referred to, as shown in the following table:

Year	Males		Females		Total
	Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio	
2014	6195	57%	4695	43%	10890
2015	2232	59%	1553	41%	3785
2016	557	20.5 %	2160	79.5%	2717

2017	472	21%	1735	79%	2207
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Source: Ministry of Civil Service

- ✓ **Present / promote active gender-sensitive labour market policies (eg education, training, skills and subsidies)**
  - Education and training rights are available for both sexes without discrimination, and they, both, can compete for jobs and employment. The provisions of the Civil Service Law guarantee training for all staff in all grades and at all administrative, technical, written, professional levels according to work requirements.
  - Training plans and programmes are developed without distinction between men and women. The training period is considered a period of employment in which the employee enjoys all the advantages of his/her job.
  - Within the framework of the development of education and vocational training system, vocational training centres have been changed to Vocational Colleges by Ministerial Decree No. 406/2017 issued by the Ministry of Manpower, providing four educational and training tracks. There are 7 Vocational Colleges distributed in a number of the Sultanate's governorates, approximately 47% of trainees are females.
  - During the year (2016/2017), the Ministry of Manpower adopted an integrated regulation to implement the Professional Diploma Programme in order to prepare qualified and specialized work force in professional fields that meet the needs of the labour market and raise the percentage of Omanisation in the private sector.
  - Regarding social services for workers, efforts have been made to raise the awareness of both male and female workers. The Labour Services Department sends text messages to raise the awareness of the national labour force and to disseminate awareness raising and educational publications in languages other than Arabic for the foreign labour force.
- ✓ **Taking actions to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace**

Article 41 of the Labour Law allows a worker to abandon the work before termination of the contract period and retain his full rights after giving notice to the employer of so doing if the employer or his representative commit immoral act against the worker or any member of his family. Among the measures, the Penal Code (7/2018) criminalized acts of harassment under Article (266), where the penalty and fine were imposed on each male: exposes to a female in a way that breaks her shyness by word or deed, invades female's privacy or wears as a woman and enters a special place for women or was forbidden entry to non-women at the time.

- ✓ **Promote land tenure rights and ensure occupying it**

#### **Actions taken:**

- The Sultanate has given attention to the granting of land plots to citizens, and the system of entitlement to government land was changed pursuant to Royal Decree No. 125/2008 in order to give Omani women the same right to obtain residential land, like men, without any discrimination as a partner in development and an active contributor to the process of building and reconstruction.
- For property ownership, the land registration system and its executive regulations allowed women to own property for various uses (residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural).
- The Personal Status Law (32/97), in Article (36) of Chapter Three, stipulates that only women have the right to dispose of their private money.

#### **Achievements:**

- Despite the decline in the distribution of land plots granted to individuals from (34261) in 2013 to reach (27471) in 2017, the woman has acquired the largest number of plots of land granted in five consecutive years. Women obtained more than two-thirds of the total land distributed by 67.2%, with priority given to the most vulnerable groups.

√ **Improvement of financial services and access to loans, including for self-employed women**

**Actions taken**

- Banking services make no distinction between males and females. Such services include facilities and loans, whether personal or for projects. The status of women in this regard is affirmed in the Civil Transactions Law issued by Royal Decree No. 29/2013, which grants women legal capacity equal to that of men in respect of all civil transactions, including obtaining bank loans and real estate mortgages. Article (496) of the aforesaid law grants women the right to obtain loans on a par with men.
- The Commerce Law issued by Royal Decree No. 55/90 entitles individuals to engage in commercial activity without gender discrimination. Article (79) et seq. thereof contains provisions on commercial loans that do not discriminate between males and females. In addition, the Banking Law issued by Royal Decree No. 114/2000 states that loans are to be granted without gender discrimination.
- Issuance of the Social Insurance Law by Royal Decree No. 44/2013 includes self-employed Omanis and the like. The Minister of Manpower shall issue the necessary regulations and decisions, including the self-employed and the like in the Sultanate or abroad.
- Financing of micro, small and medium projects by specialized funds such as Al Raffd Fund, training and qualification for entrepreneurs by Riyada, in addition to the Agricultural Development Fund.
  - o √ **Develop mechanisms for the equal participation of women in economic decision-making bodies (for example, in the Ministries of Trade and Finance, central banks and national economic commissions).**

**Actions taken:**

- The Ministry of Trade and Industry is working to simplify and facilitate procedures for investors and entrepreneurs through the transfer of all its services to be electronic self-service.
- The establishment of Women Entrepreneurs Committee in Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry to allow women to participate in economic decision-making.
- The Women's Committee of General Federation of Oman Trade Unions plays a leading role in economic decision-making and following up the rights of women working in the private sector.

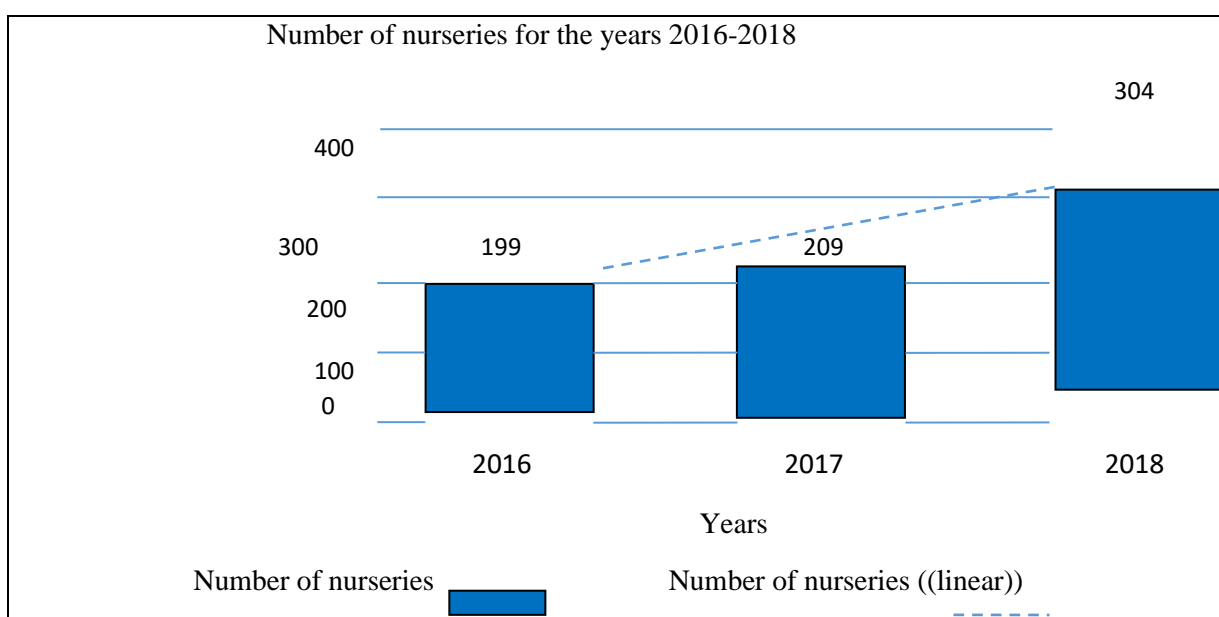
**Achievements:**

- Women Entrepreneurs Committee in Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry are (8) committees headed by women, (3) members in the boards of directors in the provinces and a membership of (98) entrepreneurs in the provinces.
- Due to the ease of procedures for investors, the number of registered trade records increased by the end of 2017 with (369.000) records against (35.000) records by the end of 2016.

**7. What actions has your country taken in the past five years to recognize, limit and / or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote family and work reconciliation?**

√ **Inclusion of unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (eg time use surveys, assessments, sub-accounts)**

- The Sultanate has been keenly concerned with the conditions of women, especially rural women. It has supported various roles of rural women, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy. The work of rural women is factored into the gross national product if commercial records, municipal licenses and agricultural holding cards pertaining to rural women’s projects exist or have been issued. Al Raffd Fund finances and economically develops rural women’s projects, such as production lines in date or other processing plants that employ women. There is also a financing programme for rural women that takes into account their circumstances and limited economic and educational resources.
  - √ **Expand childcare services or provide existing services at more affordable prices**
    - Because of the importance that children receive good services from development and care in early childhood, the Sultanate enacted laws and legislations that encourage the community to establish institutions for children, which undertakes day-to-day social care under conditions and standards that take into consideration the quality under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Social Development.
    - Institutions for children such as nurseries in all governorates of the Sultanate help working women in the care of their children during the working time, thus contributing to the advancement of women's participation in social and economic life. By the end of 2018, there were 295 nurseries and they provide affordable services to all.
    - The Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, has implemented a number of programmes and projects in the early childhood sector, the most important of which is the Guide to National Standards for the Nurseries, a developmental and vital project in the field of children's rights.
    - Child Development Centres (CSD) is a community social activity dedicated to providing social, cultural and recreational services for pre-school children. They are managed by local committees and reached 11 centres by the end of 2018.
    - Children’s Corners are activities within the Omani women's associations and women's rehabilitation centres in the cities and centres of the governorates and work to deliver the cultural, educational, social and entertainment services. The number of these corners reached 84 in all governorates of the Sultanate by the end of 2018.





Source: Ministry of Social Development

- ✓ **Expand support for vulnerable older persons and others in need of intensive forms of care**

#### **Actions taken:**

- The elderly are eligible for Social Security benefits that provide care services, financial and support services. The proportion of older women who benefited from social security in 2017 is (53%).
- Within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Social Development, the Sultanate establishes an Elder Affairs Department by Ministerial Decree No. 51/2015 to be concerned with the elderly. It works to strengthen the role and status of the elderly in society and enable them to participate in public social, political and economic life. The Department also works to consolidate partnerships and integration among Government and private entities and families of the elderly.

#### **Achievements :**

- A 1488 aged men and women received home care services in 2018. The percentage of female beneficiaries of home care services is (56.5%).
- A (1268) case received a set of support services such as prosthetic devices, maids, housing assistance and social and economic empowerment.
- The percentage of female beneficiaries of the distributed land was about (84%) of the total elderly in 2017.
- The percentage of land granted to old women during the period (2012-2016) was 82% compared to 18% for men. In 2017, the percentage of females who obtained land was 84%.
- The percentage of elderly women working in crafts was (71%) in 2016.
  - ✓ **Provide or strengthen maternity / paternity / parental leave or any other type of family leave**
- Women working in public and private sector enjoy paid maternity leave.
- The Civil Service Law granted the female employee a fifty-day special leave for pre- and post-delivery period. This leave shall be salaried and shall not be taken for more than five times during the whole service period.
- The female employee shall be entitled to a non-salaried special leave for not more than one year for taking care of her child.
  - ✓ **Conduct awareness-raising campaigns or activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work**
- The statutes of the State have focused on the importance of strengthening and protecting the family, as it is the basic unit of Omani society. Omani society has the characteristics of belonging within the general framework of Omani identity.
- In order to ensure coordination of various efforts to achieve progress and an adequate standard of living for the family, the Government formed the National Committee for Family Affairs and was entrusted with the task of proposing family policies in various aspects and coordinating between governmental and civil authorities concerned with family issues. The Directorate General for Family Development, the Family Guiding and Counselling Services, the Women's Affairs Department and the Family Development Department of the Ministry of Social Development in the various governorates intensify the awareness among the different members of the society of the importance of integration, family cohesion and integration of roles between spouses. The Marriage

Counselling Programme, which targets newlyweds and engaged couples, seeks to clarify the common roles of spouses and the importance of complementarity in family responsibilities.

- ✓ **Introduce legal changes with respect to the division of matrimonial assets or post-divorce pension benefits that recognize the unpaid contribution of women to the family during marriage.**

**Actions taken:**

- Issuance of the Social Insurance Law by Royal Decree No. 44/2013 includes self-employed Omanis and the like. The Minister of Manpower shall issue the necessary regulations and decisions, including the self-employed and the like inside and outside the Sultanate.
- The right of men and women to a pension is treated above. A death pension owed to an insured person (the deceased) is transferred in full to the beneficiary heirs according to the terms and shares mentioned for the following groups::
  - The first group: the share of sons and daughters is one half the pension owed divided equally among them, in case of more than one beneficiary.
  - The second group: widow are eligible to receive one quarter of the pension.
  - The third group: the father, mother, brothers and sisters of the deceased. Their share is one quarter of the pension.

**8. Has your country introduced austerity / fiscal adjustment measures, such as reducing public spending or reducing public sector employment over the past five years?**

**Yes/ No**

- The wages of workers in the public and private sectors, including the annual periodic bonuses, were not affected. As for the impact, there was no accurate assessment.

**Poverty eradication, social protection and social services**

- A. Women and Poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and Health
- D. Human Rights of Women
- E. The Girl-child

**9. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to reduce / eliminate poverty among women and girls?**

- ✓ **Promote poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (eg job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures**

**Actions taken:**

- The Government has given great attention to the development of plans and programmes aimed at raising the standard of living of the Omani citizen without distinction between the sexes, which made the Sultanate achieve remarkable progress in accomplishing most of the Millennium Development Goals at that time, to move towards achieving sustainable development goal with a clear vision and strong political will to address the root causes of poverty.
- The Oman Vision 2040 laid down the principles and directions necessary for building a comprehensive social protection linked to macroeconomics while ensuring integration and contributing to social stability. Welfare, social protection, partnership and integration of roles are among the priorities of the vision.

- In order to promote the provision of a decent living for women and vulnerable groups, the Social Security Programme pays monthly pensions under the Social Security Act of 1984. This law and its amendments guarantee the provision of monthly pensions to families and individuals in case of absence of a breadwinner or lack of adequate income for living. The categories covered by social security are: orphans, widows, divorcees, unmarried daughters, disabled persons, old age, abandoned and prisoners' families.
- Empowerment of social security families and low-income families through the launch of “Tamkeen” programme which seeks to enable the families of social security and low-income families and provide financial support to them in coordination among the competent authorities to start projects for them, implement the electronic promotion programme for productive families in provinces and governorates of the Sultanate, and transfer cases and families to partners such as: Al Raffd Fund, the General Authority for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises and the General Authority for Craft Industries.
- The Sultanate works with its various institutions to provide more than 28 service of assistance, benefits and facilities provided by the social welfare system, which are: exemptions from fees for public services and transaction completion fees in various government service agencies and providing the necessary support at the level of empowerment and employment.
- Anti-poverty programmes also include income-generating, training and employment programmes that help young people to set up projects with returns that support them as a primary source of income.
- The Omani Authority for Craft Industries has made many efforts to improve the economic aspects of traditional artisanship in terms of supporting workers of both sexes in this field, training them on modern bases, and establishing traditional arts and crafts centres to develop Omani handicrafts and diversify their products in many governorates of the Sultanate.
- The Sultanate provides 1500 scholarships annually to the children of the families of social security who wish to pursue higher studies, who do not obtain grants and government scholarships offered by the Ministry of Higher Education or the Ministry of Manpower, to study in universities and private and governmental colleges inside and outside the Sultanate.
- To provide technical and financial support to young people of both sexes to establish income-generating projects, including children of social security and low-income families who wish to establish their own investment projects that provide them with additional income resources based on free work and gain aimed at improving the living standards of these families.
- The Law of Scholarship Fellowships and Study Grants issued by Royal Decree No. 83/2002 and its regulations issued by Ministerial Decree No. (8/2003) is the general legal system governing the provision of scholarships, grants, study subsidies, disbursement of financial and other monetary or in-kind benefits. The provisions of this law shall comply with the principles and rules stipulated in the provisions of the Basic Law of the State, including equality and justice among the citizens concerned with the provisions of this law, including Omani employees in the civil service sector.

#### **Achievements:**

- The number of beneficiaries of the social security pension during the year 2018 was (76377) cases, and (143846) individuals, which constitutes 5.5% of the total number of Omani population (2616916 people) by the end of 2018, received an amount of (118582288) Omani riyals. Citizens in cases of incapacity and old age and divorced

women are the most common beneficiaries of the social security pension, with 86.4% of the total disbursements.

- The total number of jobs available to the children of vulnerable and most needy families in 2018 was 74217 opportunities and 84 opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- The percentage of entrepreneurs supported by Al Raffd Fund is as follows: (job seekers 42.3%, artisans 53.9%, rural women 0.2%, those subject to the Social Security Law 3.6%). The percentage of national labour force in projects by gender is 71.6% male entrepreneurs and 28.4% female entrepreneurs.
- There are (21405) craftsmen and craftswomen, (15) training and productivity centres, (24) craft houses and (300) craft enterprises. In all, 797 creative certificates of intellectual property rights were registered by the end of 2018 and (1062) craftsmen have been supported until the end of 2018.
- The number of students from the families of social security admitted in programmes of government seats and missions and internal and external scholarships, by gender

Statement	2016			2017			2018		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Number of admitted students of social security:	869	1563	2432	806	1462	2268	806	1462	2268

Admitted students in government seats, missions and grants by gender for the academic year 2017/2018	Males	Females	Total
		7994	6563

Source: Ministry of Social Development

- o **√ Expand access to land tenure services, housing and / or finance, technology and / or agricultural extension**

#### **Actions taken:**

- Women have the right to own land. There is no prohibition against women's ownership of all types of land. The Government Land Entitlement Law was amended by Royal Decree No. 125/2008 to ensure that both men and women are entitled to own land granted by the State and women are exempted from registration fees if they are unemployed, widowed or divorced.
- The Sultanate provides the needy families with social housing appropriate for members of the community through the construction of housing units for low-income segments and the provision of housing assistance and affordable housing loans to provide decent living and appropriate housing next to their villages to enable them to carry out their social and economic activities.
- The State provides free grants within the housing assistance programme amounting to OMR 25,000 for the construction of a housing unit. Divorced or abandoned woman who has children in her custody under a court order, widow caring for minors and woman who

married to non-Omani and her minor children living with her, permanent and continuous residence, in the Sultanate provided that the monthly income of the husband does not exceed 300 riyals, shall benefit from the programme.

