

**Syrian Arab Republic  
Syrian Commission for Family  
and Population Affairs**



# **National Report of the Syrian Arab Republic Beijing+25**

## **Introduction**

The Syrian Arab Republic presents this report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in keeping with its commitment to empower women and protect and promote their rights, which it considers a key factor in the construction of society and a cornerstone for the realization of comprehensive, multidimensional development.

This report bears the experience of a country that has passed through an exceptional period during which it faced a war unleashed by countries that chose terrorism as an instrument to implement their hostile agendas. They created, financed, armed and supported various forms of terrorist groups on various levels, and used them in an attempt to wipe out the humanitarian and moral values on which the Syrian society is based. They set back the achievements of decades of development and human advancement realized by the Syrian Arab Republic, for which it was outstanding in its region.

Syrian women were among those most affected by the practices of these groups, which brought unprecedented dangers with them, heightened by the effects of the unilateral coercive measures imposed by many international parties against the Syrian Arab Republic. At the same time, women were in the forefront of those standing up to these groups, as they participated in national efforts aiming to address these threats and deal with their impact. In this, they played a leading role.

These extraordinary challenges required correspondingly resolute efforts to overcome them, and preserve the advances achieved by Syrian women, reinforcing and promoting their strength.

This report presents the achievements realized at the national level in terms of activities in the areas of concern included in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It tracks the most significant steps taken in these areas since the submission of the last report (Beijing+20), and highlights the obstacles and challenges associated with each, in the hope that the national review and reporting mechanism associated with this Declaration will serve as a means for exchanging national experiences and expertise on their content in such a way that leads to the empowerment of women and the advancement of their rights.

## Section I: Priorities, achievements, challenges and constraints

### **1. What have been the most significant achievements, challenges and constraints with regards to progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment over the last five years?**

Prior to the terrorist war unleashed against it, the Syrian Arab Republic had achieved progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, enabling women to take their place in the construction of society. And, in spite of the constraints and challenges brought about by this war, it realized major achievements in this field, the most significant of which may be summarized as follows:

#### **I. Achievements**

1. The 2012 Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic confirms that citizens are equal in rights and duties, without discrimination on the grounds of gender, origin, language, religion or creed. The State stands as guarantor of the principle of equal opportunities for citizens. (Article 33/3-4). It likewise confirms that the society of the Syrian Arab Republic is founded on a basis of solidarity, mutual aid, respect for the principles of social justice, freedom, equality and the preservation of the dignity of every individual (Article 19). The State is to provide women with every opportunity to contribute actively and fully to political, economic, social and cultural life, and to remove the restrictions preventing their development and participation in building society (Article 23).
2. The amendment of a large number of the articles of the Personal Status Law by virtue of Law no. 4 of 2019, with the purpose of strengthening women's rights, notably raising the minimum age for marriage to 18 years for both males and females and approving a number of amendments reinforcing women's financial rights, confirming her consent to marriage and her knowledge of the provisions regulating it.
3. Ensuring that women have equal access to the services of the social protection system, with its main elements: Insurance, and livelihood and health security, and specialized social security for the care of poor families and individuals and marginalized groups, in particular female heads of households, foremost among whom are the families of martyrs, with their orphaned children, and the care of juvenile female offenders, the disabled, the elderly, and abused women and children, along with children who have no family to care for them, etc. Work has also been carried out on managing social support in order to advance social justice and women's productivity.
4. The strengthening of strategies and programs for the welfare and empowerment of women, especially in relation to childhood, women, young women and elderly women. The expansion of specialist services for women and children and rural development programs targeting women living in rural areas, developing the work of the Social Aid Fund with a focus on supporting the program for women's productivity, in particular for female heads of household.
5. In the domain of targeted programs:
  - Syria's post war national development program was adopted by a decree of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in 2018. It is based on a participatory approach for the purpose of framing planning efforts and shaping visions for reconstruction, not only from the economic aspect, but also in terms of overall development. This program constitutes a long-term strategy encompassing all economic and social development issues, including the components of social services (health, education, drinking water) and the social safety nets to which reference has already been made. The analytical phase of the program has been completed, and visions and strategies are being completed in preparation for establishing operational policies and executive programs for all areas of focus. The social element of this program includes social protection in its various dimensions

and forms as a key priority in Syria's recovery from the effects and consequences of the war. This includes the development of a comprehensive framework for the social protection system, safety nets and social security, under which come policies and programs aiming to put an end to poverty and marginalization, and to strengthen the resistance of people and families faced with economic and social challenges, notably unemployment, illness, disability and old age.

- The National Social Empowerment Program was activated. This aims to establish national frameworks and standards for specific social services for certain social groups, including: Rural families, families of martyrs and the wounded, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, developing and expanding the infrastructure network and specialized centers which provide these services, so as to ensure the empowerment of these groups, realize social and economic integration, and adopt and apply improved mechanisms and methods for the care and integration of the most marginalized groups.
6. Formulating policies for and managing the labor market with a view to bringing about the full employment of women's capabilities and potentials via strategies and programs including women able to work, orienting them in the active labor market and providing them with opportunities to access microfinance, employment, work opportunities to ensure their maximum productivity, aligning their skills to the needs of the labor market within the various economic, social and environmental sectors, so as to enable them to be fully integrated in society in the development process. The focus is on marginalized poor women, and the development of rural women, making use of the existing infrastructure to serve rural areas and restore their services, reinstating employment programs and expanding and strengthening employment programs aimed at women, in particular with regards to young women, in cooperation with the private and NGO sectors, within the scope of the resources available and in keeping with priorities.
  7. Working on completing the construction of systems and databases to serve research into social circumstances and the labor market for women, and developing the labor legislation governing the labor market, and legislation relating to social issues relevant to women, and ensuring their proper application.
  8. Strengthening the social responsibility of the private sector in order to monitor access to services for women as individuals or within the family context in order to achieve their effective and genuine participation, harnessing and employing their potentials in all areas of life and integrating them in the process of development with access to social protection.
  9. Being able to realize a balanced civil society for the provision of non-profit services bridging the gap in relation to the social needs of women as an entity which complements the work of the State, whilst ensuring the dignity and respect of beneficiaries within the framework of the rights and duties laid down in law, profiting from volunteer initiatives and embracing and fostering them to reinforce the principles of female voluntary work, and the diversification of services for women - ensuring they are comprehensive, diverse, and balanced in terms of their geographical distribution.
  10. With regard to national policies for the empowerment of the family, and the focus on families headed by women, and their welfare, a number of sub-strategies have been implemented in relation to women's affairs, including: The National Strategy for Women and its outputs aimed at following up the analysis of the current situation and the Action Plan for Supporting Women, along with starting preparations for the implementation of the survey of women heads of household, the commencement of the work of the Family Protection Unit, and establishing case management units at provincial level (for vulnerable and at-risk groups), in order to consolidate the case management system and complete its automation in order to link it to the management centers in the provinces.
  11. In the economic field, the Syrian Arab Republic is working to support male and female entrepreneurship, providing qualifications and enabling them to establish their

own small or medium-sized enterprises. This support has led to the creation of new work opportunities and sources of income, and has contributed to meeting the demand for goods and services in the local market using local resources, raising the level of economic development. A training program has also been established in this field for young men and women, in particular for new graduates, so as to open up horizons for numerous activities and projects, which has contributed to reducing internal and external migration and lowering the rate of unemployment. This was strengthened by a number of measures, the most significant of which was the issuing of Law no. 2 of 2016 which established the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Authority under the Ministry for the Economy and Foreign Trade. This is concerned with the formulation of policies and programs aimed at increasing entrepreneurship and the development of the SME sector for men and women, with active coordination between public and private bodies to develop projects and realize their integration and objectives.

This Authority works to link the projects with the institutions relevant to their development and to facilitate access to public services, in addition to protecting small producers, permitting a positive intervention for the development of this vital sector and enhancing its developmental role by developing programs aimed at increasing its contribution to GDP. Specific regulations and standards have been set up for the funding of projects in coordination with all stakeholders in order to achieve sectorial and geographical balance (in particular with regards to those impacted by the circumstances the country has experienced).

## **II - Challenges and obstacles:**

1. The practices of armed terrorist groups in targeting basic infrastructure and services, including institutions and centers providing various services to women, not to mention the deviant extremist beliefs and phenomena alien to the Syrian society that these groups attempted to spread in the areas in which they were present, which made women a target of the ideological and material terrorism which they practiced.
2. The continuing Israeli occupation and its policies aimed at perpetuating this occupation in total contravention of the principles and provisions of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular the legal obligations binding upon it as an occupying power. This is in violation of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people of occupied Syrian Golan. Golan women are among the groups most affected by these policies, and we refer in particular here to:
  - Practices targeting family life and family unity.
  - Restrictions imposed by the occupation authorities on the free movement of Syrians, and the refusal to allow family visits within the homeland via the Quneitra crossing under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross.
  - Arbitrary Israeli arrests and illegal detention of the people of occupied Syrian Golan, and the associated prevention of the families of the detained from visiting them or communicating with them, and in some cases the imposition of excessive bail for their release, or prohibiting them from returning to their villages in occupied Golan.
  - The continuation of Israeli settlement policies involving the confiscation of property and lands and house demolitions aimed at changing the physical character, demographic composition and legal status of occupied Syrian Golan, thus depriving women of their means of provision, livelihood, and dignified living.
  - The continuation of attempts to impose Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the people of occupied Golan, and to promote a resolution to annex Golan which the United Nations has repeatedly declared null and void. The Syrian Arab Republic has consistently called upon the Security Council to compel the Israeli occupation authorities to put a stop to its illegal settlement

policies and its repressive measures against our people in occupied Syrian Golan, which constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, foremost among which is Resolution 497 (1981) which declares that Israel's resolution to impose its laws, authorities and administration on occupied Golan is null and void and has no legal effect on any level.

- The recent announcement by the President of the United States with regards to occupied Syrian Golan clearly expressed the contempt of the United States for international law and international resolutions affirming the invalidity of Israel's policies. Perhaps the widespread international rejection of this step confirms that any attempt to legitimize these policies would constitute a threat to international peace and security.
  - Over the years of occupation, Golan women have suffered the consequences of these hostile policies aimed at perpetuating the occupation and the acts of violence, oppression and repression contained in these policies aimed at co-opting Syrians who reject these practices and maintain their adherence to their motherland.
3. The unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria by a number of international parties.
  4. The destructive impact of these measures on the everyday lives of Syrian citizens is no longer concealed, in particular given that they have affected a wide range of vital sectors such as the commercial, financial and banking sectors and the energy and transport sectors. All of these have a vital role in ensuring the provision of basic services such as education and health, the quality and continual provision of which is vital to the advancement of women and the realization of their rights.  
The comprehensive nature of these measures has hampered plans and programs aimed at implementing the Declaration and the Action Program, as will be stated in various places throughout this report. We note here that the United Nations special rapporteur on the adverse impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights, on his visit to Syria in 2018, mentioned the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on a large range of human rights in the country. Numerous UN reports have also mentioned the impact of these measures on their work in delivering humanitarian support in the Syrian Arab Republic.
  5. The continuation of some countries in policies of aggression and occupation of Syrian territory, in flagrant violation of the principles and provisions of international law. This constitutes an attack on the sovereignty of the country and undermines progress towards restoring security and stability throughout Syrian territory, and it threatens international peace and security. We refer in particular to the operations of the so-called "international coalition" which the United States claimed to form in order to combat "ISIS." It is repeatedly committing massacres of civilians fleeing the terrorist organization in various areas, of which the victims are mostly women and children. The Syrian government has lodged dozens of documents at the Secretariat of the United Nations with regards to these crimes and massacres which have had a profound impact on women and compelled them to live under harsh conditions, both psychologically and physically.
  6. The continued politicization of humanitarian affairs in Syria, including the propagation of misleading information and statistics, and the publication of reports and resolutions and the holding of meetings aimed at exerting political pressure on the Syrian government, refusing to recognize that terrorism is the root cause of the humanitarian suffering of Syrians, which must therefore be addressed in a context of cooperation and coordination with the Syrian government in accordance with the guiding principles regulating the cooperation and promotion of humanitarian work which emphasize respect for the sovereignty and independence of States and the principles of neutrality, impartiality and non-politicization.
  7. Some donor countries have imposed their political agendas on international organizations with the aim of blocking financing to the development projects required

for the rehabilitation of liberated areas and the provision of basic services there in order to establish conditions conducive to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. In particular, the rehabilitation and re-equipment of centers providing basic services such as health and education, and infrastructure networks, ensuring the sustainability of these services.

**2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities in accelerating the advancement of women and girls in your country over the last five years through laws and/or policies and/or programs (please check relevant categories). Please present some brief observations regarding how your country is addressing these priorities.**

The Syrian Arab Republic attaches great importance to the advancement of women and girls. The five priorities may be defined as follows:

- ✓ Quality of education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls.
- ✓ Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security.
- ✓ Eradication of violence against women and girls.
- ✓ The right to work, and rights in the workplace (such as the gender pay gap, occupational discrimination, and career advancement).
- ✓ Women's entrepreneurship in women's businesses and projects.

The following is a summary of how these priorities are being addressed:

### **1 - Quality of education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls.**

The education sector is given great attention in the Syrian Arab Republic, as Article 25 of the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic states that: "Education, health and social services are essential pillars in the construction of society, and the State shall endeavor to realize balanced development across all regions areas of the Syrian Arab Republic". Article 28 states: "The education system is based on the production of a generation committed to its identity, heritage, affiliation and national unity". Article 29 adds that: "Education is a right guaranteed by the State and is free of charge at all levels. The law shall regulate cases where education is paid for at universities and government institutions". Education is compulsory until the end of the basic level, and the State shall work to extend the obligation to include other levels. All this is without any distinction between male and female, as Article 33, Paragraph 2, states that: "Citizens are equal in rights and duties, and there shall be no distinction between them on the grounds of gender, origin, language, religion or creed". On the basis of these constitutional principles, the Syrian Arab Republic has been working, and continues to work, to support education.

The most significant measures it has taken in the course of the continued implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in this area have been the following:

- The taking in of all children into primary level schooling, improvement in the quality of education, and reduction of illiteracy in rural areas.
- The introduction of new disciplines within universities and higher and middle level institutes of education relating to women's issues and their role in economic and social life.
- The development of vocational and technical education curricula in accordance with developments in science and technology and the requirements of development, as well as labor market needs.
- Working on integrating gender concepts into various educational curricula, and changing their stereotyped images of women.
- Improving competencies on the subject of gender for committees supervising curricula and school textbook authors.