- The interest-free housing loan programme gives women the right to apply for an interest-free housing loan of OMR 30,000. Working unmarried girl who is the sole breadwinners for her family, working woman who is married to non-Omani and has minors living with her, permanent and continuous residence, in the Sultanate provided that the total monthly income for each husband does not exceed 400 riyals, shall benefit from the programme.
- The Invest Easy Initiative is one of the leading government initiatives in the Sultanate. It is an outstanding example of using global best practices and standards to develop the country's business environment. It is a comprehensive suite of e-services designed to provide the business community with a single window to interact with the government.
- The Ministry of Social Development works on the maintenance and restoration of housing for families of social security, persons with disabilities, the elderly and low-income segments.
- Many initiatives to raise awareness about using technology target the general public, young girls and boys in educational settings. The Information Technology Authority has provided high quality services such as analyzing and responding to cyber threats and sensitizing individuals to them.
- Training workshops for women producers in cooperation with the Information Technology Authority on electronic promotion.
- Cooperation with small and medium enterprises (Entrepreneurship) for the establishment of training workshops covering several topics, including e-promotion and feasibility studies.
- Work is underway to create a web page on the website of the Ministry of Social Development, which deals with the online promotion of women and productive families.

#### **Achievements:**

- A total of 696 public housing units have been distributed to most needy segments during the years 2011-2015.
- The number of women benefiting from the housing assistance and housing loan programmes from 2014 to 2018 was about 612 Omani women, while the number of women granted residential land during the same period was more than 103,000.
- Media projects and campaigns have been launched, including 220 awareness-raising workshops in the field of cybersecurity in 62 government institutions with participants of both sexes.
- In all, 31.8% of the total reports on incidents related to information security, including reporting of extortion cases, in 2018 were delivered by females.
- The Information Technology Authority distributed 35600 computers to the beneficiaries of social security pensions and trained 6000 of the children of that segment on the basics of computer and Internet use, 311 craftsmen and productive families on how to use social media in marketing products and 30 persons with hearing disabilities on the Cambridge programme and distributed a computer to each trainee. It has established 10 centres for the knowledge society for women in different governorates of the Sultanate.
- An integrated chapter for rural women has been allocated to the National Strategy for Agricultural Development (2015-2040). The components of this strategy make balance between the requirements of workers, including rural women, involved in agricultural, livestock and fishing activities and the conservation of natural resources as an essential element natural and environmental balance.
  - o ✓ **To support women entrepreneurship development activities**

**Actions taken:**

- The establishment of Al Raffd Fund by Royal Decree (6/2013) to support commercial projects for Omani youth of both sexes.
- The establishment of the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada) by the Royal Decree (36/2013) to support entrepreneurship and to strengthen the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in providing multiple and renewable employment opportunities for both sexes. Among the most prominent initiatives in the Authority: the establishment of an investment map, the preparation of the business environment, supporting technical programmes of small enterprises and beyond, the provision of a full range of technical and advisory services, namely (Guidance programme, the programme to support the winners of the Entrepreneurship Award, the Entrepreneurs market initiative and the comprehensive assessment programme).
- To continue to fund projects targeting women, as mentioned previously, including the Al Raffd Fund, the Agricultural Development Fund and the Oman Development Bank.

**Achievements:**

- More than 31 thousand institutions representing all vital sectors have been registered in Riyada until the end of December 2017, (23%) of which owned by females. The percentage of national manpower in projects of Al Raffd Fund by gender was 71.6% for male entrepreneurs and 28.4% for female entrepreneurs during 2017.
  - o ✓ **Introduction or strengthening of social protection programmes for women and girls (eg cash transfers for women with children, plans for public works / employment insurance for women of working age, old-age pensions)**

**Actions taken:**

- As mentioned in the first section, pension systems provide social protection for the employee and their dependents under the umbrella of social security to obtain a pension that guarantees and provides the employee with a decent life after the end of his service and the entitlement of his dependents to receive the pension in the event of his death. Employees of the civil service sector are subject to the Post-Service Pensions and Benefits Act for the Omani government employees referred to above.
  - o ✓ **To provide / strengthen low-cost legal services for women living in poverty**

**Actions taken:**

- The ministerial decree (91/2009) issued by the Minister of Justice regulates legal aid for indigent persons.
- The length of time for litigation in Sharia Courts varies depends on the dispute and the case before the court. However, the legislator took into account the speed of resolving personal status cases, that is why the date of appeal shall be within 15 days, as opposed to other cases of which the date of appeal shall be within (30) days, in addition to the confidentiality of the hearings.
- Working on promoting women's legal awareness through legal literacy in coordination with relevant authorities and civil society organizations, which are working to disseminate explanatory memorandums issued by the Ministry of Social Development to laws related to women through the implementation of awareness and education programmes targeting all segments of society and all governorates of the Sultanate.

**10. What actions have your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

- ✓ **To provide or strengthen social protection for unemployed women (eg unemployment benefits, public works programmes and social assistance)**

**Actions taken:**

- The social safety nets in the Sultanate provide the arrangements and capabilities available to care for individuals who are unable to obtain adequate means of living by ensuring that they have a decent life that preserves their human dignity and prevents them from engaging in socially unacceptable activities, such as social security and social assistance programmes, which have already been referred to.
  - ✓ **Provide or enhance conditional cash transfers**
  - ✓ **Provision or enhancement of non-contributory social pensions**
- The Royal Orders issued on November 11, 2013, concerning the standardization of salaries for the different categories of employees in the country, as well as the standardization of pension benefits and liabilities of beneficiaries towards the pension funds, represent a qualitative leap in the formulation of public policies related to the social protection system in the Sultanate.
- Social assistance mainly consists of cash assistance programmes provided by the Ministry of Social Development for those unable to work, especially the elderly, divorced women, widows and abandoned women.
- Targeted segments of social security assistance have increased to reach (8) social groups, which are orphans, widows, divorcees, the disabled, the elderly, families of prisoners, abandoned and unmarried females. The number of cases benefiting from the social security pension increased to reach (76377) cases according to the latest statistics until 31/12/2018 and an amount of 118,582,288 Omani riyal was paid.
  - ✓ **To reform social security programmes based on contributions to enhance women's access and benefit**
- The Ministry of Social Development provided a package of facilities and advantages to support the social security sector, including:
  - ✓ Facilities in the form of exemptions: from health, housing, municipality, labour force and judicial fees.
  - ✓ Facilities in the form of financial aid: monthly or lump sum payments such as school allowances for school and university students, payment of illness, the two Eids grant, the payment of condolence assistance in case of demise and payment to cover the Haj performance expenses.
  - ✓ Empowerment facilities that improve the status of the family: such as employment, training; empowerment of their income-generating projects, internal educational missions, maintenance and repair of houses and in-kind facilities such as food, furniture, laptops for children of the social security families, land, maids and prosthetic devices, etc.
- ✓ **To improve access to all of the above for certain population groups (eg women working in informal jobs, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian situations)**

**11. What actions have your country taken in the last five years to improve the health outcomes of women and girls?**

✓ **Promote women's access to health services by expanding comprehensive health coverage or public health services**

**Actions taken:**

- The Sultanate is working to ensure advanced levels of health rights, in a fair and equal manner for citizens and residents, committed to providing free health care and spreading it to various governorates. Government health expenditure in 2017-2018 was equivalent to 6.25%, which is reflected in the quality of health services. There are (1583) public and private hospitals and health units in the Sultanate until 2017.
- Pregnancy, birth, and post-natal health services are provided in parts of the Sultanate through health care institutions at no cost for rural Omani women on a par with urban women. The State bears the transportation cost of citizens who live in remote areas.
- The Ministry of Health has adopted the birth control implant as a long-term means of spacing between births that were offered in primary health care institutions for the first time in 2016, while continuing to provide primary and secondary counselling services in primary health care centres and to provide women with birth spacing means.
- Continue to provide HIV / AIDS testing services to pregnant women in all health institutions of the Ministry of Health, which has been introduced since 2009.

#### **Achievements:**

- Providing 65 health centres with delivery beds in remote villages by the end of 2016. The obstetric care in these centres are provided by trained midwives.
- The number of Omani doctors increased in 2016 to 1.9 thousand doctors, of which 61% females.
- Health indicators for women have improved significantly. Life expectancy of females increased to 79.3 years in 2016 compared to 74.7 years for males.
- The maternal mortality rate decreased from 17.8 per 100,000 live births in 2012 to 13.4 in 2016.
- The crude birth rate (per 1000 inhabitants) increased from (32.1) in 2012 to (33.7) in 2016.
- Anaemia in registered pregnant women fell from 27.9% in 2010 to 26.7% in 2016.
- The Sultanate also maintained a high coverage rate for women's health care during pregnancy (99%) and a high rate of births under medical supervision (99%). The coverage of HIV / AIDS examination for women during pregnancy was 92.6 in 2016.
- The crude birth rate (per 1000 inhabitants) increased from (29.4) in 2011 to (33.7) in 2016.
- The total fertility rate (live births per woman aged 15-49 years) increased from (3.24) in 2011 to 4.0 in 2016.
- Abortion rates drop from 10.8 in 2012 to 9.7 in 2016 for every 1000 women aged 15-49.
  - o ✓ **Public awareness campaigns / public health**
- Girls are involved in schools in awareness and education campaigns for mothers both inside and outside the school.
- The Ministry of Education cooperates with a number of bodies including the Oman Cancer Association to provide awareness programmes and examinations for school girls, and the administrative, teaching and technical authorities in schools to raise awareness and early detection of breast cancer.
- Continue to activate “Facts of Life Book” in schools for grades 10 and 11, which include topics aimed at improving life.
- Continue the implementation of the national programme to provide health services for menopausal women, counselling and health education on menopausal signs and symptoms, train competent staff and provide institutions with all the services they need.
  - o ✓ **Providing gender mainstreaming training for health service providers**

#### **Actions taken:**



- Training competent staff, providing counselling and health education on menopausal signs and symptoms, and providing the institutions with all the services they need.
- Training medical staff on resuscitation techniques for newly born infants in maternity wards as well as children with critical injuries in emergencies and accidents department of hospitals.
- Training specialists in neonatal transport from health institutions to hospitals to ensure optimal care of the baby during the transport.
  - ✓ **Promote comprehensive sex education in schools or through programmes**
- The adolescent health programme, which aims at introducing adolescence and its changes and sexual education at this phase, is being implemented, in addition to peer education programme, which includes a theme on AIDS.
- Dissemination of a guidance booklet for social and psychological specialists and health education professionals on the need to implement awareness programmes for female students relating to the avoidance of harmful physical practices and sexual harassment.
- Raising awareness topics in the instructional sections included in “My Positive Personality” booklets and adolescent health manuals.
  - ✓ **Provide refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian situations with access to sexual and reproductive health services.**

**12. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to improve the outcomes and skills of women and girls?**

- ✓ **Take measures to increase girls' access to education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development programmes and to pursue and finish their studies.**

**Actions taken:**

- Education in the Sultanate is available for all. Equal education opportunities are provided to women and girls. The Ministry of Education issues annual statistical reports in which education statistics are disaggregated according to sex and age for Omani and non-Omani students, as are statistics in the reports issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.
- Running literacy branches and centres for grades 1-3 and adult education centres for grades 7-12 in all governorates of the Sultanate for both sexes who have dropped out of school and wish to pursue their studies.
- The “Literate Village” Programme, launched in 2004/2005, aims to meet the literacy need of a village resident, males and females, in a specific period. By the end of 2018, there were 30 literate villages. It emphasizes not only principles of reading, writing and arithmetic but also support programmes and related life skills (health, religious, social, cultural) including lectures, seminars and workshops (for sewing, embroidery, reciting and reading Quran) and marketing of students’ products in various exhibitions.
- The project to eradicate illiteracy of Omani illiterates in the islands and the coastal villages (Marsis, Al Hillaniyat, Lima, Kumzar). This project aims at eradicating the illiteracy of residents of both sexes and raising social awareness through the use of different educational methods and formulas within the targeted islands.
- The electronic registration of students in the literacy classes: aims to register students enrolled in literacy classes electronically through the educational portal before the beginning of the academic year to facilitate the registration of students from their places of residence and to ensure accurate data for the people, centres and numbers of students and to reduce the phenomenon of reflux of learners with literacy system to illiteracy again.
- Employment and vocational counselling services are available for all male and female students in the Sultanate’s governorates. Female students are counselled about the paths

open to them when they are in tenth through twelfth grade (such as the higher education path, the entrepreneurial path and the vocational and technical training and qualification path).

#### **Achievements:**

- Statistics show that the number of schools in the Sultanate reached (1553) in the academic year 2013/2014 and rose to (1808) schools in the Sultanate's different governorates in the academic year 2017/2018.
- The net enrolment rate in primary education between 6-11 years for the academic year 2015/2016 was about (98.3%), and the adjusted net enrolment rate in education for age group (12-14) was (95,6 %) in 2015/2016. According to the National Statistics and Information Centre, illiteracy rate for the age group (15-79) in 2017 was 6.25% compared to (10.19%) in 2012.
  - o ✓ **Strengthen educational curricula to increase gender mainstreaming and eliminate bias at all levels of education.**
- The Ministry of Education reviews and prepares curricula designed to inculcate knowledge, skills and approaches that are connected to economic and labour market developments and scientific, technological and cultural advancements. National cadres and experts help develop such curricula without discriminating between men and women.
  - o ✓ **Provide training on gender equality and human rights for teachers and other professionals in education.**

#### **Actions taken:**

- The "Positive Personality" booklets, prepared in collaboration with UNICEF, were developed and disseminated in grades 10-12. They include booklet on family and its functions, the concept of married life, the “Intercultural Dialogue”, “My Legal Culture”, and “My Personal Skills” booklet. These booklets include knowledge and skills to empower girls in society.
- The Law of Scholarship Fellowships and Study Grants issued by Royal Decree No. 83/2002 and its regulations issued by Ministerial Decree No. (8/2003) is the general legal system governing the provision of scholarships, grants, study subsidies, disbursement of financial and other monetary or in-kind benefits. The provisions of this law shall comply with the principles and rules stipulated in the provisions of the Basic Law of the State, including equality and justice among the citizens concerned with the provisions of this law, including Omani employees in the civil service sector.
- The statistical indicators show that the percentage of females who were sent to study missions in the civil service sector increased in 2017 to 44% compared with 43% in 2014 of the total number of employees who were sent.

Certificate to be obtained	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
PhD	48	67	42	57	69	111	72	125
Masters	285	361	213	283	372	167	370	434
Higher Diploma	16	13	32	29	62	23	92	21
Baccalaureate or licentiate	391	540	526	676	259	349	123	264

Diploma	28	29	60	32	4	23	19	13
Total	768	1010	873	1077	766	673	676	857

Source: Ministry of Civil Service

- A subsidization of the cost of a personal computer, for students of higher education enrolled in the first year of study in the Sultanate, in addition to teachers who are graduates of the Government IT Training & Certification (GITTC) project. The initiative aimed at enabling different segments of society to use computers and internet. During the initiative, 120343 computer devices and 85,000 modems were distributed with the share of females standing at 50% of each.
- The non-Omani Higher Education Institution Recognition and Academic Degree Equivalence Regulations issued by Ministerial Decision No. (21/2015) of the Ministry of Higher Education. The decision stipulates the formation of a committee, and defines its terms of reference by the recognition and cancellation of higher education institutions in accordance with the provisions of these regulations, the equivalence of the educational qualifications granted by them, and others. The regulations include the bases of recognition and equivalence of educational qualifications granted by these institutions, thus providing educational opportunities for a wide range of students.
  - o ✓ **Promoting safe, non-harassment and inclusive educational environments for women and girls**
- The Ministry of Education is keen to provide a safe educational environment for women by entrusting female teachers to supervise the first cycle of basic education (1-4) in order to achieve the highest level of care for young girls because they understand the need for children at this stage for maternal care. (5-12) female schools are independent of male schools. Female teachers teach girls and male teachers teach boys; at the age of 18 years, girls become able to protect themselves from harassment and misconducts of people around them, and ready to study in mixed university.
  - o ✓ **Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging areas, in particular STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and fluency and digital literacy**
- There is continuous encouragement for girls to become involved in the various fields of science. The available digital statistics indicate that female enrolment in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics is increasing. Girls are continuously encouraged to become involved in scientific fields. Educational statistics for the year 2015-2016 indicate scientific disciplines and fields such as mathematics and sciences are female-dominated with 46% in pure mathematics compared to 44.3% for males, 46% in physics compared to 55.5 % for males and 46% in chemistry compared to 45.2% for males.
  - o ✓ **Ensure access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitate menstrual hygiene management, particularly in schools and other educational / training facilities**
- The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Counselling and Awareness Programmes in the field of women in general, and the rural women, implement the Adolescent Health Programme, which includes a set of evidence. One of the programme guides for girls is the Girls' Guide to Positive Life for grades 6-8 and ages 10-12, and contains a number of concepts of adolescence and personal hygiene for girls.
- The "My Positive Personality" booklets, prepared in collaboration with UNICEF, were developed and disseminated in grades 10-12, including booklet on family, the concept of married life and their functions, in addition to "the Intercultural Dialogue", "My Legal

Culture” and “My Personal Skills” booklets. These booklets include knowledge and skills to empower girls in society.