- Publication of the "Know Your Rights" educational series, which is issued in the form of booklets dealing with a number of rights such as the right to inherit and the right to work.

## **Second: Poverty eradication and family food security.**

- The Syrian Arab Republic seeks to pursue social empowerment policies through programs that target poverty in order to improve the income of families, and projects, programs and activities for the poorest members of the population by ensuring that they enjoy their social and economic rights, along with strengthening the productive sectors in order to generate employment opportunities. The most significant of these are:
  - ✓ Developing the work of civil society in cooperation and partnership with it, benefiting from and supporting voluntary initiatives, and increasing the number of social welfare centers;
  - ✓ Developing the work of social aid funds for the poorest groups and establishing income-generating projects and employment opportunities;
  - ✓ Working to promulgate new investment laws in order to mitigate the effects of the humanitarian crisis and promote various aspects of economic and social activity.
- In its successive five-year plans, the Syrian Arab Republic has adopted strategies for action based on a comprehensive battle against poverty via policies and programs through which the State aims to bear many of the burdens by providing for the basic needs of all citizens. Until 2010, it was on track to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by reducing poverty by half. However, the war to which it was subjected led to a decrease in food security. This was measured according to the household food security assessment survey carried out in 11 provinces in 2017, which revealed that the proportion of households suffering from food insecurity stood at around 31% of the total, and that the proportion of households vulnerable to food insecurity amounted to 45.6% of the total. The unilateral coercive measures have had a significant role to play in the increase of these figures, and their negative effects are most evident with regards to the most vulnerable groups in the family, namely women, children, the elderly and the disabled. This has clearly been reflected in the family's diet and food security, as a result of the reliance of the vast majority of poor and displaced families on food aid. The constituents of this food aid do not provide balanced amounts of macronutrients and micronutrients, and the prolonged period over which this aid has been offered has led to a decrease in dietary balance for various members of the family, in particular impacting pregnant and breastfeeding women, the sick, children and the elderly.
- National plans have paid special attention to the problem of reducing poverty among females, in particular those who are heads of household, via the following:
  - ✓ Dedicating a chapter of the plan to focus on poverty reduction and women's economic empowerment.
  - ✓ The plan addresses female poverty reduction issues from a gender perspective.
  - ✓ Emphasizing a shift in the concept of empowerment from a welfare perspective to a human-rights perspective.
  - ✓ Emphasizing the participatory role, which calls for the integration of women's efforts with official and institutional efforts.
- Throughout the course of the circumstances afflicting the country, the Syrian Arab Republic has endeavored, whether directly or indirectly, to provide families with access to food in order to achieve food security, and this is reflected in the following:
  1. The organization and development of social support protection systems to contribute to social justice and balance.
  2. The organization and development of procedures and programs relating to aid work up until 2015, followed by a shift towards organizing and supervising recovery projects of a developmental nature for NGOs and international agencies, and



coordinating operational efforts in this regard (women and children were the weakest link in this domain).

3. The regulation of labor relations, and of minimum wage levels, and expanding social security networks and inspection relations. This includes setting wages for agricultural work and establishing sub-committees to classify agricultural investment relations in the provinces.
- The Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Authority implemented the Women's Empowerment and Poverty Reduction Program in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The program adopted an integrated mechanism for the empowerment of women, ranging from the introduction of the concept of gender and health awareness to the establishment of income-generating productive microenterprises. The project combines social and economic development, and focuses on an integrated educational, vocational and financial system based on women's economic participation and the reduction of family poverty.

### **Third: The Eradication of Violence against Women and Girls:**

- Over the past years, the war on Syria has resulted in numerous cases of violence in all its forms affecting the most vulnerable groups, including women and girls. It is therefore necessary to work on the national level to implement the case management system, which is an organized and coordinated process for the provision of social assistance and protection to highly vulnerable individuals with pressing social needs, through assessing urgent individual needs, coordinating services, and social service providers making decisions to ensure the optimal use of the resources available in a timely and effective manner that addresses each case and each person involved in it. The case management system provides assistance to female survivors of violence, in accordance with the needs of the case, in terms of health and social services, psychosocial support, legal advice and mediation, and is responsible for ensuring that survivors are informed of the options available to them. The issues and problems facing a survivor are identified and monitored in a coordinated fashion with unique features that set this approach apart from other case management approaches. It is called the "Survivor-centered approach".
- Work has been carried out on the development of the infrastructure for family welfare and empowerment through the establishment of the Family Protection Unit, which receives children and women survivors of violence, and provides a holistic and integrated package of services such as shelter, psychosocial support, medical services and legal advice, as well as economic empowerment via vocational training and returning to education.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies and international organizations (UNFPA), is monitoring the situation of the most affected women (victims of domestic violence, victims of gender-based violence in all its forms), providing the necessary welfare services (reproductive health, legal advice, psychosocial support, vocational training and education, creation of opportunities to work), focusing on women heads of household and rural women.
- A guide has been drawn up to explain the tasks of the Family Recovery Center and the Child Welfare Centers under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, which provide psychosocial support services to the most affected groups (women, children etc.) Work is being undertaken to establish Family Recovery and Family Guidance Centers in a number of provinces, to manage and activate these services in coordination with NGOs.
- A number of NGOs have also opened safe spaces for women and girls which provide various services, including: Case management services for survivors of gender-based violence, psychosocial support services, awareness-raising sessions (social, psychological, health, legal), individual and group consultations, leisure activities, awareness campaigns and vocational courses.

**With regards to the welfare of girls included in the juvenile sector, work is being undertaken to:**

- ✓ Develop the work of juvenile welfare institutes and observation centers for juvenile offenders in all provinces.
- ✓ Improve services for the protection and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders (social, psychological, health, occupational and educational).
- ✓ Train and develop the capacities of all personnel working in the juvenile welfare field, including management staff at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the NGO sector.
- ✓ Projects are being implemented to improve the quality of services proposed for juveniles in coordination with NGOs, such as: Rights of the Child, the Syrian Association for Social Development.

**Fourth: The right to work, and rights in the workplace (such as the gender pay gap, occupational discrimination, and career advancement).**

- Based on the underlying principles of the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic, which guarantee equal rights and duties for all citizens, all relevant labor laws, instructions and resolutions affirm the right of women to work, and in particular to receive equal compensation and to obtain employment without discrimination on the grounds of gender. Article 119 of the Labor Code no. 17 of 2010 states that all provisions governing the employment of workers shall be valid for female workers without discrimination in similar working conditions. There is no discrimination between the sexes in accessing work opportunities in public authorities or in terms of wages or promotion. For example 32,239 people were appointed to various positions at the Ministry of Education in 2017/2018, and the majority of them were female. With regards to wages, the Basic Law for State Employees applies equally to males and females.
- With reference to labor force indicators, an increase is seen in the proportion of women employed in the workforce overall, as it rose from 14.9% in 2013 to 19.9% in 2015. Likewise, the proportion of unemployed women in the total workforce rose from 28.4% in 2013 to 53.1% as a result of the increase in the proportion of female heads of household. National employment policies have followed an approach of increasing the number of females participating in the labor market, especially given the rise in the number of female heads of household over recent years. Their contribution has been in terms of traditional, low-paying jobs.
- A salaried training program has been designed on the basis of specific inputs and outputs, targeting the first-ranked new male and female graduates, with a yearly stipend for persons with disabilities (both male and female on equal terms) within universities.

**In the domain of empowering unemployed women, a number of measures have been taken, the most significant of which are:**

1. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has implemented a program for strengthening the capacities of labor market entrants, including both men and women. A six-month project to train new graduates within ministries has been commenced.
2. Preparation of a package of industrial support measures for Damascus and the surrounding area.
3. Design of a project to reintegrate male and female workers who lost their jobs as a result of the impact of the crisis on the labor market.
4. Implementation of a project for empowerment of the unemployed, in which women, and in particular women heads of household, receive priority attention.
5. Completion of the equipping of the Career Guidance and Entrepreneurship Center and a number of programs to develop the capacity of new male and female entrants

to the labor market in order to equip them with the skills required to enhance their employment opportunities.

6. Development of the role of the private sector in ensuring access to services for families and women, and in particular women heads of household on behalf of their families, in order to achieve effective participation and optimize the use of women's capacities, integrating them into the development process.

#### **Fifth: Women's entrepreneurship in women's businesses and projects.**

- Coordination mechanisms have been expanded between government agencies, NGOs and international organizations to support micro- and livelihood projects which are to focus on targeting the most affected families and female-headed households, among which the most significant is the establishment of community development centers. Currently the services of the community development centers established during the crisis by 28 associations and NGOs have been developed to become part of the social protection system in coordination with international organizations. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has begun to deploy its services geographically and has started to establish an interactive map of the distribution of its services according to the type of services offered, with the number of various community centers reaching around 416 that provide services benefiting women.
- The aim is to move towards productive aid via the development of productive skills and capacities and the development of aid-granting mechanisms from the in-kind format to developmental targeting which seeks to generate a sustainable income for the family. Several mechanisms have been initiated for programs to develop targeted projects for the development and empowerment of rural women within the Syrian Rural Development Program and operate the National Fund for Social Assistance for the financing and incubation of micro- and livelihood projects aimed primarily at women applicants or women registered with associations and NGOs. 508 women benefited from the vocational training for employment program, out of a total number of 530 beneficiaries, i.e. a proportion of 96% of the total.
- Law no. 2 of 2016 was issued to create the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Authority. This has facilitated the access of entrepreneurs and SMEs to financing, along with the development of a financing mechanism for SMEs in cooperation with one or more banks operating in Syria.
- A framework agreement was signed between the Authority and the National Fund for Social Assistance with the purpose of providing financial support to SMEs. The Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Authority also provides the necessary consultations prior to and after obtaining funding, creating a mechanism for lending to projects from the funds available to the Authority to support local production and exports via a third party.
- Several programs have been developed for MoUs in the field of international cooperation to develop economic partnerships, strengthen bilateral cooperation and encourage investment in SMEs between the Syrian Arab Republic, represented by the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Authority, and the following countries: the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Armenia, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of India.
- Work is also under way to establish a monitoring center for SMEs through the conduct of a census of economic establishments and setting up a database on the SMEs in the provinces included in the census, in cooperation with the Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Preparations have been made for the implementation of the general census project, with the approval of the estimated budget for census work by the Prime Minister's office, and the creation of a timetable for implementation which began on 11/1/2018 and will continue until June 2019.
- The financial and accounting system for the census have been approved, and committees have been formed to start the process of making the census of economic establishments. This will result in a database for the monitoring center for SMEs in order to supply an

integrated electronic information system (a business e-directory) to ensure that male and female entrepreneurs and SMEs have access to information and the requirements for establishing projects, as well as the necessary advice to commence and develop their businesses.

- The National Fund for Social Assistance was established by Legislative Decree no. 9 of 1/13/2011 with the purpose of protecting and caring for poor families by offering regular or emergency assistance. The provision of such assistance was **linked to development** commitments by beneficiaries relating to health and education, with the aim of connecting the provision of aid to the process of economic, social, health and educational empowerment of beneficiaries, and women in particular. As of mid-2012, 439 thousand families had benefitted.

<b>Number of loans granted in 2010-2015</b>				
Project	Total number of loans for all provinces	Number of loans granted to males	Number of loans granted to females	% of loans granted to females
Livestock development project	1413	801	612	44
Northeast area rural development project	997	590	407	41
Directorate of rural women	10353	-	10353	100
Syrian Secretariat for Development	23599	13938	9661	41
Small Enterprise Development Authority	25064	15038	10025	40
Women's empowerment and poverty reduction project	388	-	388	100
National microfinance foundation	10461	6277	4184	40
Ibdaa Microfinance Bank	10983	6813	4170	38
Total	83258	43457	39801	47

**3. Over the past five years, have specific measures been taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who are subject to multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination?**

Laws in the Syrian Arab Republic prohibit discrimination against women, and vigorous efforts have been made in this area, particularly concerning the following groups:

- ✓ **Women living in remote rural areas.**
- ✓ **Women with disabilities.**
- ✓ **Older women.**
- ✓ **Internally displaced women.**

**1 - Women living in remote rural areas.**

- The Ministry of Agriculture has targeted women in all villages through offering productive grants and loans and enabling them to participate in courses, seminars and practical demonstrations in order to obtain various kinds of knowledge and skills.
- The Rural Women's Development Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture is working on the development of rural women. This unit is concerned with mother and child welfare, rural housing, family planning, literacy and social welfare, in addition to other economic and demographic issues, alongside the development of women's skills and the establishment of small enterprises. Many activities, events and seminars have been held on the subject of gender, and the number of female beneficiaries of these activities

- amounted to 436,412. There have been 286 long training courses attended by 5,561 female farmers and 215 short courses attended by 3,905 female farmers.
- A permanent market has been established in both the provinces of Homs and Latakia for the marketing of produce, and sum of 352 million was allocated for the establishment of permanent halls in the provinces of: Quneitra, Hama, Suwayda, Damascus, and Rif Dimashq.
  - The implementation of economic support projects for a number of SMEs in cooperation with international organizations, including projects implemented between the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to provide support to owners of greenhouses in Baniyas city and the surrounding countryside, aiming to offer assistance to a number of small farmers in order to ensure they continue to generate income and do not fall out of the agricultural economic cycle. Official estimates from the time show that women make up around 21% of the workforce in Tartous province, which reflects the existence of a large gender gap. Statistics likewise show that 2.4% of this workforce are women heads of household.
  - These actions and measures have resulted in production being maintained for beneficiary families and their livelihoods being improved. This permitted the achievement of a social and economic balance for this area at that time, and the sustainable improvement in the livelihood of families targeted by the project, mitigating the impact of the humanitarian crisis on the lives and livelihoods of beneficiary families. The results matrix of the project implementation and economic support is as follows: The total number of beneficiaries consisted of 217 families targeted for support. There were 24 beneficiary families with productive women as breadwinners, and there were 18 families of producers having lost a family member (missing). There were 137 families of producers who were families of martyrs.