- Female students are counselled to choose subjects related to body safety and avoiding harmful behaviours in the “Facts of Life” competition.
- Validating the handbook of protecting students from abuse after its issuance, and taking advantage of the remedial and preventive measures included in the awareness handbook.
- The “Girls for a Positive Life” handbook works to raise awareness of the physical, mental, psychological and social changes and signs of puberty, and how to deal with this phase positively. There are also other booklets such as: "My Positive Personality", "Peer Educators' Guides", “Facts for life in the School Environment” and "Adolescent Health”. The Department of Counselling and Awareness in the Ministry of Education is constantly raising awareness in this regard, and organizing awareness-raising symposia for girls about growth, preventive and therapeutic aspects and problems facing them.
  - o ✓ **Strengthen measures to prevent teenage pregnancy and enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the event of pregnancy and / or maternity**
- In order to promote measures preventing teenage pregnancy and empower adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy / maternity, the Ministry of Education has amended the Student Affairs Regulations, removing the text that prohibits married female student from continuing her regular studies and gives her the opportunity to continue her study provided that she complies with the established regulations. In case of maternity leave, her absence is considered a medical excuse.

## **Combating violence, stigma and stereotypes**

### Areas of critical concerns:

D. Violence against woman

T. Human Rights of Women

K. Women and the media

L. The Girl-child

### **13. In the last five years, what forms of violence against women and girls, and in which contexts or places, have they given priority to action?**

- o **Husband violence / domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape**
- o ✓ **Sexual harassment and violence in public places, in educational settings and at work.**

### **Actions taken:**

- The Sultanate guaranteed the protection of women from all forms of violence (including sexual violence, domestic abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace) through a number of legislation:
  - ✓ The Penal Code issued by Royal Decree No. (7/2018) abolished the Omani Penal Code issued by Royal Decree No. (7/74). The new law provided for the protection of women from all forms of physical and psychological violence, rape and non-violent indecent assault, defamation and slander, denial of the right to inheritance, forced prostitution and whoring.
  - ✓ The Law on the Combating of Human Trafficking promulgated by Royal Decree No.126/2008 guarantees the right of human trafficking victims to receive compensation for being subjected to trafficking crimes.

- ✓ Human trafficking victims are exempted from judicial fees when filing claims to receive compensation under Article 17 of the Law on the Combating of Human Trafficking.
- ✓ The Law of the Child (22/2014), article 7, states that the child has the right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, as well as the right to humane and decent treatment that preserves his or her dignity, reputation and honour.
- ✓ Article (56) of the same law prohibits any person to undertake any of the following acts:
  1. The abduction or sale of a child, or removal of any of his or her organs in any way, whether or not for consideration;
  2. Rape, non-violent indecent assault or sexual harassment against a child;
  3. The incitement or coercion of a child to engage in any sexual activity, or the exploitation of a child in prostitution, any other sexual practices or any pornographic performances or material.
- ✓ **Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (eg, cyber bullying, online stalking)**
  - In order to ensure the legal rights of customers through the initiatives of the Digital Society of Oman in the use of ICTs to conduct various formal and personal contacts and to complete transactions, the Information Technology Authority (ITA) has set up laws for electronic use in Oman to provide a high level of confidence in individuals, businesses and government units in the process of completing transactions electronically.
  - The Cyber Crime Law issued by the Royal Decree (12/2011) in 2011, in line with the tremendous technological and informational revolution witnessed by the Sultanate in order to tackle cybercrime through the development of deterrent laws for those who use ICT in a negative way affecting others or the interests of the state in general. Articles 14-18 focused on the tightening of penalties for any person who uses the informational network or the information technology facilities for pornography, extortion or seduction, whether targeting, a juvenile or a female or family and public life.
  - The Electronic Transactions Law issued by Royal Decree No. 69/2008 regulates several important issues, including: public digital legitimacy, electronic payment, data protection system, legal recognition of electronic signature, electronic contracts, recognition of electronic receipt letters, protection of customer data privacy and others. The law aims to facilitate electronic transactions, enhance the confidence of the business community and society in the use of electronic transactions and protect the privacy of individuals used for electronic transactions.
  - With regard to information security and the provision of a safe structure, the Authority has provided high quality services such as analyzing and responding to cyber threats and sensitizing individuals of both sexes to them. Through the National Centre for Information Safety, a number of projects and information campaigns have been implemented, including: 220 awareness workshops in the field of cyber security in 62 government institutions for individuals of both sexes.
  - In relation to the reporting of incidents related to information security, including the reporting of extortion cases, 31.8% of the total number of reports in 2018 delivered by females.
- ✓ **Marriage of minors, early marriage and forced marriage**

**Actions taken:**

- The Personal Status Law, Article (7), sets the age of marriage at 18 years for males and females. Marriages must be recorded in an official register as stipulated in Article (6) of the Personal Status Law. The law exempts from this the cases of marriage in which the

marriage of a person who has not completed 18 years of age is carried out with the permission of the judge and after the verification of the interest. Thus, marriage cases for persons under 18 years of age are legally carried out with the permission of the competent judge and after verifying the interest in the husband.

- With regard to the minimum age for marriage, early marriage is not a phenomenon in Omani society.
- According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the average age at first marriage in the Sultanate increased to 28 years for males and 26 years for females.

○ ✓ **Female Genital Mutilation**

**Actions taken:**

- The Ministry of Health, through its health centres, is making efforts to raise awareness of the wrong health practices, including female circumcision. Article (20) of the Child Law prohibits anyone, particularly for physicians, nurses and guardians, to carry out, promote or contribute to traditional practices that are harmful to the health of the child.
- Article (67) of the Child Law: Any person who violates the provisions of articles (17) and (20) of the present law shall be subject to imprisonment for a period of not less than six (6) months and not more than three (3) years; and the sentence, in its minimum and maximum limits, shall be doubled in case of relapse.
- The regulations of the Child Act will define harmful practices for children of both sexes, including female circumcision.

○ ✓ **Trafficking in women and girls**

**Actions taken:**

- The Law on the Combating of Human Trafficking defines the crime of trafficking in human beings as the perpetration of any of the acts mentioned in Article (2) of this law. Article (2) of the law stipulates that the perpetrator of the crime of trafficking in persons is anyone who intentionally and for the purpose of exploitation.
- The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking is responsible for developing action plans to combat trafficking in human beings in coordination with the competent authorities with the aim of clarifying the practical and procedural aspects related to the Law on the Combating of Human Trafficking in the Sultanate, as well as the roles of the concerned parties in implementing this law, creating an integrated national system that ensures coordination of national efforts between the different internal and external bodies, finding appropriate mechanisms for collecting and analyzing information related to the crime of human trafficking in the Sultanate in order to know its different directions at the national, regional and international levels.
- The committee also coordinates with all relevant authorities in the Sultanate and international bodies and organizations to establish regulations and procedures to combat the crime of transnational trafficking in human beings and to prepare a database in coordination with local, regional and international bodies includes international legislation related to the crime of human trafficking. It has formulated programmes for the care and rehabilitation of victims to facilitate integration in society, and programmes to train the implementers of this law.

**Achievements:**

Main efforts of law enforcement agencies:

**a. The Royal Oman Police**

- ✓ Raising the awareness of workers in the criminal justice system of human trafficking crimes (courses, training workshops, curriculum, adopting the subject in the nomination courses).
- ✓ Operating cooperation between authorities in other countries.
- ✓ Raising awareness at airports, ports, workplaces and places to complete transactions through brochures and leaflets explaining the mechanisms of assistance.
- ✓ Setting up a hotline in the Directorate General of Criminal Investigation and Investigation to receive reports.

#### **b. Public Prosecution**

The Role of Public Prosecution in raising awareness of the Law.

- ✓ It role in the gathering of inferences (guidance of follow-up of traffickers, follow-up of reports).
- ✓ It role in investigations.
- ✓ It role in the trial phase (secrecy of hearings, right of objection, request for protection).
- Explain to the victim his or her legal rights in a language he understands.
- Check with the victims, if they need certain care or accommodation.
- Provide the necessary protection to the victim or witness when he or she needs it.
- Allow the victim or witness to remain in the Sultanate if such investigation or trial is required.

#### **Community Legal Awareness:**

- The Public Prosecution and Community programme, which broadcasts every Sunday of every week. The idea of the programme is to introduce legal materials from national penal legislation, host prosecutors and specialists from relevant bodies, and open the door for live dialogue with the public.
- Community and Law magazine issued by the Public Prosecution disseminates legal awareness by presenting facts about cases and judgments and how a person can protect himself from being a crime perpetrator or victim. It publishes also legal articles and research.
- The Media Committee of the Public Prosecution organizes lectures for all levels of society.

#### **c. Ministry of Health**

The assistance provided by the Ministry of Health to victims of human trafficking in emergencies includes the following services:

- To ensure the physical integrity of the victim and providing treatment with the bed inside the hospital if necessary, in addition to food and medicine free of charge.
- Evaluate physical health and provide the necessary care directly in the following cases: Injuries resulting from physical violence or physical assault, malnutrition, infections, oral and dental injuries, gynaecological examinations, pregnancy.
- Evaluate the mental state and provide necessary care in the case of mental injuries resulting from physical, sexual or mental violence.

#### **d. Ministry of Social Development**

- The Family Protection Department was established by Ministerial Decision No. (230/2012).
- The regulations of Dar Al-Wifaq were issued by Ministerial Resolution No. (228/2013) and amended by the Ministerial Resolution (104/2014).
- The Department provides the following services to the beneficiaries:
  - ✓ Stay in Dar Al-Wifaq and use its facilities (bedroom - living room - kitchen - activity room).

- ✓ Psychological care: to help victims to achieve stability.
- ✓ Social care: Female workers restore the victim's confidence
- ✓ Health care: providing treatment services to ensure that patients are free from disease.
- ✓ Legal follow-up: through the presence of a legal researcher in the department.
- Article (56) of the Child Act: It is prohibited to any person to undertake any of the following acts: the abduction or sale of a child, or removal of any of his or her organs in any way, whether or not for consideration; rape, non-violent indecent assault or sexual harassment against a child; the incitement or coercion of a child to engage in any sexual activity, or the exploitation of a child in prostitution, any other sexual practices or any pornographic performances or material.

**14. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to address violence against women and girls?**

- ✓ **To introduce or strengthen laws prohibiting violence against women, their application and implementation**

**Actions taken:**

- Penal Code issued by Royal Decree No. (7/2018) abolished the Omani Penal Code issued by Royal Decree No. (7/74). The new law provided for the protection of women from all forms of physical and psychological violence, rape and non-violent indecent assault, defamation and slander, denial of the right to inheritance, forced prostitution and whoring.
- The Sultanate believes that domestic and sexual violence does not constitute a phenomenon that requires an independent law to regulate it, and that existing legislations are sufficient to deter perpetrators and prosecute them before the competent courts and to impose deterrent penalties against the perpetrators of such crimes. People exposed to sexual abuse shall be treated as a victim and the law guarantees them all necessary measures to defend their rights and punish the perpetrators. Pursuant to Royal Decree No. 72/2001, the Sultanate repealed Article (252) of the Penal Code, under which a man who kills or injures his wife, mother, sister or daughter after having surprised her while she was committing a dishonourable act may receive a reduced penalty or be exempted from punishment.
- ✓ **Introduce or strengthen measures to increase women's access to justice (such as the establishment of specialized courts, judicial and police training, protection orders, redress and reparations, including cases of women's murder).**

**Actions taken:**

- One of the general rules applied by the judiciary is that a person has the right to submit a request for protection and if the judge considers that it is necessary in the case, the protection orders shall be issued.
- There is no evidence that the courts of various types and levels discriminate against women. Article (59) of the Basic Law of the State provides that "the rule of Law shall be the basis of governance in the State. The dignity of the judiciary, and the integrity and impartiality of the judges are a guarantee for the rights and freedoms". Hence, the judiciary treats all litigants equally and does not discriminate among them. Discrimination in the courts violates the law and anyone who engages in such discrimination is held legally accountable. The laws regulating litigation procedures also provide litigants recourse if they suspect they may be subject to discrimination, including multiple appeal levels, procedures for lodging claims for damages against judges for miscarriage of justice and procedures for demanding the removal of judges.
- The right to litigate is protected and guaranteed to all persons, male and female, under Article (25) of the Basic Law of the State, which states that "Litigation is a protected right



and it is guaranteed to all people. The Law shall prescribe the procedures and conditions necessary to exercise this right, and the State shall guarantee, as far as possible, the approximation of judicial authorities to litigants and the prompt settlement of cases". Article (23) of the same law provides that "the accused has the right to appoint a person capable of undertaking his defence during the trial. The Law shall define the circumstances where the presence of a lawyer on behalf of the accused is required, and shall ensure, for those who are financially unable, the means to seek judicial redress and defend their rights". Hence, the Basic Law of the State guarantees access to the judiciary as a fundamental right of the individual. It also provides for legal aid for persons who lack the means for legal recourse. In order to implement these provisions of the Basic Law of the State, the Ministry of Justice issued Ministerial Decision No. 91/2009 regulating legal aid for indigent persons. The decision exempts persons unable to bear judicial costs from payment of judicial fees, provides for the appointment of a lawyer to defend their rights and grants them legal assistance to cover judicial announcement publication fees and experts' expenses.

- The Royal Decree (55/2010) made amendments in some laws regarding the jurisdiction of the Sharia Court Chamber in the Supreme Court in the adjudication of lawsuits concerning the prevention of marriage. It establishes a woman's right to resort to the judiciary if her guardian objects to her choice of husband and she may appeal a judgment to deny her action to His Majesty the Sultan. Protection orders are issued in such cases.
- The Ministry of Social Development, within the framework of its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or other human rights programmes, offers workshops and training courses targeting judicial institutions and all legal professions. The Council of Administrative Affairs for the Judiciary undertakes great efforts to rehabilitate and train cadres in the various areas required by judicial action, including women's rights, whether in relation to personal status law or other laws relating to women's affairs.
- The Ministry of Social Development, within the framework of its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or other human rights programs, implements workshops and training courses aimed at judicial institutions and all legal professions. The Administrative Affairs Council of the Judiciary undertakes great efforts to rehabilitate and train cadres in the various areas required by judicial action, including women's rights, whether in relation to Personal Status Law or other laws relating to women's affairs.
- The Sultanate has made assiduous efforts to spread awareness of, and to protect, human rights, including the rights of women. In this regard, the Ministry of Social Development, the body concerned with women's affairs in the Sultanate has made major strides in raising awareness of human rights and promoting the adoption of a human rights perspective. The Ministry contributed to the promotion of awareness of women's rights in the Sultanate by organizing many programmes, conferences and seminars at the national level. These efforts include the issuance of memoranda explaining the channels and procedures through which women may access the judiciary to demand their legally guaranteed rights and to seek justice if their rights are violated.
- In addition, civil-society institutions play an effective role concerning women's rights. For example, in 2017, the Omani Women's Association in Sib collaborated with the Omani Journalists' Association to organize awareness-raising programmes in 2017 that reviewed and explained the Convention and raised women's awareness of the rights covered by the Convention. The Oman Human Rights Commission also holds many human rights activities and training workshops.
- The culture of the protection of women's rights has been strengthened through the holding of many training courses and legal education programmes in the schools, the broadcasting

of radio and television interviews, the publication of articles in the local newspapers and the preparation of publications for distribution to all governmental and non-governmental bodies.

- Numerous specialized bodies have been established in the Sultanate to guarantee the rights of women and their ability to defend those rights, such as the Oman Human Rights Commission, in addition to what the Ministry of Social Development do through the implementation of a number of family protection awareness programmes and reporting mechanisms in the various governorates.
- ✓ **Provision or strengthening of services provided to survivors of violence (eg shelters, helplines, ad hoc health services, legal services, justice services, counselling and housing)**
- ✓ **Actions taken:**
  - Establishing the Dar Al-Wifaq of the Department of Family Protection of the Ministry of Social Development and issuing its regulations by Ministerial Decision (228/2013) and amended by Ministerial Decision (104/2014) issued by the Ministry of Social Development. It provides safe-house facilities to protect women and children from violence, including women who are prevented from marriage or subjected to trafficking.
  - The Dar Al-Wifaq provides temporary shelter, care and legal counselling for survivors of violence and beneficiary cases. Legal, medical, psychological and rehabilitation assistance is provided to women victims of violence through official specialists and in cooperation with relevant institutions and NGOs. Legal assistance to victims through legal researchers aims at making the victims aware of their rights guaranteed by the laws and following up cases in the judicial bodies and expediting them for the benefit of the victim. The Ministry of Social Development formed the technical committee by decision (35/2015), which includes doctors from the Ministry of Health and a number of specialists from the Ministry Social development. The social and psychological specialists work to monitor and evaluate cases and implement programmes related to the rehabilitation of victims.
  - The Ministry of Social Development has established a free telephone protection hotline (1100) to receive complaints, provide counselling services and refer cases to the relevant authorities when necessary. The hotline staff counsels callers, provides them with appropriate options for addressing their problems and helps protect their rights.
  - Annual plans for the provision of preventive, curative and awareness-raising services for women and children at risk. A workshop on the causes and risks of human trafficking was held in 2014. In 2016, a workshop entitled "Protecting women from violence" was held in 2017 about providing care for human trafficking victims.