## **2 - Women with disabilities.**

- A national plan has been drawn up containing several measures and activities to improve the economic and social status of persons with disabilities of both genders, in terms of welfare, rehabilitation, empowerment and community integration.
- The Central Council for Persons with Disabilities has been formed with the joint membership of associations and institutions working on issues relating to persons with disabilities. The Council tracks the implementation of the National Plan for Persons with Disabilities. A woman with a disability was appointed as Secretary General of the Council.
- A project has been initiated to carry out a comprehensive survey of disability in Syria in cooperation between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, the Central Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF and the UNDP to assess the disability situation in the wake of the crisis, define needs, map the distribution of disabilities and generate a national database on disability.
- The subject of persons with disabilities was included in a special part of the annual UNICEF cooperation plan for 2016, called "Social Inclusion." An annual subsidy is granted to persons suffering from cerebral palsy, according to disability type, and work is being carried out on enlarging the beneficiary sphere to include persons with other disabilities unable to work.
- A new classification system for disabilities was rolled out from 11/15/2017 until 2018. It documented the granting of approximately 200 thousand cards, with different numbers according to disability type and geographic distribution. This supplied a definition of a person with a disability and permitted the expansion of the sphere of beneficiaries of services for people with disabilities, allowing them to make use of the benefits granted by laws and legislation. This helps lighten the burden on persons with disabilities, especially women. The national classification, with its new and flexible format, runs parallel to the Ministry of Health's adoption of a disability early detection system in order to reduce the severity and number of cases.

- Work is being carried out to raise awareness within the family via family counseling, health counseling and psychological counseling. The Central Council for Disability Affairs has provided for early detection of disabilities and awareness raising within maternity centers, promoting the need for all families to engage with the detection process. Work is being undertaken to develop data on the families of persons with disabilities through disability surveys and the introduction of family income and expenditure indicators on a national level. This allows a comparison to be made between the situation of families with disabilities and other families in order to reduce the gap and to integrate disability issues into development policies by focusing on the provision and quality of services offered (education, health, empowerment). The crisis has impacted them strongly in a negative sense due to its draining effect on physical, infrastructure and human resources.
- Women with disabilities constitute 66% of the total number of disabled persons appointed to public posts, within the 4% quota stipulated in the Basic Workers Act.
- In the field of education for children with disabilities, there is no discrimination with regards to males and females in relation to the services provided, in accordance with the application of the principles of democratic, free and compulsory education in the Syrian Arab Republic, in order to benefit from all the capacities of members of society in its development. The Ministry of Education works continuously and consistently to achieve inclusive and comprehensive education for all Syrian children, male and female, in order to enable them to play an effective part in building the country. The Ministry of Education has played its role in the application of educational rights for persons with disabilities, consistent with its vision of enhancing the quality of education and applying comprehensive quality principles in training, deepening its interrelationship with the requirements of comprehensive development. It has worked to train and provide qualifications to teaching and administrative staff in selected schools on methods for integrating children with disabilities in the context of central and local training plans. The Ministry of Education has also issued criteria for the admission and integration of disabled children in basic education schools and kindergartens, in accordance with the principles that must be adhered to in the integration process, identifying cases which may be accepted in basic education schools and kindergartens with a view ensuring that children with disabilities have access to equal opportunities in education, and to the educational services which are suited to their needs and abilities, emphasizing their active participation alongside their peers in all school activities and preparing them for life in general, enhancing their integration into society and contributing to its development.
- Inclusive schools have also been established in accordance with international standards to guarantee the right to education, and provide services in a manner that is suited to individual differences. The integration program is assessed every year in the effort to disseminate its positive results across Syrian schools. Around 1,000 students with disabilities are integrated in 120 inclusive Ministry of Education schools across all levels of education.

### **3 - Older women, care for the elderly group:**

- The National Strategy for the Care of the Elderly was completed in cooperation with relevant government agencies and NGOs.
- Providing comprehensive care services in nursing homes (health care - physical treatment - activities...) In cooperation with NGOs.
- Conducting training and capacity-building courses (for care assistants) in collaboration with the European Institute for Cooperation and Development.
- The Ministry of Health has implemented a number of measures aimed at preserving and strengthening the health of elderly women through providing free of charge quality services at the primary health care level, with a regular examination every six months, offering treatment services in keeping with health complaints, and preventive

services to promote health awareness and healthy lifestyles and diet. These measures have targeted elderly men and women within the scope of health centers.

- The most significant lessons learned from these measures are the need for coordination among all sectors and stakeholders concerned with the health of the elderly, the promotion of active old age within society, emphasis on the role of the family and then society in caring for the elderly, and including geriatrics within medical and nursing curricula.

#### **4 - Internally displaced women.**

- The Syrian Arab Republic regards the protection and assistance of its citizens, including those who have been displaced, as a constitutional and moral obligation. Finding sustainable solutions to the phenomenon of displacement has been the ultimate goal of its constant work in the effort to achieve this via the following:
  - 1) Delivering humanitarian assistance to all those in need of it, without discrimination and regardless of their location, alongside securing the protecting of humanitarian workers in accordance with its international obligations.
  - 2) Continuing counter-terrorism efforts and ensuring the return of security and stability.
  - 3) Working to rehabilitate the infrastructure of affected areas which have been liberated and provide them with the necessary services of water, electricity, communications and sanitation, so as to enable the people to return to the areas which they fled from in order to escape from terrorist groups, providing conditions that will help them to restore the livelihoods and stability that were stolen from them by terrorism. A permanent plan of Action and continuing budgets have been allocated for this area.
  - 4) Continuing to implement national reconciliation in various areas of the Syrian Arab Republic.
  - 5) Integrating the development dimension into humanitarian response plans.
- Since the emergence of humanitarian needs as a result of the actions of armed terrorist groups, compounded by the unilateral coercive measures imposed by several international actors on Syria, the Syrian government has sought to provide an urgent response using all available resources to meet these needs. It has confirmed its full commitment to cooperation with the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies in accordance with the regulations of Resolution 46/182 and the guidelines established by it.
- The Supreme Committee for Aid acts as the cornerstone for the management and direction of relief work at the national level through coordinating this work at the government level (centralized, decentralized, local centers), as well as via governmental-non governmental coordination and national-international coordination. The tasks of the Committee include establishing interim objectives and humanitarian projects in accordance with national needs and priorities, tracking the implementation of ministry and provincial plans, and carrying out an evaluation process.
- The Syrian government has adopted a mechanism for coordination between civil society organizations and international institutions working in Syria with a view to promoting humanitarian work and expanding its base, allowing these permitted organizations to engage in joint work with these agencies. At present there are more than 1,500 local organizations in Syria, a number of which have signed MoUs with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, alongside 27 international NGOs working in Syria, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the European Commission Humanitarian Office and the Swiss Humanitarian Office.
- In the face of the challenge presented by the high number of displaced persons vis-a-vis the lack of adequate buildings for use as shelters, the high cost of rehabilitating buildings for use for this purpose, and the lack of the necessary international funding,

- the Syrian government has resorted to allocating a large number of government buildings for use as shelters, including sports centers, educational centers, schools, worship sites, rural development sites and social welfare centers.
- The Ministry for Local Administration and the Environment, in its capacity as the principal authority responsible for this area of aid work, is implementing numerous ongoing projects in this field. The construction of residential units for temporary accommodation in the provinces is being financed as required by public construction companies, such as the Public Company for Construction and Development, or in cooperation with some international organizations. For example, under the annual agreement signed between the Ministry for Local Administration and the Environment and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), funding has been provided for the rehabilitation and restoration of a number of buildings in several provinces agreed upon for inclusion in the operational plan, with the aim of helping displaced people return to their own areas and improving conditions in shelters.
  - The Reconstruction Committee, formed by Prime Ministerial Decree in 2012, continues with its function of paying compensation for damage to the private property of uninsured citizens in the provinces as a result of terrorist acts, approving the costs estimated by the ministries, provinces and relevant public bodies as necessary for the rehabilitation and maintenance of public buildings, establishing the annual assistance plan for ministries and public bodies, and taking the necessary measures to rehabilitate and maintain damaged public infrastructure and facilities in accordance with implementation and spending priorities. The annual budget of the Committee is estimated at 12-13 billion Syrian lira annually.
  - The National Administration Unit was established under the Ministry of Local Administration and the Environment to serve as the information and technology wing of the Supreme Committee for Aid. Among other functions, it supplies constantly updated data on displaced persons and shelters, and distributes data to relevant bodies to assist in planning and priority setting.
  - The sub-committees of the Supreme Commission for Aid continuously update the relevant databases through their supervision of aid work at province level. This includes a database of beneficiaries of the assistance offered by the Syrian government and international organizations.
  - The Syrian government has established a unit to monitor and track population movements and identify the needs of displaced persons. In the same context, an electronic crisis response system was set up to provide data relevant to several aid issues including an assessment of the number of displaced persons in all provinces, what has been done, and what actions are needed.
  - Within the annual investment plans of the authorities concerned with the water, electricity and health sectors, the Syrian government has sought to allocate the necessary financial resources to sustain the supply of these services in all governorates of Syria, whereby the average investment spending on these sectors stood at about 30% of total investment budget spending during the period 2015-2017.
  - The Syrian government is working to supply all possible facilities for and overcome all obstacles to the return of Syrian citizens to their homes, to simplify the procedures for their return and focus on the fundamental aspects of securing the necessities of life, such as ensuring housing, and providing suitable programs for job creation and the improvement of living standards.
  - A coordination agency was formed for the return of Syrian refugees abroad, with the purpose of studying and coordinating work in the field and providing all facilities and taking measures to ensure their return, enabling them to live a normal life and practice their work.
  - A priority issue for the Syrian government is to overcome the challenges posed by the removal from service of a number of civil status secretariats due to their being targeted by armed terrorist groups, and to facilitate access to such services, including for Syrians abroad. In this context, the following actions have been taken:



- 1) Amendment of the Civil Status Code by Law no. 24 of 2015 to allow the registration of births, no matter how delayed, wherever they occur and wherever the citizen is registered.
  - 2) The acceptance of civil status certificates (birth and death) organized by the mayor of the person's place of residence.
  - 3) Many branches have been created to assist the work of civil affairs directorates, especially in the provinces and places controlled by armed terrorist groups. A branch has been opened for Raqqa province in Damascus and Hama, and a branch for Idlib province in Damascus, Tartus and Latakia, where the citizens of Raqqa and Idlib fled to escape the terrorist groups.
  - 4) An integrated service center has been established in Damascus to provide civil status services to citizens from all provinces.
  - 5) Task forces have been set up in shelters and areas that have been liberated from terrorist groups in order to undertake civil status tasks in areas in which the Secretariats are not functioning.
  - 6) With regards to births occurring outside the Syrian Arab Republic, as a result of the closure of a number of Syrian embassies it was necessary to amend the Civil Status Code in order to enable citizens outside the country to register civil status events. Accordingly, Legislative Decree no. 26 of 2007 was amended several times to include new procedures aimed at facilitating the registration of events. The most significant amendment was supplied in Law no. 4 of 2017, which provides for the registration of the civil status event at the place it occurred, or the place of residence, at the Syrian embassy or consulate or at the embassy or consulate responsible for the interests of Syrians.  
 In the case of a citizen living in an area away from the embassy or consulate, it is sufficient for them to send a certificate of the event, such as a birth or death, or a true copy thereof, to the Directorate of Civil Affairs where they are registered, through their family or a legal representative, for it to be registered.  
 Law no. 24 of 2015 amended paragraphs (b) and (c) of Legislative Decree no. 26 to allow embassies to register births up until the age of 18, where it had been prohibited from registering the births of those over 14 years of age, allowing the registration of all events, however delayed, at the Syrian embassy or consulate. The period during which the registration of events occurring outside the country is permitted was amended from 60 days to 90 days on the basis of an amendment to Article 14 of Decree no. 26 of 2007, pursuant to Law no. 20 of 2011.
  - 7) At the civil society level, the Syria Trust for Development and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are undertaking a number of projects to provide assistance to citizens in this field.
- It should be noted that in addressing the impact of the phenomenon of displacement, the Syrian government is focusing on women in terms of the monitoring, protection and empowerment dimensions. For example, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, in cooperation with a number of national and international bodies, has developed an integrated monitoring and reporting strategy aimed at monitoring and reporting and widening the scope of access to the groups most at risk of danger and violence, and raising awareness of its various forms. Various courses are also being conducted in particular sectors, such as for journalists in monitoring and documentation, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
  - A study has been carried out on the situation of displaced women in temporary shelters, returning from displacement, and problems relating to family life, and following a study and analysis of the results this was translated into recommendations to be integrated in national plans and programs.
  - Medical centers or mobile clinics have also been supplied at shelters to offer various health services to women, including reproductive health services, and supplementary nutritional support for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, awareness-raising

consultations and sessions on health, along with psychosocial support activities. A number of these activities form axes of the annual joint work plan between the Syrian government and UNPFA.

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

- The practices of armed terrorist groups have resulted in waves of people being displaced from the areas in which these groups spread out, the destruction of infrastructure and the disruption of basic services, and this has combined with the effects of unilateral coercive measures to impact on women, girls, children and the elderly, in particular the most vulnerable groups. The number of women heads of household has increased, along with the number of girls having lost the protection of close family, and the poverty rate has risen, with the food poverty index rising markedly. This has also led to slowed progress in attaining the required health indicators and goals. Secondary and tertiary level health services which require advanced equipment and technology have been affected by the unilateral coercive measures imposed by some countries as follows:
  - ✓ The import of medical equipment, as well as its maintenance and spare parts, and the difficulty in ensuring a supply of quality medicines, along with the falling out of service of many major items of equipment for the provision of health services.
  - ✓ These measures have also made it difficult or impossible to ensure a supply of essential basic materials for medical and health training processes, such as educational models, and the relevant advanced software.
  - ✓ The ban on airline companies has made it impossible to transport certain items of medical equipment, in particular the high quality ones, such as magnetic resonance devices which must be transported directly via air.
  - ✓ Not allowing experts and technicians working in companies that apply these measures to come to Syria means that it is difficult to train personnel working on the equipment, which cannot be done without experts.
- The impact on the education sector in Syria was made manifest in the loss of the many gains accumulated over past decades, including the loss of some elements fundamental to the work of the sector, and the damaging of some of them. The destruction of schools and a lack of human resources have been behind a deterioration in quantitative indicators for enrollment and dropout rates. The loss of a large portion of the elements required for quality improvement has led to an increase in student density for pupils and teachers, and this has caused the Syrian Arab Republic to fall short to a great extent in achievement of the Millennium Goals. This will also bring additional burdens, such as the disruption of the educational structure for years to come, and high dropout rates, and the resulting loss in productivity and increased future unemployment and poverty rates. Increased efforts are required in order to avoid this disruption.