**A table showing the cases of women who have been accommodated at Dar Al-Wifaq from 2014-2018**

Category	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of women subjected to prevention of marriage and accommodated at Dar Al-Wifaq	44	34	36	49	43
Number of women at risk of being	2	5	3	1	4

abused accommodated at Dar Al-Wifaq					
Number of victims of human trafficking accommodated at Dar Al-Wifaq	10	2	15	20	23
Total	56	41	54	70	70

Source: Ministry of Social Development

- ✓ **Provide or strengthen strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (eg education, media, community mobilization, working with men and boys)**

**Actions taken:**

- The strategy of the education philosophy contained a number of themes and general principles anchored to human rights and girls through educational policies aimed at the continuous development of education at all stages and types.
- The National Strategy for Childhood (2016-2025) adopts the mechanism for working on the integrated and comprehensive approach to children's rights based on human rights, especially children's rights. It includes a number of strategic goals and objectives in ensuring the protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect, establishing an enabling environment for the protection of all children without exception. It focuses on preventive treatment and rehabilitation services.
- Institutional mechanisms to deal with cases of violence and abuse, such as the Child Protection Committees, have been charged with receiving complaints and reports on cases of violence, exploitation, abuse and other violations against the rights of the child of both sexes. Members of the Committee have the status of judicial officer in the application of the provisions of the Children's Code.
- The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education has taken many measures to protect abused women and girls through cases that reach hospitals or health centres or are observed in schools.

**Achievements:**

- ✓ **Introduce or strengthen measures to better understand the causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for the implementation of measures to end violence against women and girls**

**Actions taken:**

- Conducting studies on violence against women, (whether by the Sultan Qaboos University, within scientific theses, or by some relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health).
- Training male and female trainers in the field of protection to raise awareness and address the problems of cases that are dealt with. The team of trainers makes the definition of the Child Law and laws related to women, and the principles of protection of the most important priorities of the lectures and programmes they implement. The percentage of lectures that tackled Child Law was (76%) of the total lectures during 2018.

- Preparing training manuals for child protection staff.
- The Marital Counselling Programme, targeting a large segment of the society, explains the principles and rules of creating a stable family life and the rights and duties of husband and wife.

**15. What strategies have your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?**

- ✓ **Increase public awareness and change attitudes and behaviours**
  - The Executive Plan of the Social Action Strategy of the Ministry of Social Development adopted a number of activities and programmes aimed at raising public awareness about family protection and cohesion and enhancing the status of women and girls in the family:
    - ✓ Strengthen the services provided to the delinquents through appropriate training and rehabilitation programmes for children exposed to delinquency in partnership with other concerned parties, develop a programme of action with the juvenile delinquent family to improve the environment and prepare the family to receive and host the juvenile to prevent his return to delinquency.
    - ✓ In order to achieve the main impact of the family and community development chapter "a cohesive, stable, safe and sustainable family that contributes to sustainable social development", the Ministry works through activities and programmes to achieve two main outcomes: equitable, indicator-based national policies, legislation and programmes that support families stability and cohesion; integrated early childhood development is a national priority supported by government commitment, dedicated resources, institutional capacity and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms.
    - ✓ In order to move towards a systems approach to the protection of women, children and the family, the Ministry is working with partners to identify protection policies, legislation and services, and to develop a national framework that defines the roles and responsibilities of all relevant authorities and coordinates them for prevention and response and the protection and rehabilitation of women and children facing violence, exploitation or abuse.
- ✓ **Change the representation of women and girls in the media**
  - The Ministry of Information governs and supervises the media sector in the Sultanate and seeks to develop the Omani media performance in order to enhance the Sultanate's position internally and externally by organizing media work and promoting media professionals of both sexes in addition to its commitment to provide effective and efficient media services.
- ✓ **Working on primary and secondary education, including sex education**
  - The Ministry of Education is keen to provide a safe learning environment for women and girls by making the first cycle of basic education (1-4) under the supervision of female teachers in order to achieve the highest level of care for young girls, and because female teacher understands the need of children at this stage. The second cycle (5-12) has also set up independent female schools for male schools, female teachers teach females and male teachers teach males.
  - In order to raise public awareness and change perceptions and behaviours towards violence, the Peer Education Programme includes some anti-violence themes, as well as the Adolescent Health Programme.
  - The production of a film entitled "Extortion" aims to educate youth about the dangers of extortion and the solutions that should be followed when this happens.
  - ✓ **Working with men and boys, community awareness and the Marital Counselling Programme**

- The Marital Counselling Programme “Tamasuk” is important in enabling and preparing prospective partners to build a family on sound, proper foundations. It introduces the woman and the man to marriage and explains its importance and social, psychological, legal and sharia dimensions. The couple is furnished with the skills and knowledge needed to successfully deal with the challenges and requirements of married life to help them create a stable, sustainable family life and to increase their awareness of the importance of taking into account sound principles and sharia rules for selecting a partner. Premarital counselling also increases their awareness of the importance of undergoing a medical examination and the necessary tests before marriage. It raises awareness regarding marital rights and duties and key laws concerning the family.
- The production of films and videos balance the roles of men and society in family life.
- Implementation of awareness and training programmes targeting persons approaching marriage and newly married couples enrolled in universities and colleges.

#### **Achievements:**

- The Marital Counselling Programme offered (15) training courses in 2018 benefiting 1985 persons of both sexes.
- The Ministry of Social Development disseminates awareness messages on social media concerning the integration of roles between spouses and the importance of family cohesion.
- **√ Programmes related to offenders**
  - Rehabilitation and training of offenders in prisons and their reintegration into society.

#### **16. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, and unsympathetic sharing of intimate images)?**

- **√ Provide or strengthen legislation and regulatory provisions**
  - As noted earlier, laws on information technology regulate a number of issues related to women and juveniles such as fraud, prostitution, trafficking and exploitation, and reinforce penalties, especially in crimes related to these categories.
- **√ Implement awareness-raising initiatives aimed at the general public, young women and young people in educational settings**
- **√ Work with technology providers to identify and adhere to good business practices**

#### **17. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to address the portrayal of women and girls and / or discrimination and / or bias against women in the media?**

- **√ Enact, strengthen and enforce legal reforms to combat discrimination and / or gender bias in the media**
  - The Basic Law of the state guarantees equality between men and women. In light of this principle, the laws and regulations in the media in the Sultanate are clear and do not discriminate between the sexes, whether in the field of training or qualification, or in positions of leadership and decision-making.
  - In the last five years, many ministerial and administrative decisions have been issued in the field of media to enhance the role of Omani women, prohibit gender discrimination in the media, and give them leadership positions such as the position of editor-in-chief of the Omani News Agency, Head of the Electronic Media Sector at the Public Authority for Radio and Television, expert and consultant in all media outlets.
  - Developing the media legislations and professional charters governing the media work in the Sultanate in order to achieve the development of free and responsible media performance.

- ✓ **Introducing binding regulations for the media, including for advertising**

**Among the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Information:**

- The establishment of an administrative and financial system in the media institutions that is efficient and effective, and fulfils the requirements of these institutions and their plans.
- The development of the media message is in line with the needs of the audience and their priorities taking into account its diversity, quality and role in promoting development.
- Developing the media legislations and professional charters governing the media work in the Sultanate in order to achieve the development of free and responsible media performance.
- Developing a national vision for the investment process in the various media fields.
- Developing external media performance, improving its output and diversifying its means to cope with the development of communication programmes.
- Outlining a comprehensive vision for promoting media professionals training and continuing education systematically and sustainably, to enhance professionalism and credibility.
- Developing media research for the advancement of studies and surveys of the public sector in order to provide a suitable communication environment for policy makers, media and the public.
- Developing electronic media performance and laying down an integrated plan to develop the portal of information services.
  - ✓ **Support the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct**
  - Due to the importance of professional charters and in order to improve and develop the media environment, a charter has been prepared as a guiding document and a milestone in the Omani press path to advance the work of the press. The Charter outlines the practices of the media profession and informs media professionals of their duties and rights.
    - ✓ **Provide training for media professionals to promote the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media**
    - As mentioned in the first section, the Media Training Centre was established by Royal Decree No. (3/2018). The Centre seeks to improve the practical level of students in higher education institutions in the field of information, promote aspects of cooperation and exchange of training experiences in the field of information with counterparts in other countries.
    - In order to raise the capacity of media professionals of both sexes in supporting women candidates in municipal councils for the second period, a training course was organized to build the capacity of media professionals during the period from 14 to 17 November 2016 in cooperation with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR).
    - Within the interest of the Sultanate of Oman to implement sustainable development goals (endorsed by the United Nations), a training course “the role of women and civil society in achieving the goals of sustainable development” was carried out during the period 17-21 / 2/2019 in cooperation with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) to enhance the capacities of the media and civil society organizations, both developmental and those working in the field of human rights in general and women's rights in particular and the media .
      - ✓ **Promote women's participation and leadership in the media**
      - Many radio, television and advertising programmes are presented individually and jointly by Omani women. There are programmes presented by women individually, such as social and children's programmes and jointly with men such as political, cultural, health and scientific programmes. Women have a role in the development of ideas, texts and realization, in addition to presentation and preparation.

- The total number of female employees of the Ministry of Information is 92 female employees out of 415 employees. The number of female journalists in the local media, except for the General Authority for Radio and Television, is 36 Omani women working in media institutions out of a total of 88 of Omanis working in the private broadcasting and television media institutions until May 2019.
- The number of Omani female journalists working in government and private institutions in 2019 is 63, including 27 journalists working in 13 governmental institutions and 36 journalists working in 13 private institutions.
  - o ✓ **Establish or strengthen consumer protection services to receive and review complaints of media content or gender discrimination / bias in the media**
- There is a mechanism to enhance consumer protection services to receive and review complaints of media content, discrimination, or gender bias in the media, by the relevant committees concerned with the Press and Publication Law and the Law of the Private Facilities for Radio and Television, which pertain to all forms of mass media (print, TV, radio) according to the procedures and legal legislation provided for.

**18. Has your country taken any action over the past five years specifically designed to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?**

**Yes/ No**

**Cases of trafficking in human beings:**

- The Law on the Combating of Human Trafficking provides protection and care for human trafficking cases.
- Formation of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking.
- Setting up the National Plan on Human Trafficking.
- Accommodation of the cases in Dar Al-Wifaq and the provision of health, legal and living services to these cases during their stay.

**Women with special needs:**

- The Directorate General for Persons with Disabilities was established under Royal Decree No. (18/2014). It shall develop national plans and programmes for persons with disabilities of both sexes and follow up their implementation, including various programmes of care and rehabilitation and programmes aimed at integrating them into society in coordination with various bodies and technical supervision of all centres of care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities within the Ministry and centres in this field. These services are provided through the Vocational Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre, Al-Aman Rehabilitation Centre, Wafa Rehabilitation Centres for Children with Disabilities and special rehabilitation centres; prosthetic devices.
- The National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities works on developing the general plan for the care and rehabilitation of the disabled, and programmes for their care, rehabilitation, protection, employment and advancement, and promoting plans and programmes related to awareness of all types of disability and prevention. A technical committee was formed by Ministerial Resolution No. 193/2015.
- There are three types of rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities:
  - ✓ Governmental rehabilitation centres spread throughout the Sultanate's governorates, including Al-Aman Rehabilitation Centre and Vocational Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre in Muscat Governorate.
  - ✓ The Wafa Rehabilitation Centres for Children with Disabilities (26 centres), offering various rehabilitation services (special education, physiotherapy,

speech therapy, occupational therapy, vocational training, vocational rehabilitation, sports).

- ✓ Special rehabilitation centres (32 centres) distributed across the governorates of the Sultanate provide various rehabilitation services and programmes according to type of disability.
- ✓ Rehabilitation centres affiliated with civil society, including the Association of Early Intervention (10 centres) of the Association for the care of children with disabilities distributed in some provinces.

#### **Elderly women:**

- An Elder Affairs Department of the General Directorate of Social Welfare was established by Ministerial Decree No. 51/2015 to be concerned with the elderly including women. Its functions are executed through a number of entities.

#### **Participation, accountability and gender-sensitive institutions**

##### **Critical areas of concern:**

##### **G. Women in power and decision making**

##### **H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women**

##### **I. Human Rights of Women**

##### **L. Women in the media**

##### **M. The Girl-child**

#### **19. What actions and measures have your State taken in the past five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?**

- ✓ **Reform of the Constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at the decision-making level, including the reform of the electoral system and the adoption of temporary special measures such as quotas, reserved seats, standards and goals**

#### **Achievements:**

- In Article (17) of the Basic Law, the Sultanate enshrines the principle of equality by stipulating that "all Citizens are equal before the Law and share the same public rights and duties. There shall be no discrimination amongst them on the ground of gender, origin, colour, language, religion, sect, domicile, or social status".
- Article (34) of the Consultative Council Elections Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 58/2013 expressly states that there is no discrimination in the candidature between women and men stand for election to the Consultative Council.
- The Elections Law promulgated by the Royal Decree (116/2011) stipulates that candidates for municipal councils should be elected without discrimination based on gender.
- ✓ **Capacity-building, skills development and other measures**
  - The Sultanate has worked through the Ministry of Social Development to build the capacity of social workers through training female trainers and intellectuals in the field of social, political and legal empowerment of women. These trainers are working to raise awareness among the society members about legal and social empowerment of women, the importance of women's political participation and the capacity building of Omani women's associations to support and adopt empowerment programmes.



- In 2015, the Ministry of Social Development, in collaboration with UNICEF, trained specialists (social and psychological specialists, counselling and guidance specialists) to be a team of child protection trainers from abuse.
- In order to ensure the achievement of better results for women in elections for the Consultative Council than those achieved in the seventh term (2011-2015) and eighth term (2015-2019), headquarters have been prepared and equipped for Omani women's associations under current laws and regulations. Tents have been set up at the headquarters of associations that have leased buildings in the governorates where there are female candidates. Several buildings of the Wafa social centres are also being used in governorates where women's associations lack sufficient areas for setting up tents. Headquarters have been supplied with equipment and supplies.
- The Ministry of Social Development prepared and printed a training guide on managing the electoral process. It trained 20 female candidates standing for the Council's eighth term during 6-10 September 2015 in the method for managing election campaigns. Female candidates were also supported with media advertising in local newspapers. The Ministry of Interior organized seminars entitled "The consultative conference" in all governorates of the Sultanate to raise voter awareness of the role of Consultative Council members and the importance of voting. The seminars were broadcast fully on Omani television.
- o ✓ **Encourage the participation of minorities and young women, including through awareness and counselling programmes.**
  - Community members of both sexes participate in the programmes offered by the competent authorities in the Sultanate. These programmes also target young people of both sexes.
  - In order to promote awareness among the population groups, whether citizens or residents, the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reports submitted by the Sultanate to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination are published and included on the website of the Ministry of Social Development.
  - The National Committee for Family Affairs organized three seminars "young people and ethics" in order to focus on the moral dimension in all life transactions, disseminating the idea of preserving the Omani customs and traditions because of their cultural significance to the values of tolerance and peace, activating the role of governmental and civil institutions in the ethical system in society, and raising the awareness of young people about good ethics, bad moral practices and their legal consequences.
  - The National Youth Committee established by Royal Decree (117/2011) affiliated to the Council of State, organizes awareness-raising, interactive and periodic seminars to discuss youth issues and concerns, launches awareness campaigns in various newspapers and media, and holds annual meetings of young people of both sexes.
  - The Omani Commission for Human Rights develops an annual awareness and education plan aimed at promoting a culture of human rights for all segments of society, including citizens and residents. The most prominent is:
    - Organizing an annual awareness campaign at national colleges and universities in different parts of the Sultanate targeting female students on women's rights in particular and human rights in general:
      - ✓ In 2017, the Committee organizes an awareness campaign in government bodies and ministries targeting the employees therein. The campaign includes meeting with staff of different levels and grades, holding various awareness sessions on the Universal Periodic Review and writing parallel reports on human rights and local and international mechanisms to protect human rights in general, and women's rights in particular, in addition to the exhibitions associated with the event. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the

Ministry of Civil Service and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are among the ministries included in the campaign.

- ✓ Collaborating with the visual, audio and print media to publish video clips on women's rights such as the rights of domestic workers, the rights of girls and others, participate in radio programmes and reserve a monthly page in the official newspaper of Oman to publish awareness messages and human rights news including women's rights.
  - ✓ Producing short awareness films on women's rights such as the rights of women workers in the Sultanate in 2018.
  - ✓ Participating in the annual summer programme of the Ministry of Education, which targets the students of both sexes in all schools of the Sultanate. The programme includes lectures on women's rights and gender equality and the distribution of brochures and publications of the Committee.
- ✓ **Provide opportunities for mentoring, leadership training, decision-making, public speaking, self-affirmation, and political campaigns**
- The provisions of the Civil Service Law guarantee training for all staff in all grades and at all administrative, technical, written, professional levels according to work requirements. Training plans and programmes are developed without distinction between men and women. The training period is considered a period of employment in which the employee enjoys all the advantages of his/her job.

Statistical indicators according to the following table show the number of training programmes implemented according to the approved training plans and the number of female participants in these training programmes

	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Within the Sultanate	48740	39047	36628	30152	29611	22567	29494	19817
Outside the Sultanate	440	1595	245	756	116	370	160	598

Source: Ministry of Civil Service

- In the context of preparations for elections for the municipal councils' second term, the Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with the Centre for Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) and the Omani Journalists Association held training course to build the capacity of media professionals to support female candidates from 14 to 17 November 2016. In all, 21 media professionals and specialists from the ministry participated.
- A training guide on managing the electoral process for female candidates has been prepared. It promotes the participation of women in the electoral process, among the community, and trains female candidates standing for the election to the councils to use this guide.
- In conjunction with the Sultanate's presidency of the Supreme Council of the Arab Women Organization, the Sultanate hosted the Arab Youth Forum on 16 December 2018 to discuss a number of themes related to empowering young people to adopt and implement community-based programmes and projects in support of comprehensive regional development as well as discussing themes aimed at enhancing the contribution

and participation of women, on the sidelines of the seventh conference of the Organization of Arab Women.

- The Sultanate hosted the Seventh Conference of the Arab Women Organization on 18 and 19 December 2018 under the theme "Economic Empowerment of Women and the Promotion of the Values of Peace, Justice and Citizenship". The conference aims at providing a series of worksheets and visual presentations to build the economic and social empowerment of Arab women and to establish the values of social justice and strengthen their role in achieving peace and citizenship in society, in addition to strengthening the successful response and exchange of local, Arab and international experiences in the field of women's economic and social empowerment. The conference was attended by a number of the First Ladies of the member states of the Arab Women Organization, the women ministers concerned with women's affairs in the Arab countries, female members of the Organization's Executive Council and the League of Arab States, and those interested in women's issues and civil society institutions.
- ✓ **Take measures to prevent, investigate and prosecute violence against women in the political sphere**
  - Issuing Decree No. (29/2016) with the amendments of some provisions of the executive regulations of the Municipal Councils Law. The new amendment guarantees more equity for the candidates. Article (50) stipulates that any interested candidate has the right to contest the election result by request submitted to the Committee of Adjudication in electoral grievances and appeals provided for in Article (38) of these Regulations.
  - Issuing the Ministerial Decision No. 44/2019 by the Ministry of Interior on the rules, methods, procedures and fees for the campaign for the Constitutive Council ninth term elections. The decision does not discriminate between men and women concerning the conditions and rules of campaign election and provides protection to candidates of both sexes.
- ✓ **Collection and analysis of data on women's political participation, including positions filled by appointment and election**
  - The National Centre for Statistics and Information collects and analyzes data on the political participation of women to be printed in annual publications and in electronic reports published on the Centre's website. These publications are distributed in women events, particularly in the Omani Women's Day. Among these publications: "Omani women: partnership and development 2016", "Omani women: a prominent and continuous role in the service of the nation in the development process 2017", "Omani women within the series of community statistics 2018". The National Centre for Statistics and Information issued a book (Women and Men in the Sultanate of Oman 2014).
  - The Ministry of the Interior issues data related to the elections (the Constitutive Council, Municipal Councils), the number of candidates of both sexes, the number of voters of both sexes, and the number of elected members of both sexes.

**20. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to increase women's empowerment of expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)?**

**✓ Strengthen the provision of TVET education and training in the media and information and communication technology, including in the areas of management and leadership.**

- The Government provides free education for all (male and female). School education provides basic educational needs of information, knowledge and skills, and develops values and attitudes that enable learners to continue education and training according to their preferences, aptitudes and abilities.

- In the field of technical education, education and vocational training, a system of education, vocational training and technical education seeks to prepare professional outputs of high quality.
- At the level of higher education, universities and colleges offer different scientific disciplines and qualifications. These institutions contribute to the achievement of the objectives of sustainable development through the educational process. Statistics show the development of the numbers of students of both sexes in vocational colleges and Vocational College of Marine Sciences in Al Khaburah.

Year	Student's number			Student's ratio	
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
2013/2014	1665	1468	3133	53%	47%
2014/2015	1545	1930	3475	44%	56%
2015/2016	1532	2405	3937	39%	61%
2016/2017	2246	2049	4295	52%	48%
2017/2018	2345	2153	4498	52%	48%
2018/2019	2708	2380	5088	53%	47%
Total	12041	12385	24426	49%	51%

- Training workshops for a number of women producers in cooperation with the Information Technology Authority on electronic promotion.
  - Cooperation with small and medium enterprises (Riyada) for the establishment of training workshops covering several topics, including e-promotion and feasibility studies.
  - Working on launching an electronic page on the website of the Ministry of Social Development, which deals with the electronic promotion of women and productive families.
- **√ Take measures to promote access to and affordability of ICTs and enable their use for women and girls (eg, free Wi-Fi and Internet access centres and community technology centres)**
- The programme to train society in the use of information technology is an integral part of the national awareness and training initiative. It promotes ongoing education for all groups of society and seeks to develop their capacities and skills in dealing with digital technology and interacting with electronic services (the Knowledge Society Centres) for all society, particularly women. The Digital Oman Initiative has dedicated major concern to the Knowledge Society Centres as a key component of the effort to provide members of society with broad access to information technology and to close the digital divide in society.
  - In affirmation of the role played by women in the development of culture and sustainable development, the General Information Technology Authority has established Knowledge Society Centres for women in the Sultanate's governorates to provide digital knowledge and information technology training and qualification opportunities for women. During 2009-2015, 36,196 women and 19,489 men benefited from these centres.

- In order to round out the efforts of the National Information Safety Centre in the Information Technology Authority to empower women in the area of positive family development and protection of the child from the hazards of the Internet, an information safety programme has been designed for women and families to give Omani women basic cyber security skills commensurate with the requirements of the digital age so as to benefit the family and society.
- The Information Technology Authority also launched the National PC Initiative aiming to grant a computer to social insurance families with one or more students enrolled in the school and devices free of charge to students of higher education from social insurance families. It also includes a subsidization of the cost of a personal computer for students of higher education in the first year of study in the Sultanate and teachers who are graduates of the Government IT Training & Certification (GITTC) project. The aim of the initiative is to increase the number of computer users and enable access to the Internet for the delivery of electronic services. During this initiative, 334,120 computers and 85,000 modems were distributed.
- The G-Cloud (Oman Government Cloud project), which provides a common infrastructure including servers, networks, storage and applications, and currently hosts 55 projects for 27 government institutions. On the other hand, the central platform for integration in the exchange of data between e-government service outlets, during which more than 39 million transactions are carried out.
- ✓ **Collaborate with employers in the field of information and ICT to improve internal policies and recruitment practices on a voluntary basis**
  - The ITA has supported and launched a number of initiatives including the SAS Business Centre in 2013, which aims at supporting the emerging Omani institutions in the IT sector. Since its establishment, the Centre has hosted 58 companies and contributed 350 jobs to Omanis.
  - In addition, the Authority launched the SAS for Virtual Reality in 2014, which provides the infrastructure for the development of virtual reality projects and multimedia content for the local and regional market, in addition to its role in the rehabilitation of young Omani on the mechanism of interactive content industry by providing training programmes. Its achievements include: 758 training opportunities and 10 virtual reality projects.
- ✓ **Other**
  - Arab Convention on Combating Information Technology Offences, ratified by Royal Decree No. 5/2015.
  - Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified by Royal Decree No. 6/2015.

**20. Does the proportion of the national budget invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budget) be tracked?**

- There are no special budgets for women, but budgets for the women's sector are allocated to the Ministry of Social Development as the national machinery for women's affairs.

Yes/ No

**If yes, what is the approximate proportion of the national budget invested in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women?**

**22. As a donor country, does your country follow the Official Development Assistance (ODA) ratio that is invested in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (gender-responsive budget)?**

Yes/NO

**Do not confirm**

If yes, please provide more information on the methodology, scope of tracking, past trends and current ratio of investments.

**23. Does your country have a national gender strategy or action plan in place to achieve gender equality?**

Yes / No ✓.

- There is no national plan of action dedicated to gender equality, but there are many gender-sensitive strategies that mainstream women into their core themes:
- Oman Vision (2020-2040), where the theme “People and Society” of this vision focuses on promoting social welfare, and developing national capacities and competencies. It includes the development of women's role and empowerment through the provision of an appropriate environment in the economic and social fields and participation in decision-making positions.
- The Ministry of Social Development has formulated a strategy for social action (2016-2025). This strategy serves the direction of the Sultanate in general and the Ministry in particular to achieve maximum empowerment, equity and social integration. The Strategy continues to implement His Majesty's vision on the development and empowerment of women in Omani society by providing an enabling environment to affirm women's economic role, their pivotal role in the family and society, and their participation in decision-making circles. The family is placed at the heart of social work as the pillar of Omani society with its values, heritage and ancient traditions, and focuses on its development and empowerment.
- The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with relevant agencies, has formulated a long-term plan for the health system in the Sultanate up to the year 2050. A strategic study on the health of women and children has also been prepared. It covers programmes, indicators and current challenges and served as the basis for development of a strategy for the health of women throughout the life cycle. The strategy includes three objectives: elimination of avoidable maternal and newborn mortality, improvement of the quality of health services, and creation of an environment that supports the health of women and children. A draft public health law has been prepared with a chapter on maternal and child health.
- These strategies take into account the Sustainable Development Plan 2030, particularly with regard to the empowerment of women in Goal 5 and the goals related to women.

**If yes, please indicate the name, duration, priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan, including the objectives set out in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

**If yes, was the cost of the National Action Plan calculated and sufficient resources allocated for its completion in the current budget?**

- It has adopted financial balances to implement the activities and programmes to which these plans have been addressed.

**24. Does your country have a plan of action and a timetable for the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if it is a State Party), the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations**

**human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality / discrimination against women?**

√ Yes/ No

**If yes, please provide some highlights of the action plans and implementation schedule.**

- The Sultanate submitted its second and third periodic report on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on November 3, 2017, with a high-level delegation. With regard to the concluding observations, the Sultanate, through the National Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention, develops a programme and an action plan to follow up the implementation of the observations through coordination with the competent authorities to implement these recommendations.
- The preparation of the response on the measures taken to implement the recommendations set forth in paragraphs 10 (a), 16 (a), 24 (a) and 40 (b), is underway. A response is required within two years from the date of discussion of the report.
- The response to concluding observations concerning women contained in human rights conventions, such as the Convention on Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is in coordination with the competent authorities.
- The Sultanate prepares the universal periodic review of human rights by carrying on reports after coordination and consultation with various human rights entities. After discussing the review, these recommendations are directed to concerned entities according to their competence.

**25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?**

√ Yes/ No

**If yes, does it have a specific mandate to focus on gender equality or sex / gender discrimination?**

- The Omani Commission for Human Rights plays an important role at the local and international levels in the follow-up to women's issues. The Committee has received 10 reports in 2018 concerning women in all human rights. The Commission has monitored (4) cases relating to women's rights in all areas of human rights. These issues have been resolved in cooperation with the concerned authorities, according to their respective mandates.
- The committee prepares legal studies and surveys about local laws relating to human rights in general and women's rights in particular. It prepares a legal study entitled "Omani woman the right to sponsor her foreign husband and her children". The study recommends that the Aliens Residence Law and its Executive Regulations shall apply the principle of gender equality and entitle Omani women, on a par with Omani men, to sponsor their foreign spouses and children in order to create family stability.
- The Committee prepares national reports on human rights in general and women's rights in particular. It participated in the preparation of the national report submitted by the Government of the Sultanate to the International Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a member of the National Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention.
- The Omani Commission for Human Rights prepared a survey on national statistics on women published by the National Centre for Statistics and Information. It issued several recommendations and referred them to the concerned authorities.
- The Committee participated in the preparation of the draft strategy for women in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development within the membership of other relevant authorities.

- With regard to activities at the international level, the Commission follows up on reports published by international governmental organizations (UN, US State Department) and non-governmental organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International), investigate the issues contained in those reports, find out the facts and respond to those organizations.
- Organizing periodic visits to hospitals, temporary detention centres, and the central prison to meet with women there and, hold lectures for them on human rights and women's rights and check the services provided by the prison.
- Cooperating with the National Centre for Statistics and Information on human rights indicators.
- The Committee submitted a shadow report in 2016 to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The report included some recommendations that would improve some laws relating to women, including "enabling women to grant long-term facilities to their children born of foreign husband".
- The Committee reviewed the national report submitted by the Government during the year 2015 concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and made some recommendations to the Government.
- The Committee reviewed the Concluding Observations issued by the International Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2016. It also made the appropriate proposals and referred them to the concerned entities to implement these recommendations.
- The Committee examined the recommendations of the universal periodic review and their classification during 2018, and follow-up their implementation by the concerned authorities. The Sultanate submitted its second national report during the 31st session of the Human Rights Council in March 2015. The recommendations included 52 on women's rights. The Sultanate accepted 31 recommendations, noted 10 for further examination and rejected 11.
- The Committee organized a workshop on "drafting universal periodic review reports" in collaboration with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which targeted human rights workers, concerned governmental institutions and civil society.

#### Awareness and education on women's rights:

- The Committee prepares research and surveys on women's rights. It is preparing a national research that includes all governorates of the Sultanate during 2018/2019 entitled "Women's awareness of the national mechanisms adopted by the State to protect them from abuse in the Sultanate of Oman". The importance of this study lies in the legal and institutional mechanisms adopted by the State to protect women from abuse and the extent of awareness among members of Omani society, especially women in this field.
- The Committee conducts annual workshops in cooperation with civil society organizations such as the Journalists Association in 2016 and 2017 with a lecture on "International Mechanisms for the Protection of Women's Rights". The lecture included women's rights within the international mechanisms, the Sultanate's position on these mechanisms and the recommendations of the universal periodic review.
- The Committee conducts annual workshops in cooperation with civil society organizations such as the Omani Women's Association with a lecture on "Protecting Women's Rights" and "Women's Rights under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women". The lecture included women's rights in local and international mechanism, and the ways in which women can use these mechanisms to claim their rights.



- Participation in women's empowerment programmes such as the Women's Political Empowerment Programme and Women's Economic Empowerment Programme conducted by the Ministry of Social Development.
- Participation in conferences organized by all entities regarding women's rights.
- Participation in the annual scout camp organized by the Directorate General of Scouts for school students of both sexes. The participation includes holding workshops on women, empowerment of women and gender equality.
- Participation in medical conferences on women's rights targeting Ministry of Health personnel, doctors, nurses and others such as the medical conference held at Al Masarra Hospital in 2017.
- Conducting annual workshops targeting decision-makers in the State Council and the Consultative Council as well as judicial staff and judges on women's rights and political empowerment.
- Participate in the annual book fair by presenting the awareness videos of the committee, launching competitions and participating in holding accompanying lectures in the hall dedicated to that.
- Cooperating with international organizations such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions, the Asia Forum and the Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to conduct annual workshops on building capacity and empowerment of women targeting different segments of society from all government entities and civil society.
- International Human Rights Day is celebrated every year. The theme of the celebration varies every year. It includes workshops and human rights dialogue sessions, including women's rights, short films, and real stories about human rights and women in the Sultanate.
- Creating interactive accounts for the Omani Commission for Human Rights on social media such as Instagram to raise awareness about human rights and women's rights.
- Reports on gender equality:
- The Committee received reports from women complaining that they were not treated equally with men in respect of the right to grant their nationality to their children born of a foreign father. The Committee addressed the concerned authorities to consider and study the subject, and made its recommendations in this regard in its annual report submitted to His Majesty.

## Peaceful societies in which no one is marginalized

Areas of critical concern

- E. Women and Armed Conflict
- I. Human Rights of Women
- K. The Girl-child

**26. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to establish and maintain peace and to promote peaceful, non-marginalized societies for sustainable development and implementation of women's agenda and peace and security?**

- o ✓ Integrate the commitments of women, peace and security into key policy, planning and monitoring frameworks at the national and inter-ministerial levels.

**Actions taken:**

- Based on the fact that work and building, achieving national cohesion and unity, establishing security and stability and mobilizing national energies constitute the solid foundation necessary to achieve national goals in various fields, the Sultanate has maintained its stability and advanced ranks in global safety indicators. The Sultanate was ranked 1st on the Arab level at the absence of internal conflict and sub-external conflict in the World Peace Index 2018 issued by the Institute of Economics and Peace in Australia. It was ranked fifth among Arab countries in the Global Peace Index and fourth on the Arab level at the social security and peace index in 2018. It has been placed on the list of States with a high degree of peace.
- The Sultanate is keen to involve women in the processes of maintaining security and peace building. It recognizes the importance of woman participation in police work, as she has been able to prove its high efficiency and outstanding professionalism in dealing with various obstacles and difficulties encountered. It has taken many measures to assume leadership positions with consecutive successes. The first Omani woman to serve as a head of police station has been appointed. The most prominent areas in which women work in the police:
  - Training area: women have contributed effectively through the implementation of training programmes for women's police corps, as well as female candidates and students enrolled in the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences. The training includes physical fitness and military training (military movements, shooting and weapons), and supervising factions and courses for women who join the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences. Women become able to prepare, train and lead military queues, both on occasions and openings for policing and service facilities, as well as some specialized programmes.
  - Public Security: policewomen are present in all police stations and service centres in the various governorates and provinces of the Sultanate. They also carry out security and order functions in public events and festivals and participate in raids, arrest, transfer and guard prisoners as well as spreading security awareness in the community.
  - Criminal Investigation: women played a major role by conducting criminal investigations and inquiries in some cases, monitoring suspects, collecting information about them, moving to crime scenes, dealing with juveniles, and questioning women in criminal cases involving women.
  - Traffic policing: women proved their worth in this area through their outstanding participation in patrols and traffic directing in addition to traffic services provided to the public and traffic engineering and participation in the awareness of all segments of society.
  - Special Tasks: women contribute to the protection of VIPs and special operations by securing and protecting female VIPs at the local level, accompanying visiting dignitaries to the Sultanate and participating in the special operations unit to deal with the difficult situations in which women are involved.
  - Technical field: The female police contributed to supporting the technical and technical system by contributing to many technical fields such as programming, networking, etc., and has an active contribution to the development of websites with the latest designs, in addition to technical support for hardware, service and programmes providers.
- **√ Support comprehensive gender-sensitive analysis and early warning and prevention mechanisms**
  - To strengthen the capacities and efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and coordinate them in the field of emergency management, the Sultanate has ratified the Statute of the Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council of States' Centre for Emergency Cases Management by Royal Decree No. 56/2013. Among the most important tasks of the Centre are to contribute to the identification and assessment of natural and non-natural hazards in the GCC States, suggest scientific and practical solutions to reduce those risks,

receive urgent reports on emergencies and alert and warn of them according to the available information, formulate policies and procedures to facilitate relief work among the GCC States in a clear and coordinated manner, prepare guidance manuals on how to plan contingency management at the national level in the GCC countries and guidelines for confrontation and response procedures, contribute to the development of contingency management plans, programmes and projects, provide technical support, coordinate support efforts and human and automatic support among GCC States.