**5. Which of the following does your country consider to be among the top five priorities for accelerating the progress of women and girls in your country over the next five years, through laws and/or policies and/or programs? (Please verify relevant categories).**

Women's issues and their social, economic and political empowerment constitute a focus of attention for all the official, private and public institutions of the Syrian Arab Republic. The 2012 Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic and the national legal framework in general emphasize the protection of women's rights and advancement in all areas, in particular education, health, employment, social and political participation, and the creation of an enabling climate, contributing to their effective participation in the

sustainable development process. The main priorities for accelerating the progress of women and girls in the Syrian Arab Republic are:

- ✓ **Quality of education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls.**
- ✓ **Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security.**
- ✓ **Eradication of violence against women and girls.**
- ✓ **Access to quality health care, including for sexual and reproductive health rights.**
- ✓ **Women's entrepreneurship in women's businesses and projects.**

### **1 - Quality of education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls.**

Within the framework of the Syrian Arab Republic's public policy, which holds to the active role of women in properly preparing and educating a generation so as to contribute into the building of society in all fields. Education and training are among its top priorities for the next five years. In this context, the objectives of the Ministry of Education include:

- To accommodate all children in primary school classes and improve the quality of education.
- Reduce illiteracy and female dropout rates from basic education, especially in rural areas.
- Encourage women to pursue educational courses in order to ensure proper family development.
- Indicative programs to include the necessity of educating girls, at least to the level of compulsory education.
- Encourage rural women wishing to pursue post-compulsory level education, with due consideration for improving their situation.
- Invest in the Internet so as to serve the cause of education and expand the introduction of information technology into various educational phases.
- The introduction of new disciplines within universities and higher and middle level institutes of education relating to women's issues and their role in economic and social life.
- The development of vocational and technical education curricula in accordance with developments in science and technology and the requirements of development, as well as labor market needs.
- Raising the capacities of teachers of commercial subjects and female teaching assistants for women's crafts, from an educational and training perspective.
- Working on integrating gender concepts into the various educational curricula, and continue to transform the stereotypical image of women in the educational curriculum.
- Improving competencies on the subject of gender for committees supervising curricula, and male and female school textbook authors and teachers.

### **2 - Elimination of violence against women and girls.**

The elimination of violence against women and girls is a permanent and key objective of the Syrian Arab Republic, especially given the systematic violence against women perpetrated by armed terrorist groups in the places where they spread out and attempted to spread their extremist beliefs. Among the preventive and remedial actions to be taken against this phenomenon are:

- The enactment and amendment of legislation and laws, the implementation of existing laws and organizing awareness-raising campaigns in society, and involving men in them.
- Completing the construction of the case management system and putting it into implementation to provide assistance to male and female survivors through networking between government agencies and NGOs, and cooperation with international organizations.

- Opening more protection units in the provinces in order to receive women and girls who are survivors of violence, and to provide integrated packages of services such as shelter, psychosocial support, medical services and legal consultation, as well as economic empowerment via vocational training and a return to education.
- The re-launch of the Violence Observatory, which aims to track the phenomenon of domestic violence, in the first phase via 18 monitoring stations in hospitals, police stations and NGOs, with the purpose of observing and analyzing the phenomenon of domestic violence and setting up plans to counter it.
- Capacity building for social workers, organizing the practice of psychosocial support in partnership with NGOs.
- The launch of a hotline by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to receive complaints from women subjected to violence, managing cases via offering advice to survivors and referring them to the services required.

### **Third: Poverty eradication, and raising agricultural productivity and achieving food security.**

Planning for the coming period is based on work to achieve the following:

- The equipping of specialized manufacturing units according to the geographical spread of agricultural crops, and training in the use of unit supplies and the manufacture of the product, taking into account production and quality requirements in order to meet specifications, in order to develop a rural product to compete on the markets and improve the living conditions of rural families.
- The provision of loans on favorable terms to rural women working in rural manufacturing (food and traditional handicrafts).
- The provision of productive grants (vegetable seeds, wheat seeds, poultry, production supplies) with government funding through plans and cooperation programs with international organizations.
- The opening of marketing outlets for the sale of rural women's products with the aim of delivering the product directly to the consumer, and eliminating the role of intermediaries, adding to the value of the product and reflecting positively on the economic situation of rural families.

### **Fourth: Access to quality health care, including for sexual and reproductive health rights:**

One of the main priorities of the Syrian Arab Republic is to raise healthcare awareness and improve healthcare quality through:

- Working to restore health centers and improve the infrastructure required to provide decent services.
- Provision of essential medicines (according to the Essential Medicines List).
- Provision of medical equipment and supplies appropriate to the level of health facilities.
- Training service providers in accordance with national work manuals.
- Raising the health awareness of the population, and encouraging the use of services.
- Reinforcing the health information system to respond to needs and decision making.
- Directing plans and strategies to benefit all sectors, focusing on women and children as they are most in need and most vulnerable. This requires coordination among all service providers and the participation of beneficiaries in the planning process.

### **Fifth - Women's entrepreneurship in women's businesses and projects:**

Given the positive effects of the interest in women's entrepreneurship in business and women's projects as outlined above, the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to focus on:

- The development of rural women, in particular women heads of household and those affected by the crisis in all provinces of Syria, with women who have the potential for change and the desire to work and improve their position at the forefront, through the

Rural Women's Development Program to raise their productivity and social, health and legal awareness through seminars and practical demonstrations.

- Setting up programs to raise women's capacities and develop their skills in various fields through specialist technical training courses to provide rural women with qualifications in various technical subjects relating to agriculture and food manufacturing.
- Continuing work on empowering women economically and socially, strengthening their capacities by supporting and developing the SME sector and reinforcing its role in the national economy, whereby it is expected to directly contribute to improving the standard of living of families and reducing the poverty level, ensuring a comprehensive economic recovery for local communities in cities and rural areas.
- Strengthening cooperation between the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Authority and training centers in the Syrian provinces through following up on the signing of a number of agreements, including those aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs and business leaders and owners of SMEs, providing qualifications to management staff and employing the capacities of youth, in particular women, in all professions and specializations, implementing a range of programs and activities.
- Training, qualification and capacity development of human resources working in the commercial and business sector and SMEs, in particular women entrepreneurs, in addition to facilitating the entry of the women jobseekers sector into the labor market and training them in a number of appropriate professions.
- Following up on the training of trainers and the "Guaranteed Employment" program to raise the capacities of male and female jobseekers, taking advantage of vacant job opportunities in the private sector, and following up on the establishment of several cooperation agreements between the Authority and public and private sector bodies and NGOs with a view to offering all forms of logistical support necessary for projects and female jobseekers according to a special program.

## Section II: Progress achieved across the twelve critical areas of concern

### **Comprehensive development, shared prosperity and decent work:**

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

- Women and poverty
- Women and the economy
- Women's human rights
- The female child

#### **6. What measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote gender equality with regards to the role of women in paid work and employment?**

Main actions taken in this field:

##### **1 - Strengthening/enforcing laws and policies/practices in the workplace which prohibit discrimination in the employment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation:**

- As previously mentioned, Article 119 of the Labor Code no. 17 issued in 2010 states that all provisions governing the employment of workers shall be applied without discrimination to women when their working conditions are similar.
- The Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Authority was established by Law no. 2 of 2016. Among its closely related functions is enabling women to access employment, and improving the performance of SMEs, in addition to protecting small producers and permitting a positive intervention for the development of this vital sector, reinforcing its developmental role by establishing programs that aim to increase its contribution to GDP without any discrimination between males and females. Likewise, specific controls and standards have been established for the funding of projects in coordination with all agencies in order to achieve sectoral and geographical balances.
- Male and female entrepreneurs, those seeking decent work, producers, farmers, female breadwinners and innovators have been targeted by project owners and brought together with investors in order to back them and support companies at local trade fairs on an equal basis.
- With regards to the budget that has been allocated for this, the investment budget approved for the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Authority in 2018 included 700 million Syrian lira allocated as follows:
  - ✓ 410 million Syrian lira for a comprehensive survey of SMEs, with about 1.8 million Syrian lira actually spent on this item.
  - ✓ 66 million Syrian lira for trade fairs and the promotion of SMEs, of which around 51 million was spent, with an implementation rate of 90%.
  - ✓ 164 million Syrian lira for support to SMEs, of which 7 million was spent on this item.
- With regards to the 2019 budget: A sum of 300 million Syrian lira was allocated for the survey of SMEs, and 100 million for support to trade fairs and the promotion of SMEs, alongside 204 million for support to SMEs.
- On impact assessment: The development of this vital sector and the promotion of its development role by formulating policies and programs will contribute to increasing GDP in order to achieve sectoral and geographic economic balance, in particularly including the villages and cities affected by the crisis. It will also contribute directly to improving the standard of living of families, and poverty alleviation, providing for a comprehensive economic recovery for local rural and urban communities.
- The lessons learned with regards to SMEs show that work on supporting and developing the SME sector in the national economy and following up on the signing of a number of cooperation agreements between the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Authority and various training centers in the Syrian provinces leads to the empowerment of male and female entrepreneurs and owners of SMEs, along with the training of national cadres and

the absorption of young people's energies, in particular women, in all disciplines, as well as securing a decent living for jobseekers.

## **2 - Improving financial services and access to credit, including for self-employed women:**

- Work has been undertaken on facilitating access to funding (logistical support, funding and local and international partnership contracts) for entrepreneurs and SMEs.
- A mechanism for financing SMEs has been developed in cooperation with banks working in Syria. Work is currently underway in coordination with both a depository bank and the National Microfinance Establishment to create a suitable finance product for SMEs.
- A framework agreement was signed between the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Authority and the National Fund for Social Assistance with the aim of offering financial support to SMEs and creating a mechanism for supporting projects in various formats, including interest rate support to reduce the cost of borrowing, with the facilitation of access to funding for projects via programs offered by the Loan Risk Guarantee Establishment.
- Providing the necessary consultations prior to and after obtaining funding.
- Creating a mechanism for lending to projects from the funds available in the Local Production and Third Party Exports Support Agency.
- With regards to assessing the impact of these measures, it may be said that the efforts made to provide support via financing and lending lead to a reduction in the risks and difficulties faced by male and female entrepreneurs and affecting the financial services offered to them.
- As for lessons learned, the facilitation of access to funding services constitutes the mainstay of SME development, which has been a method for empowering women to contribute to the national economy.

## **3 - Support for the transition from informal to formal employment, including legal and policy measures benefiting women in informal employment.**

- A number of steps have been taken in order to provide assistance in obtaining the licenses necessary for launching SMEs, and facilitating their transition to the formal sector, via the following:
  - ✓ Formulating a mechanism for the registration of SMEs at branches of the Authority in the provinces, within a working mechanism at the branch including, alongside registration, the issue of a project sponsorship document and providing various support services for male and female entrepreneurs alike.
  - ✓ Forming a committee within the Small and Medium Enterprises Authority with the task of studying ways to simplify procedures for establishing and operating SMEs and providing them with the benefits and facilities necessary for their development. A survey was made of the procedures for awarding licensing by the authorities concerned in preparation for the committee commencing its study and work on simplification of them. Likewise, a study was made of all the difficulties faced during the work of these projects.
  - ✓ Signing a number of cooperation agreements between the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Authority and certain training centers in the provinces aimed at empowering male and female entrepreneurs and owners of SMEs, training staff and employing the energies of young people in all professions and disciplines, along with implementing a series of programs and events.
  - ✓ Work is under way on establishing an observatory for SMEs through the conduct of a census of economic establishments and the establishment of a database on SMEs in the provinces included in the census, in cooperation with the Central Bureau of Statistics. Preparations have been completed for the implementation of the general census project, the approval of the estimated budget for census works by the

- Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the formulation of a timetable for implementation starting from 11/1/2018 and continuing until June 2019.
- The financial and accounting system for the census have been approved, and committees have been formed to start the process of making the census of economic establishments. This will result in a database for the monitoring center for SMEs in order to supply an integrated electronic information system (Business e-directory) to ensure that male and female entrepreneurs and SMEs have access to information and the requirements for establishing projects, as well as the necessary advice to commence and develop their businesses.
  - Impact assessment: These measures will support the transition to formal organized work and supply a comprehensive database of SMEs in order for them to be targeted by development programs, and various support programs, opening the way for women to enter the labor market within a legal and institutional framework providing protection and support.

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

None

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

In spite of the circumstances experienced by the Syrian Arab Republic, no measures have been taken to reduce the number of private sector employees over the past five years. However, austerity measures have been implemented to control public finances, briefly summarized as follows:

- On 7/15/2015 a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to regulate current spending (spending on advertising, maintenance, bonuses and incentives).
- On 12/3/2015, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to reduce spending by 30% for the fuel (diesel) budget item for the year 2016.
- On 1/6/2016, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to reduce spending by 30% for the following budget items: maintenance and repairs, stationery and publications, bonuses, overtime, office equipment, electricity, conferences, seminars, workshops and hospitality.
- On 1/27/2016, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to reduce spending by 20% on the fuel (diesel) budget item, additionally to the 30% cut, making a total reduction of 50% for 2016.
- On 2/22/2017, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to reduce spending by 25% for the budget item allocated to fuel for service cars working on gasoline and diesel, and reducing diesel allocations for other uses with the exception of public hospitals.
- On 2/13/2018, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to issue a decree from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to extend work according to document no. 142/15 of 2/22/2017.
- On 3/24/2019, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to reduce spending by 25% of the total of resources in the second section of the budget.
- On 4/14/2019, a decree was issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to reduce spending on the gasoline and diesel articles by 50%.

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



**Critical areas of concern:**

- Women and poverty.
- Women's education and training.
- Women and health.
- Women's human rights.
- The female child.

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

Reference has already been made to policies for the social and economic empowerment of the poorest members of the population via ensuring the enjoyment of social and economic rights, and promoting productive sectors to create employment opportunities. The post-war development agenda has included a comprehensive framework for the social protection system, and safety and social security networks, under which come policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty and marginalization, and strengthening the resilience of individuals and families faced with social and economic challenges, notably unemployment, sickness, disability and old age.

The first national sustainable development report highlighted the effects of the terrorist war faced by the Syrian Arab Republic, and set out its development priorities and poverty eradication plans.