- The Sultanate has given attention to the development and rehabilitation of Omani staff to cope with the rapid development of the equipment and systems used in the process of weather forecasting. The meteorological personnel are highly qualified in the field of human resources development since the establishment of meteorology, which resulted in reliable and experienced Omani staff in all fields. In the field of meteorology there is a 100% Omani staff in various fields and competencies with high scientific qualifications such as doctorate, master's and bachelor's degree in meteorological sciences in accordance with the directives of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to give consideration to human resources and rely on national staff in all fields.

o ✓ **Others**

- The Sultanate has based its policies and positions on a deep understanding of its historical experience and its belief in the importance and necessity of providing the best possible environment for development and nation building. It has been able to build bridges of trust and credibility based on openness and clarity in dealing with different situations and developments and adopting a clear policy based on cooperation with all in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, promotion of dialogue and non-violence in dealing with matters. In the Gulf region, the Sultanate plays a positive role in operating and developing cooperation and integration among the GCC countries and achieving development, security and stability in the region. It endeavours to make this meet the aspirations of the GCC countries and peoples and their common and mutual interests in a way that effectively achieves Gulf citizenship and provides more cooperation and coordination between GCC states and neighbouring countries such as the sisterly Republic of Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to promote stability and tranquillity and prosperity with those countries and their peoples.
- The Sultanate supports all efforts made to enable the region avoid dangers that may threaten its security, stability and development achievements through the promotion of dialogue and understanding, promoting peaceful solutions, and addressing problems and disagreements wisely.
- The Sultanate's policies and attitudes are widely appreciated in the Arab region, because of its continuous positive contribution to various Arab issues and the credibility of its positions in developing its relations with various brotherly countries, in order to serve the common and mutual goals and interests. This stems from the Sultanate's belief in the importance of promoting joint Arab action, expanding cooperation between brotherly states and investing the potential to achieve a better life for all Arab peoples.
- The Sultanate has also been keen to contribute to the activities of various regional and international entities and organizations to support peace efforts, promote respect for human rights and participate in counter-terrorism efforts.

**27. What actions have your State taken in the past five years to increase women's leadership, representation and participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peace-building, humanitarian action and crisis response at decision-making levels in situations of armed conflict and other conflicts and in fragile or crisis-prone areas?**

- ✓ **Integrating a gender perspective into the prevention and resolution of armed or other conflicts**
  - The Sultanate is free of any conflicts and there are no camps for displaced women. However, the Omani Authority for Charitable Activities works to provide in-kind and material assistance to needy groups inside and outside the Sultanate. This assistance includes housing, education, medical treatment, relief and other assistance. The Authority also works to implement economic empowerment programmes for women, especially women with low incomes.
- ✓ **Promote women's equal participation in humanitarian activities and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level**
  - The Sultanate is keen to participate in the training workshops held by United Nations organizations and the Department of Women, Family and Childhood in the League of Arab States and the Arab Women Organization on women, peace and security.
  - The National Committee for Civil Defence is the entity that represents the national disaster management system and includes all the necessary national material and human resources to deal with the emergency events. The National Emergency Management Centre represents the Executive Office and the Emergency Management Operations Centre, which coordinates emergency response efforts and assistance and support to the subcommittees. There is a national emergency management plan.
  - The Omani Authority for Charitable Activities works to provide in-kind and material assistance to needy groups inside and outside the Sultanate. This assistance includes housing, education, medical treatment, relief and other assistance. The Authority also works to implement economic empowerment programmes for women, especially women with low incomes.
  - The Ministry of Social Development works to promote the status of women in all fields and to provide protection, security and care in coordination with the competent authorities by conducting training workshops to raise awareness of women on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Security Council resolution 1325/2000, and women's role in security and peace.
- ✓ **Integrating a gender perspective into humanitarian action and crisis response**
  - The existing national legislation on security includes general rules applicable to all segments of society, including men and women, and calls for the promotion of a culture of tolerance, security and tranquillity. The Military Justice Act, Royal Decree No. 110/2011, prohibits war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and crimes of captivity and the wounded and states that there is no statute of limitation for these crimes, in accordance with conventions related to international humanitarian law.
  - The Sultanate acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction by Royal Decree (26/2014). The Sultanate ratified the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict under the provisions of the Royal Decree (54/2011). The Sultanate also ratified the Arab Convention on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism under the provisions of the Royal Decree (27/2014) and the Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime by Royal Decree (6/2015).
  - Civil society organizations contribute to providing aid to conflict-affected countries through the Omani Authority for Charitable Activities. The private sector is a partner in supporting and developing national strategies. Social responsibility is part of this sector work at the national level.
- ✓ **Protection of civil society and women's rights defenders.**
  - The Constitution of the State, which is the main source of all legislation in the Sultanate, was promulgated in 1996 after 26 years of economic and social developments. Article (33)

of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of forming societies. This article indicates that the right to form societies is a constitutional right for everyone.

- The Civil Associations Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 14/2000, and the law on non-governmental societies issued by Ministerial Decree No. 150/2000, regulate the process of declaring and supervising the work of societies. The Ministry of Social Development is the body supervising the work of civil societies of all types, which are registered under this law.
- The Sultanate gives consideration and support to civil societies and organizations in general and societies concerned with Omani women in particular. These societies were initially supported by the government by allowing them to use schools to carry out their activities, which started with literacy courses among Omani women before they have established headquarters and received annual financial support from the government. The Ministry provides financial, technical and capacity-building support to these societies.
- The Social Action Strategy of the Ministry of Social Development devotes a chapter to the role of civil societies and organizations. This chapter has the following impact: "A responsible and independent civil sector capable of forming a strong and effective community awareness to serve the Omani society" in addition to establishing an integrated partnership between the civil sector, the government sector and the private sector that contributes efficiently and effectively.

**28. What actions have your State taken in the last five years to strengthen 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 conflict and other humanitarian or crisis response?**

- o ✓ **Take measures to combat the production, use and trafficking in illicit drugs**

**Actions taken:**

- At the level of regulations and legislatives: many laws, systems and regulations on drugs have been reviewed, updated and completed, including:
- The Anti-Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act promulgated by Royal Decree No. 17/99 was amended by Royal Decree No. 34/2015 in line with the development of international laws and regulations in this field.
- The National Committee for the Affairs of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was established by Royal Decree No. 17/99 on the Law on Narcotic Drugs. It was re-formed in 2015 under Royal Decree No. 34/2015, in conjunction with issuing the amendments of the Anti-Narcotics Act. The national committee was upgraded to be chaired by the Minister of Health, in addition to other concerned authorities represented in the committee. The Committee has established an administrative and technical body as an executive office to follow up the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the National Commission for the Affairs of Drugs, monitor the extent of the problem, follow it up and propose appropriate solutions.
- Promulgating the regulations governing private health facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with an addiction to drugs and psychotropic substances by Ministerial Decision No. 124/2015 in order to encourage and attract the private sector to open drug recovery and rehabilitation centres in the Sultanate.
- Adopting the Manual on the Treatment of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in Governmental and Private Health and Pharmaceutical Institutions, issued by Circular No. 37/2016 of the Ministry of Health, with a view to developing principles for the safe practice of the management of narcotic substances and psychotropic substances in health institutions and to ensure compliance with the Anti-Narcotics Act.

- Finishing the preparation of the National Strategy for Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances for the years 2016-2020, with a view to guiding and unifying the efforts of different entities such as human rights and civil society institutions in reducing the problem of drugs, adopting a methodology based on scientific evidence in setting priorities, making decisions and evaluating indicators of achievement for each entity. The strategy is based on four main objectives (developing national capacity for prevention and awareness; treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration; combating; and monitoring and studies).
- The National Programme for Social Rehabilitation (Takayyaf): The Ministry of Social Development conduct training workshops for specialists of “Takayyaf” programme. The programme aims to reintegrate and rehabilitate drug addicts and released prisoners by providing them with follow-on care and helping them to maintain their recovery, return to a normal life and overcome the challenges they face. The Ministry has trained a specialized team to handle these cases and the guide to follow-on care has been adopted.

### **Achievements:**

- In term of treatment, rehabilitation and follow-on care: through the expanding and developing treatment and rehabilitation services for drug patients, raising awareness among citizens, providing medical treatment and psychosocial support for patients in outpatient clinics and internal departments with a capacity of 44 beds in Masarra Hospital, training and rehabilitating health personnel and encouraging the recruitment of specialized staff.
- A new 40 -bed recovery centre was inaugurated in early 2015 to rehabilitate and reintegrate recovering addicts over a six-month period through an adaptive programme offered by competitive staff. The rate of relapse is 33% of the total beneficiaries during the years of work of the centre, which is an indicator of the success of the centre. Recovering addicts are appointed as recovery counsellors in the centre. Fifteen recovery counsellors are appointed.
- Since its establishment, National Committee for the Affairs of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances has focused on awareness-raising programmes and activities directed at various segments of society in order to prevent them from falling into the problem of drug abuse.
- Develop an annual awareness plan about drugs and psychotropic substances, including awareness-raising publications, awareness campaigns, seminars and exhibitions, participation in summer activities, festivals, radio and television programmes and electronic awareness.
- Issuing an awareness annex, “Al-Amal”, about the Committee and its efforts and awareness programmes and treatment, twice a year and distributing it as an annex to one of the official newspapers for free.
- Launching the awareness bus project of the anti-drug programme in 2016. The bus contains exhibitions and awareness programmes aimed at reaching all segments of society.
- Launching the community competition on combating and immunizing the society from drugs in all the governorates of the Sultanate in 2015 with the aim of involving the community in finding effective solutions and adopting community projects to reduce the spread of the problem of drug in society through the health committees in the states.
- Launching “Fawasel” programme which aims to raise students' awareness of the problem of drugs and prevent them from falling into it by developing their personal abilities and empowering them and developing their life skills through an applied and interactive curriculum for students and parents. A national team has been trained and certified to train school supervisors to apply the programme to students. It has been implemented since the

beginning of 2017 in 15 schools and will be distributed to the rest of the Sultanate's schools.

- Training and qualifying various human security, health, social, legal, religious and media personnel and the concerned civil society organizations inside and outside the Sultanate, as well as accredited lecturers from the different governorates of the Sultanate to raise awareness among citizens in different provinces. The number of training workshops implemented in 2016 has reached 13 training workshops for trainers detailed in the annual edition of the Commission.
- o ✓ **Take measures to combat trafficking in women and children.**

**Actions taken:**

- The Sultanate has acceded to a number of international conventions and charters on combating human trafficking, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto, to which the Sultanate has acceded by Royal Decree No. 37/2005; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children; Convention on the Rights of the Child (54/96); Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004/21); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2005/42); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008/121; and the Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime by Royal Decree No. (2015/6).
- The Sultanate's internal laws also reflected the Sultanate's commitment to the provisions of international laws, treaties and covenants in this regard in order to protect women from crime by combating human trafficking through a number of legislations such as the Law on the Combating of Human Trafficking (2008/126); Omani Penal Code (74/7); Code of Criminal Procedure (99/97); Labour Code (2003/35); Child Law(2014/22); Law on the Residence of Aliens (16/95); Civil Status Law (66/99); Law on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (79/2010).
- The Sultanate has established a number of mechanisms for the protection of women and girls. The most prominent of these are the National Commission for Family Affairs, which consists of members from different governmental bodies, the Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Omani Human Rights Committee, the Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Royal Oman Police (ROP) focused its strategy on dealing with this crime by raising public awareness and capacity building for judicial officers, teaching some courses about human trafficking at the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences, adopting the human trafficking course as one of the courses for officers promotion, participating in the specialized courses offered by INTERPOL and in international and regional conferences and workshops for the purpose of building national capacities capable of dealing with this crime. The hotline has also been activated in the Directorate General of Investigations and criminal investigations to receive reports against trafficking in human beings.
- In dealing with trafficking crimes, the Public Prosecution works in the public prosecution stages (inference, investigation, and trial) in three separate investigations, in addition to the advocacy role of the prosecution, not only in dealing with crime but also in combating it.
- The Ministry of Social Development works to combat trafficking in human beings by: protecting and rehabilitating victims of human trafficking in the Sultanate through a series of legal procedures carried out by legal specialists; providing social protection through a series of interrelated and targeted mechanisms and activities that focus on providing

victims with psychological, social and economic care; providing security protection through procedures that ensure the physical and psychological integrity of victims and rehabilitation through a range of medical, psychological and social programmes; education and training: through a set of educational and training programmes offered to victims according to their ability and needs; and awareness and education: to raise awareness and community culture about the causes, dimensions and seriousness of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and ways to combat them.

- The Ministry of Health also works to provide health and psychological care commensurate with the individual needs of the victims so that their particular situations are taken into consideration and assistance is provided once the victim is identified, found or accessed regardless of his or her legal status while providing assistance, with particular attention to the situation, the mental capacity of the victim, as well as the ability to understand information and make decisions. The Ministry of Health also provides appropriate medical reports on the situation of victims in preparation for submission to competent courts.
- The assistance provided by the Ministry of Health to victims of human trafficking in emergencies: ensuring the physical integrity of the victim, providing treatment with the bed inside the hospital if necessary, providing free food and medicine, physical health assessment and provision of care directly in cases (injuries resulting from physical violence or physical abuse, malnutrition, infections, oral and dental injuries, gynaecological examinations, pregnancy, assessment of mental state and provision of care in cases of mental illness resulting from physical, sexual or mental violence).

**29. What actions have your State taken in the past five years to eliminate discrimination against and abuse of the rights of female children?**

- ✓ **Take measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increase awareness of the needs and potential of female children.**
  - The Child Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 22/2014 guarantees a number of civil, health, social, educational, cultural, and protection measures and mechanisms, and provides a chapter on civil penalties and compensation to ensure that all children in the Sultanate have their rights recognized by law and other relevant legislation in the interests of the child. Prohibition of the forced recruitment of children into the armed forces, recruitment into armed groups or direct involvement in hostilities.

**On protection measures, the Child Act has banned many acts, including the following:**

- The Child Act prohibits harmful practices under Article (20), which states that "It is prohibited for anyone, particularly for physicians, nurses and guardians, to carry out, promote or contribute to traditional practices that are harmful to the health of the child." Any person who violates the provisions of this article shall be subject to imprisonment for a period of not less than six (6) months and not more than three (3) years according to Article (67) of the same law, and the sentence, in its minimum and maximum limits, shall be doubled in case of relapse. Female genital mutilation was included among harmful traditional practices in the Draft of the Child Law Executive Regulations. The Ministry of Health is making efforts through its health centres to raise awareness of harmful practices.
- ✓ **Promote girls' access to quality education, skills development and training**
  - The Sultanate has taken great interest in the right of children to education, which is compulsory until the completion of basic education and free in government schools until the completion of post-basic education. Education received 10.5% of the total government expenditure in 2017/2018. The number of public schools has increased to reach 1808 and the number of students has increased to reach (770,481) students during the academic year (2017/2018), while the number of students in private schools reached (105,680) students.