Practical measures also taken in this area include:

**Firstly: Promoting the access of poor women to decent work via active labor market policies (such as job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures.**

Work has been carried out on the following:

1. Raising the level of training skills among technical staff working in the area of development of rural women, and rural women. Over the last five years, the Directorate of Rural Women's Affairs has conducted 135 training courses for female engineers in various fields (agriculture, health, business establishment, food processing, marketing, local community development, etc.)
2. Economic empowering of rural women through:
  - ✓ The family farming project, from which 17,360 female farmers benefited. The project, spread across the provinces (Rif Dimashq, Suwayda, Homs, Ghab, Latakia, Tartous, Quneitra, Hama and Aleppo) provides for the supply of a grant (summer - winter vegetables) and a drip irrigation network, with government funding estimated at two and a quarter billion Syrian lira. Currently, distribution has been made to fifteen thousand families in order for them to plant gardens next to their houses in the countryside, achieving self-sufficiency in vegetables for the families and enabling them to sell the surplus, thereby bringing in additional income for rural families.
  - ✓ Various methods have been adopted, such as the establishment of revolving funds, which have helped rural women to set up small production businesses for themselves and their families.
  - ✓ 24,030 rural families were targeted via the National Strategy for Family Farming at the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform in 2016.
  - ✓ A productive grants program was implemented in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Under this program, production grants (vegetable seeds, wheat seeds, barley seeds, summer and winter vegetable seedlings, irrigation networks, fertilizer) were distributed in a number of provinces in order to assist the resettlement of rural families having returned to their villages affected by the circumstances impacting the country, including:

- Targeting 80,000 families over the past five years.
  - Providing food processing loans, with rural women being supported with soft loans during 2019 to finance food processing businesses in order to support rural products in terms of quantity and quality. 1,000 families will be targeted across all provinces.
  - Since 2016, a central market has been held annually in Damascus with the participation of 300 female farmers to market rural women's products, in order to support the marketing of rural products by delivering them directly from the farm to the consumer without any intermediaries. Likewise, markets have been established in Homs and Latakia provinces for the sale of rural women's products. Now funding has been obtained to establish markets in all remaining provinces.
  - 60 rural industry units were set in operation in various provinces out of a total number of 179 units.
3. An advanced methodology was developed for the work of rural development centers which work on empowering rural women, population and gender issues, and providing services to people with disabilities. These centers also aim to supply direct and indirect opportunities for work on new special projects dependent on the characteristics and nature of the area, contributing to providing additional resources for the reduction of poverty and unemployment rates.
  4. The services of 3 rural development centers in Latakia and Tartous have been strengthened, out of 29 centers. Other centers are under way in Talkalakh and Yabrud. (The total balance of funding for the rehabilitation and support of rural development units and centers was 769 million Syrian lira).
  5. 145 training courses were held for rural women across all provinces, via which technical support was offered in various domains in order to meet training needs.
  6. The draft National Program for the Support and Empowerment of Women was completed. Once approved, it will be transformed into a program of action within ministries and the National Program for the Support of Youth.

**Secondly: Supporting activities to develop women's entrepreneurship in the area of business and projects.**

- A package of measures was launched to empower the Syrian countryside through the National Fund for Social Assistance in cooperation with the Agriculture Cooperative Bank to the sum of two billion Syrian lira, with interest supported by the Fund and repaid for the borrower (4% out of 10%). The number of applicants stood at 1,345, with 861 technically accepted. 500 projects are currently being studied for funding and 102 projects have been funded.
- Training 1,118 entrepreneurs and funding 321 entrepreneurship projects (international funding).
- Vocational training, income generation and livelihood services have been developed by NGOs with a view towards moving towards productive aid. Assistance in cash and in kind has been supplied for the support of livelihood programs in areas liberated from terrorist groups, and a number of rural areas, with approximately 43,000 beneficiaries, valued at 1,630 million Syrian lira (international funding).
- The State has currently allocated a sum of two billion Syrian lira to the National Fund for Social Assistance for interest rate support on lending for micro-enterprises, and a sum of 40 billion to support the interest rate on loans to SMEs, and restore the means of production that were lost during the war. The primary beneficiaries of these programs are women breadwinners, as they constitute one of the target groups, in particular displaced women.
- Introducing or strengthening social protection programs for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public work/employment guarantee schemes for women of working age, and pensions for older women).

- Achieving a more advanced vision for the work of the public employment offices, including 92 thousand persons registered in the public employment offices. Securing 1,700 private sector job opportunities and 797 job opportunities within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and its affiliated bodies, in addition to around 50 thousand discretionary job opportunities in the non-governmental sector, including opportunities provided by micro-projects and the launch of a Career Guidance and Entrepreneurship Center in Damascus as a tool for intervention to stimulate the labor market and provide training and capacity building opportunities for 2,535 beneficiaries.
- Taking on 411 beneficiaries in the first phase of the program to support new graduates, beginning with 120 trainees (6-month practical incubation period, with a payment to the graduate of 25 thousand Syrian lira).
- A number of NGOs are contributing to support women in the field of entrepreneurship via vocational courses and qualifications.

**10. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

The principal measures taken to improve access to social protection are:

**Firstly: The provision or promotion of conditional cash transfers.**

One of the main lines of work of the National Fund for Social Assistance is the provision of conditional cash transfers, whereby poor families and women benefit from assistance and social support if the children of the family continue to study, and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers continue to consult the health center and vaccinations are provided for their children.

**Secondly: The provision or promotion of unconditional cash transfers.**

- A comprehensive social protection framework has been developed in Syria, including policies aimed at families and children, among them beneficiaries of cash aid for persons with disabilities - 33,041 people at a value of 3.2 billion Syrian lira (cerebral palsy, cash subsidies, scholarships, government and international funding).
- Providing/strengthening low-cost legal services for women living in poverty. Civil society associations have been stimulated towards providing legal advice and awareness services and assisting in the issuing of identity papers, in particular given the problems created by the war, with the inability to register many marriages due to people being located in areas outside government control, and the resultant unregistered births, which is currently being rectified by the assignment of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the NGO Syria Trust for Development to provide all the necessary services free of charge.
- Disability grants are being provided for cerebral palsy and children's severe disabilities to alleviate the burden on families, especially mothers.

**Third: Providing or strengthening non-contributory social pensions.**

A pension scheme has been launched for elderly men and women without family care or anyone to provide for them, who are not enrolled in social insurance.

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

The most significant measures taken for the improvement of health outcomes for women and girls may be outlined as follows:

**Firstly: The expansion of specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, maternity and HIV services.**

- The State embraces the principle of providing free primary health care services. Services are provided via a series of health centers that cover most areas, allowing people easy access to free primary health care services. Following the liberation of areas from armed terrorist groups, a survey of facilities was carried out to verify their levels of readiness and to identify gaps. Many regulatory decisions were issued for the work of health facilities, and damaged health facilities are being restored according to a plan in cooperation with many international organizations. Work is also regularly underway on training health personnel who have returned to their workplaces.
- In the current phase, the focus is on restoring the provision of services and planning to raise their quality via standardizing work tools and the supportive supervision of their delivery.
- With regards to reproductive health services in particular, given the shortage of necessary staff, especially midwives, and to increase the number of women enrolled in the study of midwifery in order to compensate for the shortage, study years have been adjusted and the curriculum has been amended and strengthened in keeping with the functions of the midwife and the pre-work study period. This is to ensure the qualification of a suitable number of midwives to serve as the basis for the delivery of good quality and efficient reproductive health services.

**Secondly: Promoting women's access to health services through expanding the scope of comprehensive health coverage or public health services.**

The Syrian Arab Republic's concern for women's health and its commitment to the recommendations of the World Population Conference and the Beijing Conference have resulted in meaningful steps being taken, the most significant of which have been:

1. The reproductive health project, which aims to provide high-quality services and information, in particular in remote areas.
2. A project for natural birth centers to provide health care and education throughout pregnancy and to take in all births having natural procedures, transferring non-natural cases to hospitals, and providing care for mothers and newborns, with attention to the high quality of services. This has been reflected in a number of activities, the most important of which are:
  - ✓ Developing national capacities in the area of reproductive health. Many doctors and midwives have been sent on external training and familiarization courses.
  - ✓ Reinforcing the recently commenced midwifery training to integrate reproductive health concepts into the curricula at medical schools and implement it in midwifery and nursing institutes.
3. Strengthening the logistics and supplies system through providing family planning methods at all health centers, and the training of personnel in this area.
4. Promoting preventive programs that improve women's health through the implementation of the early detection project for cancer in women.
5. Providing a number of health centers with cervical endoscopy devices, and training doctors to perform the endoscopy.
6. Training women to carry out self-examinations for breast cancer and producing educational publications.
7. Conducting a regular annual examination at the health center with referral where necessary for radiography.
8. Providing a number of referral centers with equipment for the conduct of mammograms.

9. NGOs such as the Syrian Family Planning Association and the Zahrat Al Mada'in Association also contribute to providing accompaniment services and reproductive health services for women through the opening of a number of holistic clinics.
10. The International Youth Chamber in Damascus launched the "Wonderwoman" project in 2018 with the support of the Ministry of Tourism for the support of breast cancer survivors. The project consists of two parts: the first focuses on awareness, organizing lectures and awareness-raising seminars in cooperation with the Doctors' Union, and the second is an intensive 4-day-per-week program for survivors which includes psychological support sessions, yoga, sport, and nutritional consultations.

**Third: Promoting comprehensive sex education in schools or through community programs.**

- Educational curricula developed in Syria include the subject of sex education, in particular in science books for grades 6, 7, 8, 9 and the third secondary science grade. The necessary information and skills are provided to students as appropriate to their age.
- The Ministry of Education, via the Syrian Educational Satellite TV Channel, has disseminated public health awareness, in particular among women, through the production of health awareness programs in conjunction with the relevant authorities (the Ministry of Health, the School Health Directorate).
- The Ministry of Health is working on raising awareness about reproductive health and sex education through a number of measures, including interactive workshops and awareness sessions on sex education subjects.
- More than 14,450 male and female students at the preparatory and secondary levels were trained, with 300 teachers and mentors, through the Ministry of Health's programs aimed at adolescents, and the work of NGOs (the Family Planning Association), targeting school students at the preparatory and secondary levels as well as mentors, educators and teachers of religious education and science.

**12. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to improve educational outcomes and skills for women and girls?**

**Firstly: Taking measures to increase girls' access to education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and skills development programs, and to enable them to continue and complete their studies**

- The Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education at the Ministry of Education has conducted the following courses and programs without discrimination between women, girls or men in terms of enrollment:
  - ✓ Vocational and technical education courses from 2014 to 2019:
    - Central training courses on new curricula.
    - Training courses on vocational guidance in some provinces.
    - Training courses on the development of training methodologies in some provinces.
  - ✓ With regards to training courses granting qualifications for teachers of trades and engineers on modern curricula and laboratories in order to keep pace with scientific developments, for the year 2019 we may state the following:
- The Ministry of Education's general training plan for the year 2019 included 34 courses on vocational and technical education for all professions and specializations (manufacturing, commerce, women's), concerned with qualifying engineers, teachers of trades, commercial sciences and female teaching assistants on modern curricula and laboratories in line with their respective fields.
- In the period between month two and month five, communiqués were prepared on vocational and technical training courses in cooperation with the Directorate of

- Preparation and Training in order to disseminate them to all training directorates in the provinces to nominate trainees for each course.
- Vocational and technical education training courses are being conducted between the seventh and ninth months.

**Secondly: Reinforcing educational curricula in order to increase gender equality mainstreaming and eliminate sexism at all levels of education.**

Education in Syria is ensured for both sexes at all levels of education. It is compulsory and free of charge at the basic education stage, and this has given Syrian female children and women the opportunity to receive an education. In spite of the progress that has taken place, the illiteracy rate remains higher among females due to the war on Syria. The gap in education levels is still evident, in particular in rural areas, and the state has therefore planned for meaningful steps in the field of reform and modernization of the education system, taking into account the recommendations of the Beijing Conference.

**Third: Promotion of safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls.**

- The Ministry of Education is committed to the proper functioning of education in schools, and making them a stimulating and safe educational environment for all our pupils and students. It is also committed to enhancing cooperation between school staff and students' families and realizing the national and educational dimensions of these requirements which reflect on student performance, with a richer knowledge of moral and national values, and better behavior and attitudes towards their teachers, family and homeland.
- It is likewise committed to the importance of interacting with students in a positive manner and dealing with their affairs on scientific and educational bases which contribute to their conscious discipline and compliance with the school system as dictated by modern educational methods and psychosocial guidance, affirming that physical or verbal violence should not be used in schools on the grounds of not serving educational methods.
- The Ministry of Education has released a set of ministerial communiqués stressing the prohibition against beating in schools, whatever the reason or cause for this punishment, due to the negative effects of this on pupils and students and the negative impression it makes on their psychology. School principals are held responsible for the proper implementation of this.
- The Ministry of Education has issued monitoring cards for cases of violence in schools and measures taken by the school administration and education directorates. These are duly submitted to the Ministry of Education's Research Directorate.
- Working on promoting the role of psychosocial counseling in schools in order to address cases of violence between pupils and students, if any, through individual and group counseling, the promotion of the language of communication, listening and dialog among students for the rejection and prevention of violence, offering psychosocial support for those committing violence and those on the receiving end of it in particular, and for students in general.
- Guidance booklets on the reduction of the phenomenon of violence have been distributed on the Internet on the Ministry of Education's website and to specialized (psychosocial) guidance mentors and (psychosocial) counselors in education directorates, including:
  - ✓ The non-use of violence in schools.
  - ✓ Preventing the spread of the phenomenon of violence in schools.
  - ✓ The role of the counselor in dealing with aggressive children.
  - ✓ The role of the counselor in crises and disasters.
  - ✓ The current crisis and its impact on children.

- The Ministry of Education, in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), has adapted the mental health guide for school pupils and conducted 33 training courses on the guide involving specialized mentors, psychological and social counselors, and a number of school principals. 910 people were trained across the majority of provinces.
- In cooperation with UNICEF, a manual has been produced on psychosocial support in emergency and crisis situations. Copies of the manual were printed in cooperation with UNICEF, and trainers were trained to form a central team, as well as a local team in each province. 46 training sessions on the manual were held for specialized guidance mentors and psychosocial counselors, reaching 1,380 trainees, and comprising a number of topics, notably dealing with difficult feelings, protection of children in emergencies, psychological support in emergency situations, the impact of crisis situations, levels of psychosocial intervention, psychological first aid, psychosocial care in emergencies, the role of education and authorities in psychosocial support, support provided by caregivers, and practical activities.
- Work has also been carried out to reinforce the role of the social counselors and more actively stimulate their role by:
  - ✓ Defining the tasks of psychosocial counselors and issuing a set of ministerial communiques to organize their work and set up a training program for them.
  - ✓ Providing psychosocial counselors with an annual guidance plan for the school at which they work, placing their work within scientific principles to provide guidance and mentoring services to a particular group or students in general.
  - ✓ Setting objectives for the annual guidance plan for the school counselor, to include the dissemination of the mentoring work mechanism among all pupils, students, management staff, teaching and educational staff, and caretakers responsible for issues and the local environment, reducing behavioral problems in the school and working to address them, helping new students to adapt to the school environment, and working to realize the principles of proper preventive awareness in its health, education, psychological and social aspects, and reduce negative phenomena such as violence, aggression, truanting, smoking, etc., as well as reducing behaviors not conducive to education.
  - ✓ Promoting the role of psychosocial counseling in schools to address behaviors not conducive to education amongst students and pupils, if any (cases of violence, unruly behavior, smoking etc.) through individual and group counseling, the promotion of the language of communication, listening and dialog between students and pupils, and the rejection and avoidance of violence, through offering psychosocial support for those engaging in behaviors not conducive to education in particular and students and pupils in general.

### **Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes**

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

- Violence against women.
- Women's human rights.
- Women and the media.
- The female child.

#### **13. Over the past five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or situations, have you prioritized for action?**

The Syrian Arab Republic attaches great importance to violence against women and girls on many levels, and the following are the most important contexts or situations:

#### **Firstly, underage marriage, early and forced marriage:**

- At the outset, we should indicate that the proportion of females married under the age of 18 fell from 18% in 1993 to 8.3% in 2010, according to data from the family health survey. This reduction is attributable to an increase in enrollment in education, and

especially secondary education, among females. The crisis undergone by the Syrian Arab Republic over the last eight years has had a clear impact on the status of children in the Syrian Arab Republic in general, and on the status of female children in particular. This age group has been affected psychologically, physically, socially, educationally, and in terms of health and livelihood. One of the greatest tragedies faced by the female child group, particularly in refugee camps, has been forced marriage whilst underage. Given the non-registration of such marriages in countries that have set the age for marriage at 18 years and over, such as Jordan and Turkey, they have been deprived of the rights associated with childhood, such as living with parents or family, playing, learning and receiving adult care, as well as the right to select a partner and obtain assurances of stability, and the denial of a registered marriage due to its violating the legally defined age, which means that children are not registered either and no rights are upheld in the event of a separation.

- The rate of underage and early marriage has also increased as a result of a rise in poverty rates and internal displacement, as a form of protection for females in the eyes of their families. The Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs has therefore prepared a study on the societal determinants of early marriage in Syria with a view to assessing the reality of this phenomenon and finding out the extent to which it has increased and spread, identifying the changes caused by the crisis and whether the phenomenon of early marriage as a temporary negative coping strategy developed during the crisis has turned or could turn into the dominant and prevailing social pattern for marriage. The study concluded with a number of recommendations and targeted programs relating to the empowerment of girls, raising community awareness, and vocational training programs for girls who drop out of education.
- Amending the Personal Status Act by virtue of Law no. 4 of 2019. One of the most significant amendments is to raise the minimum age of marriage for males and females to the age of 18.

### **Secondly. Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and at work.**

- Reproductive health topics are being addressed in educational curricula (in the science strand), and these concepts are being promoted via health education programs and the school health curriculum at all levels of basic education.
- Staff at the School Health Directorate of the Ministry of Education, and in particular those responsible for the various health education programs, are given training courses on sex education and training topics, including the following courses:
  - ✓ A comprehensive sex education course for female health assistants in the Directorates of Education in Damascus and Rif Dimashq, and staff at the Directorate of School Health in all the provinces, in cooperation with the Syrian Family Planning Association, over the period 3/24-28/2018.
  - ✓ Educational courses on the comprehensive sex education curriculum for teachers of religious education and science and psychosocial counselors within the Directorates of Education in Rif Dimashq and Homs, with 13 courses reaching 364 teachers. These courses were implemented in October and November 2018.
  - ✓ Conducting a training course for some school health workers and staff from the Directorate of Planning and International Cooperation on the use of active education techniques to reduce violence in schools and promote gender equality and nutrition in cooperation with the World Food Program (WFP) in the period 9/22-10/2/2018.

### **Third: Trafficking of women and girls**

- Prior to the crisis, the Syrian Arab Republic was ranked third in the world in terms of the absence of trafficking in human or human organs. However, following the crisis in Syria and with the waves of citizens fleeing the crimes of the terrorist groups in



search of asylum, a large number of Syrians have fallen victim of human trafficking networks in particularly in the countries of asylum and the camps of neighboring countries. United Nations reports, including those issued by the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have shown a notable and continuous increase in the rate of organized crime in the area of trafficking, in particular concerning young Syrian girls.

- The phenomenon of trafficking in human organs has spread around the Syrian border areas, and investigations have identified that networks are being exploited to traffic the organs of Syrian citizens, in particular children, by impersonating humanitarian organizations transporting the injured, and taking the form of field hospitals which are staffed by doctors of various nationalities. This is all with the knowledge of the authorities of Syria's neighboring countries.
- One of the most heinous practices arising from the ideology of the armed terrorist groups is: Child marriage and forced marriage under the title of "Marriage Jihad," which reflected the extremist and deviant beliefs of these groups and is considered a form of human trafficking, in addition to the recruitment of child soldiers.
- Despite the challenges faced by the Syrian Arab Republic in combating human trafficking, in particularly in asylum countries and neighboring camps, the Syrian Arab Republic is making vigorous efforts to prevent and suppress human trafficking and punish the perpetrators through a number of measures, including:
  1. Promulgating Law no. 3 of 2010 on the prevention of human trafficking and creating the Department for Combating People Trafficking, which has the function of preventing crimes of human trafficking and protecting victims.
  2. Establishing a national committee to combat people trafficking and protect victims with the participation of civil society. This has drawn up a national plan to combat people trafficking, with four main strands of work: Prevention, protection measures for victims and their care and the provision of full safeguards for them, judicial prosecution, partnership building, and local, regional and international cooperation.
  3. Workshops to build the capacity of those working in the field of combating human trafficking within the relevant ministries, namely: The Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Social Affairs and Labor, Health, and the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs and NGOs, in cooperation with international organizations including the IOM, UNICEF and the UNHCR. Special psychosocial and legal care programs have also been developed for human trafficking victims so as to ensure a strict implementation of the articles of law that provide for protection measures for victims, assistance for their psychosocial recovery, access to appropriate care, and ensure confidentiality and privacy, and the provision of advice and legal assistance on request.
  4. Promulgating Law no. 65 of 2013 regulating the recruitment and employment of non-Syrian domestic workers and guaranteeing their rights. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor worked to issue Resolution no. 2644 of 2013 to regulate the work of private agencies engaged in the recruitment and employment of non-Syrian female workers.
  5. Rehabilitation of the department for receiving women and children located at the Department for Combating People Trafficking in line with international standards.
  6. Issuing a psychosocial support guide for women and children who have been subjected to human trafficking crimes, especially children who have been recruited as soldiers.
  7. A number of cross-border people-trafficking networks have been apprehended.

<b>14. What actions has your country prioritized over the last five years to address violence against women and girls?</b>
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The Syrian Arab Republic is working to address violence against women through a number of legal measures and the development of national strategies and action plans to prevent violence in various sectors, including:

**1 - Introducing or strengthening laws against violence targeting women, and working on their application and implementation.**

- A number of Syrian women have been subjected to the most heinous forms of sexual violence at the hands of armed terrorist groups in the areas where they were deployed and in refugee camps. In addition, takfiri fatwas were issued authorizing the sexual exploitation of women in various guises such as "marriage jihad" and "honor marriage." The terrorist groups committed colossal violations of women's rights, with the ISIS terrorist organization going as far as to open recruitment camps for women and girls to train them in suicide attacks or recruit them for "marriage jihad," issuing an instruction book on how to deal with female captives, and how to imprison and assault them, in the most heinous form of sexual violence and violation of women's dignity.
- The Syrian Arab Republic is therefore working in a concerted manner with civil society institutions to empower women, combat and put a stop to all forms of violence against them and to raise awareness of their rights under the current circumstances. Article 489 of the Penal Code has been amended by Law no. 11 of 2011, which increased the punishment for crimes of sexual violence in general, particularly if committed against a person under the age of 15. Law 24 of 2018 was promulgated to amend Article 469 of the Penal Code and it increased the punishment of any person entering into marriage with a minor outside of court.
- Women victims are being referred to special care centers under the Ministry of Social Affairs, some of which belong to NGOs, in which they receive treatment and health services and undergo rehabilitation programs in order for them to be reintegrated into society. The Family Protection Unit has been opened and has begun to take in children and women victims of sexual violence, providing health and psychological support, rehabilitating them and reintegrating them into society in line with international standards.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has implemented a program to prepare a national framework for the support and empowerment of women, and a program for the development of mechanisms for responding to gender-based violence. A number of activities have been organized, including the provision of social welfare services and the strengthening of their quality for the most vulnerable groups. Work has taken place on preparing a national plan to implement the recommendations of the international Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 2014.

**2 - Introducing or strengthening strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (for example in the education sector, the media, via community mobilization, and working with men and boys).**

1. In the education sector
  - The Ministry of Education is working to wipe out violence via ministerial instructions prohibiting beating in schools in all its forms and concerning the need to use alternative pedagogical methods that are attractive to pupils.
  - Realizing the principle of equal opportunities for all and gender equality via increasing the school enrollment rate among females. The percentage of female enrolment in kindergarten / category three / in basic education schools in 2018-2019 was: 43.41%, with a percentage of female dropouts in category b rejoining their educational level, with a curriculum and school plan developed by the Ministry applied to them for this purpose. They take grades 1-8 according to the plan and curriculum over four years and at four levels.

- Providing alternative education opportunities for female students in unsafe areas through self-teaching resources, targeting 6,500 female students.
  - Compensating the lack of education for students prevented by circumstances from continuing at school by extending the school year for children in East Ghouta, Raqqa, Deir Ezzour, Afrin and Idlib from 6/24/2018 to 8/13/2018. The number of females in the Rif Dimashq province stood at 35,000, in Raqqa province at 9,050, in Deir Ezzour province 10,200, the Afrin area 700, and Idlib province 685.
2. Via the media and community mobilization
- The production of targeted short dramatized advertising materials giving short messages on how to address violence against women and girls. 30 short episodes were produced and broadcast over television channels.
  - Producing drama series. 33 series were produced to highlight the prevention of violence against women. These works reflect a positive image of women in various ways according to the strategy required and the message they wish to convey via these works, such as:
    - ✓ The series "Women of This Time" written by Buthaina Awad and directed by Ahmad Ibrahim Ahmad.
    - ✓ The series "The Free" written by Anoud Al Khalid and directed by Basil Al Khatib, which talks about women's emancipation issues, and how Syrian women have achieved advancement and made significant gains.
    - ✓ The series "Waiting for Yasmeen" written by Osama Koksh and directed by Samir Hussein, talks about Syrian families dealing with the worst phases of the crisis, when a full social life commences in the garden, and about how women dealt with the crisis and stood firm and were able to protect their family, and their role in educating their children and developing their own character.
  - Regular discussion programs on TV channels:
    - ✓ The "Women in Media" program is a series that has run for a number of years concerned with the role of women in media looking at role models, and the resistance role of female media figures, even reaching the point of martyrdom.
    - ✓ The episodes of the program "Those Women" were dedicated to dealing with the social and professional role of women.
    - ✓ The "Women in War" program is about Syrian women and their role in Syria's victory, and the great sacrifices they made, raising their children with the values of martyrdom. The programs also address the role of society and government institutions in contributing to the steadfastness of Syrian society.
  - Radio programs have also addressed women's issues and highlighted their positive aspects, such as "Syrian Women and the War", "Women's Sessions", and "Syrian Women throughout History".
  - Fifteen training workshops have been held for media professionals on strengthening the role of women.
  - Objectives and activities relating to the work cited above:
    - ✓ Changing the stereotype of women.
    - ✓ Enhancing the status of women throughout history and in contemporary times, highlighting their important and active role.
    - ✓ Building the capacities of media professionals and raising their level of performance to improve their media messages and enable them to address the issue in the proper way.
    - ✓ Spreading a different culture with regards to women via drama to support and empower Syrian women.
  - Persons targeted by the measures taken by the Ministry of Information:
    - ✓ Media professionals from all audio-visual, print and electronic media forms.
    - ✓ Scriptwriters.
    - ✓ Women's and men's sectors of society.

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

**1 - Strategies:**

- The Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs has drawn up a national framework for support to women in the Syrian Arab Republic in order to address the most pressing problems faced by them, especially during the reconstruction phase. It is founded on previous gains relating to women on the national level, such as: The Draft National Strategy for Women 2007-2010, and that which has been done and is being worked on internationally and regionally, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the recommendations of the Cairo Conference, the Millennium Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.
- The National Framework for the Support of Women aims to identify the problems and challenges faced by women in the economic, educational, and health fields, and in political and community participation, as well as in the domain of protecting against and combating violence against women. Policies, programs, activities and the interventions necessary have been formulated and proposed to solve these problems and address current and future challenges via the process of development and reconstruction.
- The current status of women in all areas - education, health, the elimination of violence against women, participation in decision-making positions, women and poverty, women and the economy and women and the media have been analyzed, and work carried out on formulating operational matrices for three time periods (2019-2020, 2021-2025 and 2026-2030) on the most pressing problems. A program of intervention (including objectives, activities, implementing bodies, partner bodies, difficulties and obstacles and the human and material resources required) has been developed in an integrated manner with the reconstruction program.
- The National Framework for the Support and Empowerment of Women, which aims to further advance the status of women in Syria and meet their current and future needs, is based on fundamental foundations and visions, which include:
  - ✓ The Syrian government's ministerial statement of 2016 on the subject of the social sphere, working on developing the social protection system to enhance access to social safety and strategy nets, as well as reinforcing family welfare and empowerment strategies and programs, in particular in relation to childhood, women, youth and the elderly.
  - ✓ Adopting a holistic approach based on the combined efforts made and proposing programs that develop resilience, flexibility, strength and recovery abilities, and develop capacities for coping with difficulties, by way of specific targeted solutions and programs to meet needs.
  - ✓ Promoting networking and partnership between the various institutions active in society, whether official or civil, combining capacity and rehabilitation development efforts and reinforcing mechanisms for cooperation and coordination in the provision of development services.
  - ✓ Responding effectively to needs by identifying the interventions that are required and which fulfill the needs.
  - ✓ Relying on fact-based data to develop policies based on real-life evidence and needs.
  - ✓ Setting priorities for the planning of programs to meet needs, consisting of:
    - Realizing food security, with attention to female-headed households.
    - Developing the capacities of women and girls through rehabilitation, training, physical and psychosocial support.
    - Considered interaction with those who have been subject to harm, violence and traumas.
    - Working to promote the values of improving women's status and once more realizing social integration and cohesion.