- The Gender Equality Index shows an increase in favour of girls among students enrolled in first through eleventh grade; the net enrolment ratio for females for the academic year (2015-2016) is as follows; 54.6% in pre-school education, (95.4%) for grades(1-6) in state and private schools, (95.7%) for grades (7-9), (85.3%) for grades 10-12.
- In order to integrate the delinquent juvenile into society, Article (26) of the Law of Juvenile Liability issued by the Royal Decree No. 30/2008 stipulates that the Department of Juvenile Affairs shall take follow-on care measures to assist the juvenile in integrating positively and effectively into society in order to protect him/her from returning to delinquency. The measures include: assisting the juvenile in creating appropriate opportunities to complete his/her training, education, and generate a source of income.
- Regarding literacy, illiteracy among females has dropped significantly from 12.6 in 2013 to 8.4 in 2017. Adult education centres for grades 7-12 have been provided to those who have completed three years in the literacy programme, or those who have dropped out of regular school and they can read and write.
- ✓ **Addressing negative medical results due to malnutrition, early pregnancy (eg, anaemia) and exposure to HIV / AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases**
  - The Child Act guarantees that the child shall have the right to preventive and curative healthcare under Article 15, which includes the following: "reduce infant and child mortality, fight diseases and malnutrition, detect disabilities at an early stage, classify them and provide the appropriate treatment to counter them, provide mothers with appropriate prenatal and postnatal healthcare, provide all the sectors of the society, the guardian and the child with key information related to the child's health, nutrition and safety from accidents, protect the child from the hazards of environmental pollution".
  - The rate of protein-based malnutrition in children under five has declined from 128/1000 children under five years in 1995 to 1.5/1000 in 2017 as a result of the efforts of the Ministry of Health to combat malnutrition by adopting a programme to combat malnutrition, child-friendly hospitals and strategies to reduce micronutrient deficiencies in children (iodine, iron, vitamin A).
  - Indicators of infant nutritional status in Oman less than 6 months of age are no different from those in the reference community, but signs of malnutrition has begun to emerge in the age at which complementary foods are used in child food, due to:
    - The fact that mothers do not continue to exclusively breastfeed. The results of the studies indicate that although 99% of mothers start breastfeeding within the first half hour of birth, only 10.6% complete exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, thus exposing the child to diarrhoea and various diseases that affect growth. This may be due to the insufficient period of maternity leave granted to a mother for 50 days at birth, forcing her to start giving birth to breast-feeding alternatives even before completing the sixth week of life.
    - Maternal malpractice is prevalent in terms of early initiation of child supplementation before the fourth month or insufficient food intake, such as three meals a day instead of five as recommended by UNICEF.
  - The National Nutrition Survey 2017 has recently been implemented and results are being disseminated and ongoing action plans are being developed based on those results.
  - Work is underway to develop a community awareness plan to combat anaemia among pregnant women.
  - The food support measures in force in the Sultanate are being revised to update them based on the results of the 2017 National Survey.
- ✓ **Implement policies and programmes to reduce underage marriage, early marriage and forced marriage**

- The Ministry of Health is implementing a programme in the context of maternal and child health programmes, to convey awareness messages about the dangers of early marriage to schools and society, in addition to awareness programmes on the risks of early marriage and its social and legal consequences. The programme is launched despite the fact that early marriage does not constitute a phenomenon in the Omani society.
- Article (7) of the Personal Status Law states "full capacity to constitute a marriage requires a sound mind and completing eighteen years of age ". This article includes gender.
- A number of issues and problems related to family affairs were addressed in awareness and prevention programmes to educate parents about mechanisms for protecting children in all aspects and clarify the Child Law accountability mechanisms to protect children from harmful practices, including early marriage or forced marriage.
- Legislation and laws in the Sultanate guarantee the prohibition of all harmful practices relating to child marriage, early and forced marriage and genital mutilation. The eligibility for marriage age has also been determined. However, early marriage is not a phenomenon in Omani society. The average age at first marriage in the Sultanate is 28 years for males and 26 years for females.
- ✓ **Implement policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices**
  - The Penal Code issued by the Royal Decree (7/2018) issued a law abolishing the Omani Penal Code issued by the Royal Decree (7/74). The new law affirms the protection of women from all forms of physical violence and psychological violence.
  - The Sultanate guarantees the legal protection of women through judicial procedures and measures when subjected to any form of violence. Cases of personal status are urgent cases and very confidential when they are considered by the courts in the Sultanate.
  - The Sultanate has established a number of mechanisms for the protection of women and girls, notably the National Commission for Family Affairs, the Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Omani Human Rights Committee, National Committee Against Trafficking in Human Beings, National Commission for the Welfare of the Disabled and the Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
  - Issuing the Child Law by the Royal Decree No. 22/2014 in which Articles (20), (60) and (40) guarantee the protection of child by prohibiting anyone, particularly for physicians, nurses and guardians, to carry out, promote or contribute to traditional practices that are harmful to the health of the child, punishing the perpetrators and doubling the sentence in case of relapse.
  - In order to enforce the child law, many measures have been taken to protect the child through awareness and education programmes to spread the contents of the law in various governorates of the Sultanate and to all segments of society. The number of educational programmes implemented in this regard since 2014–2018 is 461.
  - The right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse is guaranteed by the Child Law in articles (7) and (56), as well as the right to humane and decent treatment that preserves his or her dignity, reputation and honour. The State ensures his or her enjoyment of the said rights by all available means, as well as the prohibition of any act of abduction, rape or any sexual activity and others.
  - The security line is established with a toll free number (1100). The 24-hour line receives complaints and reports, and is supervised by trained and specialized national staff.
  - Formation of "Child Protection Committees" in accordance with Ministerial Resolution (168/2015). These committees receive reports of any violations of the rights of the child and the girl-child, cases of violence, exploitation, abuse and other violations, members of which have the status of judicial control, and 156 child protection committees

- implemented awareness programs during 2018. There are (171) trainers of both sexes in the field of protection of women and children.
- ✓ **Implement policies and programmes to eliminate child labour, excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work by female children.**
    - The Labour Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 35/2003 prohibits employing any child in activities or industries which, by their nature or due to the conditions under which they are carried out, are likely to be harmful for his or her health, safety or ethical behaviour.
    - A decision was issued by the Ministry of Manpower No. 217/2016 concerning the regulation of the employment of minors and the businesses and professions in which they may be employed.
    - The Ministry of Social Development is undertaking a number of efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labour, including follow-up to the implementation of the Child Law, a free line to report child abuse or exploitation, and the role of child protection committees in reducing the exploitation or illegal employment of children.
    - The Child Law regulates the issue of child employment in Chapter VII. Article 45 prohibits employing any child in activities or industries which, by their nature or due to the conditions under which they are carried out, are likely to be harmful for his or her health, safety or ethical behaviour. Such activities and industries shall be specified by a decision of the Minister of Manpower in coordination with the concerned authorities.
    - The Child Law issued by the Royal Decree No. 22/2014 under Article 46 prohibits employing any child who is under fifteen (15) years of age in any activities other than those stipulated by Article (45) of the present Law. This minimum age may be raised, pursuant to a decision issued by the Minister of Manpower, in some industries and activities whose nature requires so. Is exempted from the minimum age requirement stated in the previous paragraph the employment of a child in agricultural activities, maritime fishing, crafts and industrial and administrative activities, provided that work is part of an enterprise restricted to the members of the same family, and does not hinder the education of the child or impair his or her health or development. The regulation shall define the family concept relevant to the application of the provision of this article.
    - Under article (48), the employer must conduct free medical examination for the child prior to his or her placement and on a regular basis after such placement. In scheduling periodical medical examinations, the employer shall take into consideration the nature of the job and the health condition of the child, as prescribed by the regulation. The daily working hours of a child may not exceed six (6) hours; and these hours must be interspersed with one or more rest periods totalling not less than one (1) hour. A child must not be required to work continually for more than four (4) consecutive hours, or be caused to stay in the workplace for more than seven (7) hours.
    - The Ministry of Manpower has appointed labour inspectors in all the governorates of the Sultanate to carry out inspections and to follow up the procedures stipulated in the labour legislation. In addition, according to the Child Law, any person who violates the provisions of articles (45), (46), (48) and (49) of the present law shall be subject to imprisonment for a period of not less than one (1) month and not more than six (6) months and a fine of not less than five hundred Omani riyals (OR 500) and not more than five thousand Omani riyals (OR 5000), or either of the two sentences.
    - The Ministry of Social Development has prepared a study on child labour in collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University, in order to highlight the main reasons that lead many children to work and shed more light on these reasons regarding their psychological and social consequences and impacts on the child, family and society, identify the problem of child labour and its geographical spread in the Omani society, define the social, educational and economic characteristics of the working Omani child and develop the

most important recommendations that contribute to reducing and eliminating the problem of child labour.

- ✓ **Promote girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life**
  - Many efforts have been made to intensify the legal awareness of women in the various rights granted to them. Among these efforts, the Ministry of Social Development has issued explanatory notes on laws related to women, publishing these memoranda among the community and conducting awareness workshops in various governorates of the Sultanate. The Omani women's associations, which were 62 in mid-2017 and are active in all governorates of the Sultanate, are intensifying their efforts in raising women's legal awareness as well as raising awareness in other fields related to women's empowerment.

### **Preserve, protect and save the environment**

Critical areas of concern

Human Rights of Women

Women and environment

The Girl-child

### **30. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?**

- ✓ **Support women's participation and leadership in the management and governance of the environment and natural resources**
  - The Sultanate has been keen to take care of women and integrate them in leadership and supervisory positions and represent them in various membership in international committees including the World Commission of Nature Reserves, the Green List of Nature Reserves, the World Commission of Nature Reserves and the Technical Group on Turtles. They are appointed to hold high responsibilities in the management of nature reserves in Oman.
  - The Sultanate has worked to support women's participation in disaster management, providing assistance and support to disaster victims, reducing their risks and contributing to the development of policies, programmes and projects to combat climate and mitigate its effects.
  - Women participate in many activities concerned with preserving the environment and natural resources. The most prominent participations during 2017 and 2018 were in national events on combating oil pollution and climate change.
  - Omani women and civil society organizations represented in the Omani Women's Association played a prominent role in dealing with the climatic conditions in which the Sultanate was exposed in May 2018 (Cyclone Mkono) in Wusta and Dhofar governorates in October 2018 (Hurricane Luban in Dhofar governorate).
  - Participate in the assessment of the effects through conducting studies on environmental impact and guidance for specialists on the mechanism of work, based on the national plan to combat oil pollution and setting up mechanism to deal with waste and provide specialists with guidance in the mechanism of collection and handling of waste. A specialized team has been appointed to spread integrated awareness among women.
- ✓ **Strengthen evidence and / or raise awareness on environmental and health risks related to gender (eg consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)**

**Actions taken:**

- Based on the Sultanate's interest in providing Omani women at all levels with various concepts of environmental sustainability, The Omani Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs is keen on educating practical and scientific practices on the importance of conserving natural resources and contributing to the preservation of the environment and wildlife.
- Implement education and awareness programmes in cooperation among institutions and civil society organizations to raise awareness of environmental risks and their impact on health.
- Preparing and qualifying specialists in the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs to provide and lead awareness activities targeting civil society organizations, especially the Omani Women's Associations, which are distributed in all governorates, and students of both sexes.
- ✓ **Increase women's access to and control of land, water, energy and other natural resources**
  - The focus is on land ownership in the Sultanate as a key economic resource, related to the ability to produce, use other resources, and to achieve physical security. In rural areas, land plays a central role in the economy, either directly investing in agricultural production or mortgaging it for loans and grants to facilitate production processes, which increase women's ability and confidence in business and commerce.
  - Rural women's ownership of land is directly linked to their empowerment and well-being, through which women can ensure their physical security, avoid poverty and need, and be able to participate effectively in important family decisions.
  - The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries issued Ministerial Decision No. (10/2017) concerning the issuance of the Regulation for the Use of Agricultural Land, which aims at preserving and regulating agricultural lands, in addition to the development and updating of the laws and regulations that regulate the work in the field of agricultural development, agricultural production and food safety.
- ✓ **Promote the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines related to the natural environment**

#### **Actions taken:**

- Participate in international studies and surveys to monitor these phenomena in school environments and implement appropriate plans to reduce them. The International Study of Science and Mathematics (TIMSS215) includes some items to measure bullying behaviour. The 2015 Global School Health Survey also includes monitoring of violence among schoolchildren.
- There is a guide entitled "girls for a positive life" working to raise awareness of the physical and mental variables, psychological and social signs of puberty, and how to deal with this stage positively. There are also other booklets such as "My Positive Personality", "Peer Educator Guides", "Facts for Life in the School Environment", and "Adolescent Health" guides. The Department of Guidance and Awareness in the Ministry is constantly raising awareness in this regard. Schools carry out instructional courses that guide girls in developmental, preventive and curative aspects and the problems they face.

#### **Achievements:**

- The available digital statistics indicate that female enrolment in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics is increasing, and girls are continuously encouraged to engage in scientific fields. Educational statistics for the year 2015-2016 indicate that the proportion of females in disciplines and scientific fields such as mathematics and sciences is higher than that of males, with (46%) compared to 44.3% for

males in pure mathematics, (46%) compared to (55.5) for males in physics, and (46%) compared to (45.2) for males in chemistry.

- As mentioned earlier, the Sultanate guarantees gender equality in basic and post-primary education. In fact, the Gender Equality Index shows an increase in favour of girls among students enrolled in first through eleventh grade; the net enrolment ratio for females for the academic year (2015-2016) is as follow: 54.6% in pre-school education, (95.4%) for grades (1-6) in state and private schools, (95.7%) for grades (7-9), (85.3%) for grades 10-12 (statistics annex). Females constitute 54% of students admitted to higher education institutions inside and outside the Sultanate in 2016. The number of female graduates from institutions of higher education in 2016 increased by (93%) compared with 2012. Females constitute (59.3%) of students graduated from higher education institutions.
  - ✓ Promote women's access to sustainable time and labour-saving infrastructure (eg. access to clean water and energy) and technology for climate-smart agriculture
  - ✓ Take steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in the green economy

To promote participation and double the income of small food producers, especially women, many initiatives have been implemented in the productive projects:

- ✓ Omani bee-raising and honey production.
  - ✓ Rehabilitation of goat and cow sheds.
  - ✓ Breeding, production and marketing of domestic poultry and its products.
  - ✓ Introducing modern techniques (hatching machines, butter separator, milking machine, etc.).
  - ✓ Supporting the Rural Women Products Marketing Project.
  - ✓ Creating a marketing identity for the products of rural women.
  - ✓ Rural Women Dairy Promotion Program.
  - ✓ Establishment of model villages for the production of milk and dairy products.
  - ✓ Developing products of women living on the coast.
  - ✓ Developing the pickle industry for rural women
  - ✓ Plant Production Programmes (single span greenhouses, umbrellas, modern irrigation systems, dates packaging unit, and others)
- The Sultanate also seeks to improve the date palm production, which is one of the strategic crops of the Sultanate, through development programmes and projects related to dates production and marketing. It also encourages the various researches and manufacturing industries related to palm trees.

### **31. What actions have your country taken in the past five years to mainstream a gender perspective in policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resistance and mitigation?**

- ✓ **Support women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disasters, in disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation policies, programmes and projects.**
  - The Civil Defence Law was issued by the Royal Decree (76/91) and defines the Civil Defence as: a group of procedures, precautions and actions aiming to protect the population, secure safety of communications, national wealth, facilities, properties, establishments, buildings and projects from general disasters hazards and warranty flow of work regularly in all places.

- The Royal Decree (75/99) was issued to change the name of the National Commission for Natural Disasters to the National Committee for Civil Defence and merge with this law.
- The competent authorities in the Sultanate represented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs carried out a number of activities related to the environmental aspect such as: the activities of the culture of different wild trees targeted the beaches and sites of various nature reserves, recycling activities of household plastic waste aimed at collecting, sorting and reuse of plastic waste in different forms, activities related to the rescue of marine life and return to its natural habitat, such as the process of returning young turtles to the beaches. It should be noted that these programmes were carried out by specialists who were well prepared to provide and lead these awareness activities.
- The Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development until 2040 provides a strategic direction for policy and investment in the agricultural and rural sector. The strategy consists of a comprehensive set of measures that ensure the economic application and sustainability of agricultural and rural development activities, contributing to the overall prosperity of the Omani people and their effective contribution to diversifying sources of income, creating jobs, achieving social stability, enhancing food security in the Sultanate and preserving the environment.
- Each pillar of the strategy consists of more than one programmatic area of intervention. These include programmes that seek to achieve several objectives or outcomes, including Pillar B, which seeks to improve environmental sustainability in agricultural and rural activities, and to achieve two outcomes; the first concerns the relationship between agro-food activities and the environment, and the second is related to the capacity to cope with natural disasters, including climate change.

Follow-up the improvement of agricultural capacity and rural livelihoods to cope with climate change and natural disasters through two sub-outcomes:

- Adaptation to climate change and natural disaster risk management in agricultural and rural development policies, investments and programmes.
- Mitigation of climate change and improvement of agricultural footprint.
- The adoption of mitigation measures to reduce the impact of climate change in agriculture and rural areas and on rural women is an important component of this outcome.
- The main role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in this area is divided into two parts:
  - ✓ Encourage dialogue and provide support in policymaking and coordination among relevant institutions to ensure that the role of agriculture and rural development is integrated into national disaster management strategies and action plans.
  - ✓ Contribute to field operations and research to ensure that all efforts against climate change and disaster risk management have been taken into account, and disseminate modern techniques of agricultural production, processing and marketing.
- ✓ **Strengthen the evidence base and raise awareness that women and girls are disproportionately vulnerable to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters**
  - The Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs is keen to highlight the role of awareness, culture and environmental education in protecting the environment and conserving its natural resources in order to preserve its continuity and sustain its ability to provide resources and services to achieve the goals of sustainable development through issuing environmental publications such as pamphlets, brochures and children's awareness stories dealing with various environmental issues and the role of the individual and society in dealing with them.

- Organizing environmental exhibitions in various governorates of the Sultanate in addition to exhibitions held by governmental and private bodies.
- Every year, 15 environmental events are held at the local, regional or international level, aimed at conveying awareness messages to different segments of society.
- In the field of environmental communication, the Sultanate has endeavoured to exploit sound and visual effects to address the segments of society through radio programmes in governmental and private channels, and meetings of decision-makers in the environmental field to shed light on various environmental issues.
- Conducting environmental forums and consulting various groups of society in environmental issues to adopt the concept of sound and joint planning for comprehensive development on a participatory basis for all stages for development and protection of the environment and its natural components. On this basis, 3 environmental forums were conducted: the first environmental forum focuses on the services of the auditors and means of developing their mechanisms, the second environmental forum in 2014 tackles environmental education and its inclusion in the education system, and the third environmental forum in 2015 tackles environmental responsibility, raising awareness and building confidence and partnership with officials of industrial companies.
- **√ Promote the access of women in disaster situations to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation**
  - The Omani Authority for Charitable Activities was established by the Royal Decree (6/96). The decree states that it is as a civil society for charitable activities and has legal personality and financial and administrative independence. Its main objectives are: receiving and collecting donations, grants and other faith-based or voluntary funds in order to deliver them to the beneficiaries, supporting and financing projects that sponsor children, orphans or the disabled, supporting and financing social welfare projects and programmes that benefit citizens, providing emergency assistance (relief) to those affected inside or outside the Sultanate - whether individuals or institutions - from disasters, fires or accidents, providing assistance to social and charitable institutions, the poor and the needy within and outside the Sultanate.
  - The National Civil Defence Commission is responsible for combating hurricanes and weather conditions, earthquakes, tsunamis, accidents of hazardous materials, epidemics and outbreaks, major land, sea and air transport accidents, major fires and oil spills.
  - It was also mentioned in the first section that the Sultanate provides emergency and relief assistance to affected people if some of the Sultanate's provinces are exposed to unusual climatic factors such as storms, rain, etc.
  - The Omani Charitable Organization contributes to providing a wide range of therapeutic, study, food, cash, housing, orphan assistance and relief assistance to people affected by natural disasters in Oman and abroad. It should be noted that the Omani government has activated the contribution of the private sector to the development of local communities.
  - The sub-committees in the affected governorates, represented by the Omani Women's Associations, the Ministry of Social Development and other relevant authorities, are considered to be in charge of emergency management in general, through leadership and coordination of field efforts to respond to emergencies in particular, within the scope of its geographical jurisdiction through an integrated system in which there is a combination of efforts and potential of the sectors and the main bodies and support at the governorate level.
- **√ Provide or strengthen and implement gender-sensitive laws and policies relevant to disaster risk reduction, climate resistance and mitigation (for example, disaster laws addressing the risks faced by women in the event of a disaster)**
  - To continue to activate the legal provisions related to the Law on Conservation of Environment and Prevention of Pollution in the Sultanate issued by Royal Decree No.