- Focusing on human development programs and women's empowerment programs for human advancement.
  - Not relying on relief programs and interim projects, but working on formulating sustainable development visions and programs, emphasizing the participation of women in planning, implementation and follow-up.
- Strategic objectives:
    1. The economic empowerment of women.
    2. Promoting equal access to sensitive and high-quality healthcare services for women.
    3. Reducing gender-based violence and domestic violence.
    4. Developing the education and training system on a basis of equality.
    5. Ensuring the effective and equal participation of women in political and public decision making.

## **2 - Raising public awareness, and changing attitudes and behaviors.**

- The Ministry of Information has developed and launched an awareness raising strategy on violence against women in the media through producing dramatized radio and television spots, drama series, documentary films and roadside advertising campaigns. Implementation has commenced of this strategy, of which the main work axes are: Producing drama and radio spots and drama series, given that drama has an influential role to play among the public in delivering messages. These were broadcast on the Syria Drama, Syria and Nour Al Sham TV channels and dealt with issues such as violence against women, early marriage, girls' education, gender equality, marriage to relatives, the impact of negative social communication, human trafficking - especially that of girls, the recruitment of girl soldiers and reproductive health. These drama spots were delivered by influential, well-known artists.
- The articles of the CEDAW have also been addressed in the media via:
  - ✓ Media coverage of all events held by all bodies responsible for this topic.
  - ✓ Highlighting the Convention via special seminars.
  - ✓ Holding familiarization workshops for media professionals on the Convention.
- The strategy aims at:
  - ✓ Changing the stereotype of women.
  - ✓ Affirming the leadership role of women, and that they are capable of standing alongside men in all tasks.
  - ✓ Promoting women's status and issues.
  - ✓ Training and capacity building for media professionals from all kinds of media outlets.
  - ✓ Focusing on drama series and spots, given that television has the capability of addressing a wide range of different social sectors, transcending barriers caused by illiteracy and education level.
- This strategy targets:
  - ✓ All sections of society.
  - ✓ Media professionals from all media outlets, whether audio-visual, print or electronic, to provide them with the required information to improve their media messaging.
  - ✓ Scriptwriters, given that their writing carries an impact, to introduce them to the most significant issues faced by women which need to be focused on in their dramatic works.

**16. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking and non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

- Legislative Decree no. 17 of 2012 was issued comprising the Law on Regulating Communication on the Internet and Combating Cybercrime, which defines a number of new crimes committed via use of the computer and the Internet, and provides a general text with stricter provisions on traditional crimes committed via the Internet. These include sexual harassment, extortion, the dissemination of pornographic images, and so forth. The law likewise provides for harsher penalties for such crimes against minors or the like.
- Article 24 of the Law on Combatting Cybercrime stipulates that a specialized law enforcement agency shall be created in the Interior Ministry to investigate cybercrimes, gather digital evidence, arrest the perpetrators and refer them to the competent courts for punishment. The law enforcement agency shall have the assistance of permanent or temporarily appointed experts in the implementation of its tasks.
- Pursuant to Article 24, the Minister of the Interior issued Decree no. 564/Q of 3/22/2012, establishing a special branch within the Criminal Security Department called the Anti-Cybercrime Branch to combat and investigate these crimes, collect digital evidence, arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice. The Minister of Justice likewise issued Decree no. 5413 of 3/29/2012 designating a judge as a representative of the Ministry of Justice on the committee concerned with cooperation with the Anti-Cybercrime Branch. Many crimes against women have been stopped, and the perpetrators arrested and brought before the competent courts.
- Law no. 9 of 2018 was promulgated to establish a public prosecution office and investigations departments specialized in cybercrime and communications crime in every province of the Syrian Arab Republic. The law provided for the establishment of criminal courts of first instance and appeal to hear cybercrime and communications crime cases.

**17. What actions has your country taken over the last five years to address the portrayal and/or discrimination against and or bias against women and girls in media outlets?**

- The Ministry of Information has carried out a number of measures aimed at:
  - ✓ Raising awareness among the public, especially women.
  - ✓ Spreading a culture of women's issues.
  - ✓ Focusing on the positive role played by women in human and societal development.
  - ✓ Informing women of their legal and constitutional rights.
  - ✓ Interacting with public opinion with a view to changing the prevailing stereotypes of women in society and stimulating their positive participation in all aspects of life, by addressing media professionals and training them to produce journalistic materials to attract the public and increase their awareness of the need to combat gender-based violence.
- These measures include the implementation of the following:
  - ✓ 11 workshops for media professionals held in the provinces of Damascus, Tartous, Homs, Suwayda and Aleppo, dealing with women's issues through gender-based violence, women's education and so forth.
  - ✓ 10 short development films produced dealing with the recruitment of child soldiers, including girls, girls' education, violence against women, disability, early marriage, small businesses, family planning and the elderly.

- ✓ Dialog sessions with scriptwriters to familiarize them with the importance of development media, in order to include development themes (women's issues, childhood issues) in their dramatic works, given the influential role they play.
- ✓ Sponsorship of a 16-day campaign to end gender-based violence, held in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund.
- ✓ Production of 15 radio spots dealing with themes such as women's education, violence against women, reproductive health, family planning, and early pre-nuptial examination.
- ✓ The production of 30 development drama spots dealing with issues such as violence against women, women's education, early marriage, underage marriage, marriage of relatives, and gender equality.
- ✓ Production of 13 spots dealing with youth issues and needs.
- ✓ Production of 10 documentary films on issues such as social media, women's success stories, gender equality, violence against women, underage marriage and early marriage.
- ✓ A roadside advertising campaign in the provinces on girls' education, begging, successful women, and the elderly.

**18. Has your country taken any action over the past five years to address violence against specific groups that has been specially designed to combat multiple forms of discrimination? among women facing problems?**

Answer: No

**Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions**

**Critical areas of concern:**

- Women in authority and decision-making.
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.
- Women's human rights.
- Women in the media.
- The female child.

**19. What actions and measures has your country carried out in the last five years in order 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 reform of the electoral system and adopting special temporary measures such as quotas, reserved seats, measures and targets.**

- Women's participation in the legislative, executive and judicial authorities reflects women's enjoyment of their citizenship and their exercise of their rights and duties at the highest level. The 2012 constitution guaranteed full equality between men and women in citizenship and in active and full participation in political, social, cultural and economic life.
- Embodying this civilizational trend, a woman held the post of Vice-President of the Republic, and a woman held the position of Political and Media Adviser to the Presidency of the Republic. Another woman served as Adviser on Cultural Affairs, whilst one woman was elected to the presidency of the People's Assembly, and two women were promoted to the rank of general, one in the army and the other in the police.
- The presence of Syrian women in the legislative authority represents the zenith of political activity, in terms of its influence and effectiveness, the proximity of decision and policy making, and the study, amendment and approval of legislation with a view to bringing about social, political and economic change. There were 29 women in the People's Assembly in the second legislative term.

- Women are also present in the judiciary. There are now 302 women judges, i.e. 20% of the total number of judges in Syria. Two such women are Vice President of the Cassation Court and the President of the Chamber. There are also dozens of female counsels at the Court of Justice. Two women occupy posts as deputy justice ministers.
- Women have likewise taken their place in the executive authority. In the current government of 2017, four female ministers were appointed, a proportion of 7%.
- In the diplomatic corps, 15% of all ambassadors accredited to represent Syria are women. A number of them hold the post of Head of Mission at various Syrian embassies. The proportion of female diplomats within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reached 28%.
- Women head two of the new parties licensed under the Parties Act no. 100 of 2011. On average, women represent 30% of the members of licensed parties. The proportion of women in leadership positions within these parties varies from 15% to 35%, according to the goals and orientation of each party.
- Numerous studies and surveys have been conducted in order to monitor the social obstacles preventing women putting themselves forward as candidates or taking the initiative to enter the field of administration and leadership. They have shown that the obstacles are linked firstly to the idea of stereotypical roles, with the prioritization of family tasks and duties, and being overburdened. Secondly, the obstacles are linked to cultural and social legacies which have become deeply entrenched over the ages, with their traditional perspective on women's role, defining boundaries for women's advancement in work and up the social and political ladder. This is also linked to a lack of or weak networking and coordination among women eligible to stand as candidates, both among themselves and with the institutions which could prepare, qualify and mentor them to meet the demands of success in election campaigns.

**20. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to increase women's empowerment in expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communications technology (ICT)?**

- Women have been, and continue to be, strongly present within media institutions, across the various channels, branches, and levels of work in them. Programs have been dedicated to improving their status in society and empowering them through creating the Directorate of Development Media, which has carried out a wide range of tasks ranging from women's issues and social and economic roles, reproductive health and family planning to dealing with all the issues and conditions surrounding them, such as customs and traditions, and attitudes which require precise academic research.
- Radio and television workshops and seminars have included meaningful discussions and proposals aimed at highlighting women's empowerment issues, focusing on gender issues and violence against women. Over the past decades, Syrian drama has offered presentations, analyses and media messaging which sought to build a positive image of the current and future roles of women.
- The seminars and workshops also discussed the provisions of international treaties, their content and aims, and tracked the outcomes of the work of international conferences and the Platform for Action, along with the extent to which goals and objectives were achieved.
- A national technical media committee has been formed specifically for women's and children's issues, with a female membership of approximately 80%. The function of the committee is to track all issues relating to women.
- The main difficulties and challenges are:
  - ✓ Insufficient material resources, a lack of continuity in resources, and social media control over these issues, with the broadcast of many erroneous images.
  - ✓ The scarcity of scientific research on the role of media outlets in empowering women and promoting their roles, as although most media activities have



credibility and professionalism, they are not founded on academic studies, whether for preparation, evaluation or in tracking impact.

**21. Do you monitor the proportion of the national budget invested in enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment (is the budget gender-sensitive)?**

Answer: No.

**22. As a donor country, does your country monitor the amount of official development aid (ODA) which is invested in promoting gender equality and empowering women (is the budget gender-sensitive)?**

Answer: No.

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

Answer: There is no dedicated strategy for achieving gender equality.

**24. Does your country have a work plan and timetable for the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if party to them), or the Universal Periodic Review recommendations, or other UN human rights mechanisms addressing gender inequality/discrimination against women?**

- Answer: Yes.

Following discussion of the second and third national reports by CEDAW in 2014, the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs formed a working group from various governmental and non-governmental sectors to study and implement the CEDAW recommendations. A plan was drafted for the implementation of the recommendations, addressing proposed activities, the implementation period, the implementing authorities, the estimated budget, obstacles and challenges, and positive incentives.

- **The most significant points of the plan:**

- ✓ Continuing efforts to remove reservations, in particular in relation to Article 2.
- ✓ Publicizing discrimination against women in Syrian society.
- ✓ Studying the amendment of some articles of the Penal Code.
- ✓ Publishing the results of the review of discriminatory laws.
- ✓ Increasing the number of women in reconciliation committees and decision-making positions.
- ✓ Training on international treaties and resolutions on women.
- ✓ Publicizing general recommendation no. 25.
- ✓ Establishing a network of associations working on women's affairs.
- ✓ Widely promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

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

Answer: No.

## Peaceful societies in which no person is marginalized

### Critical areas of concern:

- Women and armed conflict.
- Women's human rights.
- The female child.

### **26. What actions has your country taken over the last five years to establish and maintain peace, promote peaceful societies in which no person is marginalized for sustainable development, and implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda?**

- The Syrian Arab Republic has consistently affirmed its firm position with regards to the fact that the solution for Syria is based on Syrian-Syrian dialogue lead by Syria itself, without external intervention or preconditions.  
Accordingly, it has cooperated with UN envoys, engaged in the Geneva and Astana tracks and expressed its openness to genuine initiatives respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian government spared no efforts to engage with any initiatives which provided for arrangements for a truce and cessation of hostilities, where they were in the interests of protecting civilians and respected Syrian sovereignty.  
Alongside the political track, the Syrian Arab Republic has affirmed its legitimate right as guaranteed by the principles and rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations to fight against terrorism and to liberate the areas in which armed terrorist groups have spread out, restoring them to security and stability.  
National reconciliation has been approved as a national strategy in many areas of the Syrian Arab Republic, accompanied by the issue of repeated decrees for amnesty, and the launch of continuing legal status settlement operations with the purpose of allowing all Syrians covered by these decrees to return to contributing to the development and construction of the country, giving the opportunity to those who have taken up arms against the State, or those who have been involved in any illegal acts, to regularize their situation and reintegrate back into normal society.
- Over the years of the war it has faced, the Syrian government has, in accordance with its constitutional obligations, sought to meet the humanitarian needs of its citizens and improve the humanitarian situation in the country in parallel with its ongoing efforts to combat terrorism and restore security and stability to all of its territory.
- Women have consistently been at the heart of these efforts both as active partners through their membership in official delegations to negotiations and in national reconciliation operations, as provided for under the women's role in leadership and increased representation strand, or through prioritizing women's empowerment and protection issues in relief and reconstruction efforts, given that they are one of the groups most affected by the consequences of the terrorist war faced by the country.
- Since 2012, humanitarian response plans have provided a framework for cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Nations in support of the government's efforts to provide emergency humanitarian aid in all humanitarian response sectors. These plans have included several work strands addressing the effects suffered by women. It is to be noted that the Syrian government has, over years of partnership with the UN, borne the greatest burden in terms of the volume of this work across the country, to a proportion ranging from 70%-80%.
- The Syrian government is working on the implementation of a number of activities and cooperation programs with UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR in support of national efforts in the areas of monitoring, protection and empowerment. These are the major areas constituting its axes of its work in dealing with the impact suffered by Syrian women during the course of the terrorist war the country has faced.
- The Syrian government has continually called upon all Syrians forced to leave the country by the crisis to return to their homeland following the liberation of the greater number of areas that had been subject to terrorist control, affirming that the choice to return must be a voluntary one, preserving the dignity of all those who return, and

affirming its responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of its citizens and securing the elements of a decent life for them. The Syrian government has therefore reviewed existing legal standards with a view to removing all obstacles to the return of Syrian citizens, simplifying procedures for their return and focusing on the most basic aspects of ensuring the necessities of life are provided, such as accommodation and appropriate programs for job creation and improving living standards.