114/2001 by preparing awareness programmes and monitoring the concerned parties in the commitment to preserve the environment and reduce environmental pollution.

### Section III: National Institutions and Procedures

**1. What is your country's current national mechanism for gender equality and women's empowerment? Please state its name and describe its location within the government.**

- The Ministry of Social Development is the national mechanism for women's affairs in the Sultanate. It works to provide care and social protection to many segments of society, and to develop the capacities, potentials, values, and ties of the Omani family, community and individuals to create a coherent and cohesive society. It seeks to ensure harmony and a unified social fabric among all components of society and to combat all social phenomena and problems that lead to the threat of this fabric by addressing them with study, research and cooperation with the concerned institutions in combating and reducing the negative aspects.
- Among the priorities of the Ministry of Social Development are the programmes and projects concerned with women's issues and the inclusion of women in the social development plans and policies. The Ministry has set the fifth goal of the Ninth Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2020) to emphasize family development programmes, family cohesion, women empowerment, child protection and development of his capacities through supporting and encouraging the role of the family and its rehabilitation in social and developmental fields, and strengthening and empowering the role of women and their integration into development activities and projects taking into account their family and reproductive conditions. It should be noted that the Ministry has worked on the formulation of a strategy for social action, including a number of sectoral strategies in the areas of women, children and persons with disabilities, which have incorporated a gender perspective. Gender indicators and gender responsive budgets have formed the basis for the implementation plans of these strategies for the years (2016-2025).
- There are a number of administrative divisions in the ministry dealing with women, children and the family:
- General Directorate for Family Development: The Directorate General for Family Development is represented by its departments: the Department of Women's Affairs, the Department of Child Affairs, the Department of Family Development and Empowerment, the Department of Family Counselling and Guidance, the Family Protection Department, the Child Welfare Centre. It carries out many social projects and programmes in order to invest people's energies and develop them into productive human forces through long-term development programmes that contribute to achieving advanced levels of living standards for families and other relevant human development indicators for families, women and children.
- The Department of Women's Affairs: is one of the departments of the Directorate General for Family Development, which works to empower and educate women in social, health, economic, political and legal fields. It is concerned with developing women's potential and skills so as to enable them to participate actively in development programmes and in their family and community life, planning and implementing programmes directed at her, providing support and training, proposing studies and research on women and their role in society, and following up the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in addition to its membership in several regional and Arab committees on women's affairs.
- The Department of Child Affairs: is concerned with the affairs of children of both sexes. It is responsible for planning and promoting programmes, activities and projects related to the upbringing of the child, raising family and community awareness of children's rights, planning and implementing alternative care programmes, orphans and the like, following

- up and implementing decisions and projects issued by local and international conferences and seminars and develop appropriate mechanisms for their implementation.
- Department of Family Protection: one of the departments of the General Directorate for Family Development, which provides protection and care for cases of abuse and violence, whether women or children or cases of human trafficking.
  - The Department of Family Counselling and Guidance: is one of the departments of the Directorate General of Family Development that works to strengthen and empower the family and support its efforts in facing the various psychosocial problems that threaten the family and its cohesion in light of the challenges and rapid changes facing the family at all economic, educational and social levels by providing counselling and guidance services to individuals and families.
  - Department of Family Development and Empowerment: is one of the departments of the General Directorate for Family Development that works to enable the families of social security and low-income families to transform them from families dependent on social security to productive families.
  - The Directorates of Social Development in the Sultanate's Governorates: a regional directorates in all governorates of the Sultanate concerned with the affairs of women, children and the family through the family development departments, family development divisions, women and children affairs in various governorates.

**The National Committees formed by the Ministry of Social Development, which focuses in its policies on the issues of women, children and the family:**

- **The National Commission for Family Affairs:** its statute was issued by - Royal Decree No. 12/2007. It is a supervisory, coordinating body concerned with policymaking on the family, women and children. Its role was revised based on Ministerial Decree No. 146/2012 concerning the issuance of the executive regulations for the Law on the National Commission for Family Affairs and by Ministerial Decree No. 300/2012 concerning the Commission's technical secretariat
- **Committee for the Follow-up to the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:** With a view to following up the implementation of CEDAW, the Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, has formed a national committee headed by the Minister of Social Development. Its members represent the legislative and judicial authorities, concerned ministries, civil society institutions, the Omani Commission for Human Rights and the Women's Committee of the General Federation for Oman Trade Unions. The Department of Women's Affairs is the technical secretariat of this committee. A special budget has been provided for the activities and programmes of the Committee. The Committee works to disseminate the Convention through the programmes and activities carried out by the Women's Affairs Department and members of the Committee.
- **Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:** This committee is concerned with the follow-up to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, chaired by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Development. Committee participants include representatives of ministries and authorities concerned with the rights of the child. The Committee continues to prepare periodic reports on the level of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Sultanate, follow up the implementation of the observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the reports of the Sultanate and follow up the levels of enforcement of children's rights in many areas.
- **The National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities:** This committee is concerned with the affairs of persons with disabilities of both sexes, headed by the Minister of Social Development. Its membership includes representatives from a number

of authorities at the level of the ministries' agents concerned with the affairs of persons with disabilities. This committee is working on preparing the general plan for the care and rehabilitation of the disabled of both sexes, and developing programmes for their care, rehabilitation, employment and advancement, and the promotion of plans and programs related to awareness and prevention of all types of disabilities. A technical committee was formed by Ministerial Resolution No. 193/2015. This committee is affiliated with the National Committee for the Care of Persons with Disabilities.

**2. Is the president of Authority a member of the institutional process for the implementation of sustainable development goals (eg inter-ministerial coordinating offices, agencies or committees)?**

√ Yes/ No

If yes, please provide more information

- The Sultanate formed a national committee to achieve the goals of sustainable development. It is a high-level committee headed by the Supreme Planning Council. It consists of members from all ministries, government agencies, the Oman Council, representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations and academic institutions. It is entrusted with a number of tasks, the most important being to follow up the integration of the goals of the sustainable development agenda 2030 with the objectives of the five-year development plans and Oman's Vision 2040, oversee the follow-up of setting up an integrated system based on measurement indicators to monitor progress indicators at the level of goals and objectives, sustainable development goals, and ensure that they meet national targets periodically. The Ministry of Social Development is a member of this Committee.
- As part of the preparation of the first voluntary national review of the Sultanate, a national group of action was formed comprising a number of experts and officials from ministries including the Ministry of Social Development, government bodies, representatives of the private sector, the Oman Council, civil society organizations and academic institutions, in addition to a group of action from the National Centre for Statistics and Information to monitor and measure indicators of sustainable development goals.
- The Ministry of Social Development has set up a group of action to follow up the implementation of sustainable development goals related to the ministry's competencies, the first of which is the eradication of poverty, the fifth goal is the achievement of equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in addition to other objectives related to the work of the ministry. The group consists of members from all ministries and bodies concerned with these objectives and civil society institutions. It participated in the preparation of the first voluntary national review of the Sultanate.

**3. Are there formal mechanisms for various stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan?**

√ Yes/ No

If yes,

- a. Which of the following stakeholders is officially involved in the national coordinating mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan?**

<b>Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Action Plan 2030</b>
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✓ **Civil society organizations**

✓ **Civil society organizations**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ <b>Women's rights organizations (Omani Women's Associations)</b>              | ✓ <b>Women's Rights Organizations (Omani Women's Associations)</b>              |
| ✓ <b>Academia and research institutions</b>                                     | ✓ <b>Academia and research institutions</b>                                     |
| ✓ <b>Religious organizations</b>  | ✓ <b>Religious organizations</b>  |
| ✓ <b>Parliaments / Parliamentary Committees</b>                                 | ✓ <b>Parliaments / Parliamentary Committees</b>                                 |
| ✓ <b>Private sector</b>   | ✓ <b>Private sector</b>   |
| ✓ <b>United Nations system (United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF in Oman)</b> | ✓ <b>United Nations system (United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF in Oman)</b> |
| ✓ <b>Other active entities, please specify ...</b>                              | ✓ <b>Other ... please specify...</b>  |

**b. Does your country have mechanisms to ensure the participation of women and girls from marginalized groups and to highlight their concerns in these processes?**

√ Yes/ No

The Sultanate has put a number of measures in place to ensure the participation and protection of women and girls from the most needy groups. These measures include:

- The Basic Law of the State guarantees that all Citizens share the same public rights and duties and there shall be no discrimination amongst them on the ground of sex, origin, colour, language, religion, sect, home or social status by explicit provision in Article (17), which includes all categories of society, male and female.
- The Child Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 22/2014 in Article (2) affirms the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of sex between children as the most important rights guaranteed by this law. Article (38) of the same law highlights the values that education in the Sultanate aims to establish, including the consolidation of the values of equality of individuals and non-discrimination between them on grounds of sex, religion, race, social origin, disability or any other considerations.
- The Sultanate guaranteed the protection of women from all forms of violence (including sexual violence, domestic abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace through a number of laws: Penal Code issued by Royal Decree No. 7/2018, Labour Law No. (35/2003) and its amendments, Civil Service Law No. 120/2004 and the Personal Status Law No. 32/97.
- The Social Security Law issued by the Royal Decree (87/84) and its amendments grants the right to social security to a number of the most vulnerable groups (Orphans, widows, divorcees, unmarried daughters, old age, prisoner's family, persons with disabilities and incapacitated persons).
- Provide capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors, police and other law enforcement personnel on how to consider the issue of gender in cases.
- Ensure reporting violence and abuse by establishing a free telephone protection hotline to receive complaints from all members of the community, awareness of this line and reporting way.
- The National Human Rights Commission has set up a complaints unit to receive complaints from women in general and abused domestic workers. This unit is fair to women, including foreign workers, and guarantees their rehabilitation.
- The Ministry of Social Development has intensified women's legal awareness through issuing explanatory memorandum on legal articles related to women, in order to empower

women and aware them about their legal rights and distributing them to a large segment of society.

- Provide protection and temporary shelter for women and girls who have been subjected to violence or abuse in addition to human trafficking victims through Dar Al-Wifaq of the Ministry of Social Development, which provides them with temporary accommodation, social and psychological programmes, legal counselling. It also works on prosecuting offenders, meeting the victims' needs and solving their problems.
- The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking established an annual plan to combat trafficking in human beings, prepare a database in coordination with local, regional and international entities, develop programmes to care for and rehabilitate victims, raise awareness through leaflets and publications, and take all measures to protect citizens and residents of human trafficking.
- Women with disabilities have enjoyed considerable concern in respect of employment opportunities. Special measures have been taken to employ persons with disabilities, including women. The Ministry of Manpower and other ministries concerned with labour and employment stipulate that 2 per cent of persons hired in private enterprises and companies must be persons with disabilities.
- Omani women's associations throughout the Sultanate provide social, cultural and economic activities for women and girls and play a major role in the empowerment of women through participation in various training areas to facilitate women's access to employment opportunities, as well as education and awareness raising for women and society through implementing many health, cultural, social and self-empowerment programmes.
- The Sultanate was keen to take care of the situation of rural women and worked to support its various roles, including its work in non-monetary sectors.
- The Committee for Conciliation and Settlement in the various governorates of the Sultanate work to look into civil, commercial and personal disputes. These committees seek to bring closer together the parties to a dispute and find solutions that satisfy all parties. Resorting to these committees is optional and free of charge.

**c. Please describe how stakeholders are contributing to the preparation of this national report.**

- The Ministry of Social Development has circulated the guidance note for comprehensive reviews at the national level to follow up the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for all ministries, requesting from authorities and civil society organizations to provide the data and information required for inclusion in the report (entities like: Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Royal Oman Police, Ministry of Defence, Information Technology Authority, Oman Charitable Organization, Supreme Planning Council, National Centre for Statistics and Information).
- The Women's Affairs Directorate has worked on carrying out training workshops, preparing the report, discussing the drafts of the report and taking the necessary action regarding the addition of observations.
- Holding a series of meetings to update the data associated with the information requested in the report.
- Coordination with the National Centre for Statistics and Information on the provision of statistical data required in the report.
- Dissemination of the Guidance Note for members of the National Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, representing the following parties (State Council, the Consultative Council, Administrative Affairs Council of the Judiciary, Public Prosecution, Legal

Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Justice, Omani Commission for Human Rights, The Women's Committee of the General Federation of Oman Trade Unions, the Omani Women's Associations representing the Committee) on the preparation of the report and the collection of data and information by their representatives.

- Dissemination of the memorandum and sections concerned to the Directorate General for Family Development (Department of Child Affairs, Department of Family Protection), Directorate General of Social Welfare (Department of Elderly Affairs), Directorate General for Persons with Disabilities to provide data and information required for the report, especially specialized departments in the Directorate General for Family Development.
- Guidelines on the form and content of the reports have been observed.

**4. Are both gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls a key priority in the national plan / strategy for the implementation of sustainable development goals?**

√ Yes

- **The Ninth Five-Year Plan of the Sultanate 2016-2020:** approved by Royal Decree No. (1/2016). It includes a set of sectoral objectives related to sustainable development goals. The sustainable development goals are one of the main pivots in the preparation of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). The plan calls for keeping abreast of with the updates in the international development charters, foremost of which is the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 28 September 2015, in particular the provisions of Goal 8, which refers to the need to "promote sustained, comprehensive and sustainable economic growth for all, full and productive employment and decent work for all".
- **Social Action Strategy (2016-2025) formulated by the Ministry of Social Development:** it includes a number of sectoral strategies for women, children and persons with special needs. The strategy adopts human rights and the rights approach to ensure the rights of women, children and persons with special needs and incorporates a gender perspective. These strategies incorporate gender mainstreaming, gender indicators and gender responsive budgets as a foundation for the executive plans for these strategies for 2016-2025.
- In line with the objectives of this strategy, the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (2030), and the Sultanate's commitments to international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Ministry directed the implementation plan of this strategy towards integrating a gender perspective by building and developing its institutional capacities in gender analysis and integrating it into monitoring and evaluation through gender-responsive results, indicators, data and reports. This strategy is in line with the future vision of Oman 2040.
- **Oman Vision 2040:** The Sultanate worked on preparing the comprehensive national strategy for the Sultanate of Oman (2040-2020). It includes three chapters: human and society, economy and development, government and institutional performance. The chapter of "human and society" focuses on promoting social welfare and developing national capacities and competencies.
- In this context, this chapter includes the development of women's role and empowerment, through the provision of an appropriate environment in the economic and social fields and participation in decision-making positions.

## Section IV: Data and Statistics

1. **What are the first three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?**
  - ✓ **Reprocess existing data (eg, polls and surveys) to produce more categorized and / or new gender statistics**
    - Data are often disaggregated in surveys, opinion polls and surveys by sex, since all data are available by sex.
  - ✓ **Conducting new surveys to produce national background information on specialized topics (eg, time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty and disability)**
    - It could be possible to conduct surveys on gender statistics in the future.
  - ✓ **Improving sources of administrative or alternative data to address gender gaps**
    - The National Centre for Statistics and Information requests and collects administrative data from different authorities according to gender. The authorities are also urged to provide the Centre with various data on gender.
  - ✓ **Production of knowledge products related to gender statistics (eg, easy to use reports, policy briefs, research papers)**
    - Annual reports on gender indicators are issued.
  - ✓ **Development of a database and / or a central online monitoring panel on gender statistics**
    - A special database has been established for gender statistics that contains many gender indicators and is included in the Central Statistics Database of the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Most statistical databases are disaggregated by sex and are available to all on the Centre's website.
2. **What are the first three priorities in your country to strengthen national gender statistics over the next five years?**
  - ✓ **Conduct new surveys to produce national background information on specialized topics (eg, time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty and disability)**

It could be possible to conduct more specialized surveys of gender statistics in the future.

- ✓ **Production of knowledge products related to gender statistics (eg, easy to use reports, policy briefs, research papers)**
    - Most of the community publications are classified and analyzed by sex. There are also publications on gender statistics and the empowerment of women.
  - ✓ **Building statistical capacity for users to increase statistical appreciation and use gender statistics (eg, training courses, seminars on statistical estimation)**
    - Some employees joined online training course to enhance statistical capacities in gender organized by ESCWA and obtained a certificate in gender statistics. Other employees are encouraged to take this course.
    - Participate in workshops inside and outside the Sultanate, especially gender statistics and women's empowerment.
3. **Have you identified a national set of indicators to monitor progress in sustainable development goals?**

✓ No

- Please find attached an annex to the global sustainable development indicators on gender available in the Sultanate of Oman.

4. Has data collection and compilation been initiated in relation to each of the indicators of Goal 5 of the sustainable development goals of gender indicators within the framework of other sustainable development objectives?

√ Yes

If yes, please define the indicators given priority

- All data for the five target indicators were provided only:
  - ✓ Indicator 5.2.1
  - ✓ Indicator 5.2.2
  - ✓ Indicator 5.3.2

5. Which of the following subdivisions<sup>1</sup> is routinely provided by the main surveys in your country?

Geographical location

Income

Sex

Age

Education

Social status

Disability