- The Syrian Arab Republic included the challenges resulting from the war waged against it and its impact on achieving development in its first national report on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including those relating to the fifth goal of the Agenda, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The study of achievements and challenges around this goal concluded that in some areas women's empowerment had improved, whilst in others it fell short, as outlined in the report in various places in the areas of education, health and economic empowerment.

**27. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to increase women's leadership, representation and participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian and crisis response activities, at decision making levels, in situations of armed conflict or other conflicts and in marginalized or crisis-hit areas?**

- On the basis of the principles enshrined in the constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Syrian government provides women with every chance available to actively and fully contribute to political, economic, social and cultural life, and works vigorously to remove any barriers limiting their participation in the development of society.
- Syrian women have a long history of participation in political and public life. Women hold the position of Vice President of the Republic and Presidential Adviser, lead a number of ministries and parties, and occupy senior administrative positions (Deputy Minister, Director General etc.) in addition to being present in the judiciary and the diplomatic corps; a woman was formerly the Speaker of the People's Assembly, and the number of women parliamentarians in the second legislative term 2016-2020 stands at 29.
- Syrian women have been represented on national reconciliation committees and in civil society initiatives active in this field, enabling them to contribute effectively to reflecting women's concerns. They were likewise represented in the government delegation in all rounds of the Geneva negotiations, in which they numbered from two to four women. They actively participated in the Sochi National Dialogue Conference.
- Syrian women participate in delegations representing the Syrian Arab Republic at various international conferences, including those held within the framework of the United Nations and specialized international agencies, and have headed such delegations numerous times.
- The Syrian government has worked to implement a number of activities and cooperation programs with UN agencies working in Syria to support its national efforts in monitoring, protection and empowerment, which constitute the primary fields for its work in addressing the impact on women of the events witnessed by Syria. Joint annual plans with some international organizations include programs aimed at achieving this goal.
- Syrian women participate actively in civil work through their leadership of numerous civil associations and initiatives in the field of women's empowerment, combating and ending all forms of violence against women and increasing awareness of their rights. These initiatives have played a fundamental and effective role in supporting and guiding state efforts in some cases.
- The Syrian government is working hard to remove all restrictions limiting women's participation in international forums. Its efforts include:

- ✓ The decree regulating the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (Legislative Decree no. 20 of 2016) provides for equal opportunities for women and men to enroll in the diplomatic and administrative service, and for equal criteria for recruitment, assessment, evaluation, promotion, leave, compensation and family and financial benefits.
- ✓ Syrian women have a long history of international work. The first female ambassador in the Arab world was Syrian, and today, women represent 15% of all ambassadors accredited to represent Syria. Among these are the Permanent Representative to UNESCO and the UN office in Nairobi, as well as a number of female heads of mission in various Syrian embassies. The current number of female diplomats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Expatriates stands at 67 out of 172, i.e. at 28%. The number of women enlisted in the diplomatic corps increased consecutively over the four competitions held over the period between 2001-2017, as follows:
  - In 2001: 5 women out of a group of 19.
  - In 2003: 11 women out of a group of 35.
  - In 2007: 13 women out of a group of 36.
  - In 2017: 29 women out of a group of 65.
  - The number of female administrative staff at the Ministry stands at 112 in comparison to 191 males.
- ✓ Syrian women participate in discussions taking place in international forums, especially those relating to women's issues, and contribute to formulating the final documents and resolutions issued by them, whether through the dispatch of female representatives to follow up on these discussions, or the work of female diplomats at Syria's permanent missions to the UN and its offices.
- It should be noted that one of the effects of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria has been to impose obstacles and restrictions on the travel and movement of Syrians and Syrian airlines and transport companies. This is in addition to some countries, in violation of their international obligations, resorting to delaying or impeding the granting of entry visas to their territories, which has in some cases impeded participation in international conferences and limited the opportunities for delegations to engage in an exchange of expertise in various fields of knowledge.

**28. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to strengthen judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and the rights of women and girls in armed conflict situations or other humanitarian actions or crisis response situations?**

- The Syrian government has sent dozens of letters to the UN documenting the crimes and massacres committed by armed terrorist groups and the so-called "international coalition" which have had a profound effect on women. As these crimes continue, the Syrian Arab Republic has called for international accountability for the states that have supported these groups and supplied them with support in any form, and to hold to account the "international coalition" countries, and put this accountability into effect, notably through the application of reparations to victims.
- The Syrian judiciary is mandated to investigate and hold persons to account for any violations occurring within its jurisdiction in accordance with Syrian laws and their substantive and procedural provisions which ensure the proper application of these laws. As an example, the Syrian legal framework imposes severe criminal penalties on the perpetrators of sexual assault crimes, including those contained in several points of the Syrian Penal Code promulgated by Legislative Decree no. 148 of 1949 and its successive amendments aimed at reinforcing the legal framework to combat these crimes.

- The Syrian Arab Republic attaches high importance to raising awareness of international humanitarian law and international human rights law among law enforcement officials, judges and the military in order to build their capacities in the application of these laws. In particular, we would like to refer to the activities of the National Commission on International Humanitarian Law, which holds continued training events throughout the year on international humanitarian law in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross.
- Continuation of the work of the Joint Investigation Committee between the Ministries of Defense and the Interior, formed by Administrative Order 11047 of 2011 for the purpose of investigating complaints filed by citizens against members of the Syrian Arab Army and the internal security forces during the implementation of their tasks, and referring complaints that have been verified to the competent judiciary.

**29. What actions has your country taken over the past five years to eliminate discrimination against and violation of the rights of female children?**

- A dedicated committee has finalized a draft law on the rights of the child which is at the final stage of promulgation with the authorities competent to issue it. The draft law emphasizes basic general principles for the protection and welfare of the child. The best interests of the child are to be a priority in all decisions and actions relating to the protection and welfare of the child, whichever authority issues or implements them, without discrimination.
- Amending the Personal Status Law through Law no. 4 of 2019, and raising the minimum age for marriage to 18 years for males and females.
- Establishing work strands for the protection of children, especially girls, in cooperation plans with international organizations, in particular UNICEF and UNFPA.
- Launching awareness raising campaigns on early marriage.
- Performing several legal amendments to the Civil Status Code in order to guarantee the registration of children (Law no. 24 of 2015).

**Conserving, protecting and restoring the environment**

**Critical areas of concern:**

- Women's human rights.
- Women and the environment.
- The female child.

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

Answer: None.

**31. What actions has your country taken over the past five years in order to integrate a gender perspective into policies and programs on reducing disaster risk, climate resilience and mitigating impacts?**

Answer: None.

### Section III: National institutions and procedures

**32. What is your country's present national mechanism used to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment? Please state its name and describe its position within the government.**

The Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, which is a financially and administratively independent body affiliated to the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor.

**33. Is the president of the national mechanism within the institutional process for implementing sustainable development goals (for example, as a member of offices, agencies or inter-ministerial coordination committees)?**

Yes/no

Answer: Yes

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

Answer: Yes

If yes,

**a) Which of the following stakeholders formally participate in national coordination mechanisms that have been established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

- ✓ Civil society organizations
- ✓ Women's rights organizations
- ✓ Parliaments/Parliamentary committees
- ✓ The private sector

**Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030**

- ✓ Civil society organizations
- ✓ Women's rights organizations
- ✓ Academic and research institutions
- ✓ Religious organizations
- ✓ Parliaments/Parliamentary committees
- ✓ The private sector

**b) Does your country have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups participate in these processes and that their concerns are highlighted?**

Yes/no, Please provide further details on the mechanisms in use. (Maximum of two pages.)

**c) Please describe how stakeholders contribute to the preparation of this national report**

This report has been prepared in a participatory manner, with the involvement of all stakeholders in ministries and government bodies relevant to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, alongside representatives of grassroots organizations, women's associations and civil society representatives. A number of workshops were held at the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, where the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the goals of the national report to monitor 25 years of progress were presented. Several meetings were also held with authorities to acquire the data required, and a drafting committee was convened to write the report.

**35. Are gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a main priority in the national strategy/plan for the implementation of sustainable development goals?**

Yes. This topic was included in the first national sustainable development report, and launched in 2019. Under Goal Five, the report supplied an analysis of the achievement of gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls by 2030. It concluded in Goal Five that women's empowerment had improved in some areas, whilst it fell short in others. On the educational level, the ratio of males to females in basic and secondary education differed, showing that females had not reached this goal in terms of basic education and secondary vocational education, whilst the ratio exceeded ambitions for the Millennium Goal concerned with female empowerment with regards to secondary and higher education. In the field of health, the Syrian Arab Republic is close to meeting requirements for improving reproductive health and lowering maternal mortality rates. In terms of economic empowerment, the proportion of women in paid work in non-agricultural sectors has increased in general, and particularly in the hotel, restaurant and other service sectors.

## Section IV: Data and statistics

### 36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made the greatest progress over the past five years in terms of gender statistics at a national level?

- ✓ The use of more gender-sensitive data in policy formulation and the implementation of programs and projects
  - ✓ Conducting new surveys to produce national background information on specialized topics (such as the use of time, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty and disability). This is carried out via the National Observatory on Violence.
1. **The National Observatory on Violence:** The National Observatory on Violence seeks to track cases of violence and monitor all cases of domestic violence reported to domestic violence monitoring points in hospitals, police stations and associations. The outputs of the Observatory constitute statistical-analytical gender based reports that help decision makers in making decisions and developing plans to address domestic violence. Given the multitude of bodies that must cooperate and participate in the establishment and operation of the National Observatory, the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, in cooperation with UNFPA, has commenced operation of the Observatory on a small scale so that all the tasks assigned to the observatory may be fulfilled across a limited number of monitoring points, which shall be expanded over time. This stage is a necessary step in order to verify a number of issues, including: The requirements for work at the Observatory, methods for selecting staff at monitoring points, and topics on which they should be trained, in terms of interacting with victims of violence and methods for obtaining the information required, technical skills relating to the handling of this information, and its delivery and storage within the general database used in the Observatory.
- ✓ **The development of a database and/or a central Internet-based dashboard on gender statistics. This shall be done via the Population Information System.**

The Population Information System, by taking advantage of the availability of the integrated IT infrastructure at the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs, models the real effect of population policies at universal and local levels within the Syrian provinces in a process of monitoring and observing the implementation of the targets and the quantitative and qualitative population targets established by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), along with the Beijing Conference recommendations and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, through analyzing gender-related statistical data, figures and inputs, thus facilitating their production, compilation, exchange and continuous updating, and consequently supplying precise indicators on their development implications for all sectors of society, including planners, policy makers, decision makers, researchers and stakeholders in the overall sustainable development process.

### 37. Among the following, what are the top three priorities in your country for enhancing national gender statistics over the coming five years?

- ✓ The use of more gender-sensitive data in policy formulation and the implementation of programs and projects
- ✓ The development of a database and/or a central Internet-based dashboard on gender statistics
- ✓ Building the statistical capacities of users in order to increase statistical estimations and the use of gender statistics (for example through training courses and seminars on statistical estimation).



**38. Has a national set of indicators been put in place to monitor progress towards the sustainable development goals?**

- ✓ Yes, there are 160 indicators (see Appendix.)

**39. Has data collection and compilation commenced with regards to the indicators for Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals and indicators relating to gender within the framework of other sustainable development goals?**

- ✓ Yes, indicators were compiled and issued in the first Sustainable Development Report launched in 2019, where nine main objectives were presented, namely:
- ✓ The elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- ✓ The elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including human trafficking, and sexual and other forms of exploitation.
- ✓ The elimination of all harmful practices such as child marriage, early marriage, and forced marriage.
- ✓ The recognition and valuing of unpaid care work and domestic work via the provision of public services and infrastructure, the formulation of social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibilities for livelihood and family within the home.
- ✓ Ensuring women's full, active and equal opportunities for participating in leadership on an equal footing with men at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- ✓ Ensuring access for all to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Action Plan of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents from their review conferences.
- ✓ Undertaking reforms to secure equal rights to economic resources for women, as well as access to ownership and disposal rights in relation to land and other properties, along with financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- ✓ Promoting the use of empowering technology, especially ICT, to promote the empowerment of women.
- ✓ Adopting sound policies and enforceable legislation, strengthening existing policies and legislation to advance gender equality and empower all women and girls at every level.

**40. Which of the following 10 categories are routinely provided by major surveys carried out in your country?**

- ✓ Geographic location
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Social status
- ✓ Disability

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## Appendix

### Key indicators for Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 39	Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere
Indicator 39-1	The female literacy rate
Indicator 39-2	The ratio of females to males in pre-university education levels
Indicator 39-3	The ratio of females to males in university education
Indicator 39-4	The participation rate of employed women of ages 15 and over
Indicator 39-5	The percentage of women workers of age 15 and above according to economic activity.
Indicator 39-6	The percentage of women workers contributing to the family.
Indicator 39-7	The female unemployment rate at university level.
Indicator 39-8	The male to female ratio of loans and financial facilities granted for microfinance and small business projects
Indicator 39-9	The number of female beneficiaries of vocational training programs and centers
Target 40	The elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including human trafficking, and sexual and other forms of exploitation.
Indicator 40-1	The number of laws and pieces of legislation combating violence against women (the Personal Status Law, the Penal Code).
Indicator 40-2	The number of cases of trafficking of women, and sexual abuse and exploitation.
Indicator 40-3	The number of cases of violence against women (murders)
Target 41	The elimination of all forms of harmful practice, such as child marriage, early marriage, and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM).
Indicator 41-1	The number of early and forced marriages
Indicator 41-2	The teenage birth rate in the 15-19 age group.
Target 42	Recognition for and valuing of unpaid care work and domestic work via the provision of public services and infrastructure, the formulation of social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibilities for livelihood and family within the home, as appropriate at the national level.
Indicator 42-1	The ratio of self-employed persons and workers in the family contributing to its expenses to the total of employed persons
Indicator 42-2	The proportion of female recipients of humanitarian assistance of the total assistance provided.
Indicator 42-3	The quality of support and humanitarian services delivered to females (governmental, private and civil society).
Target 43	Ensuring women's full, active and equal opportunities for participating in leadership on an equal footing with men at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
Indicator 43-1	The proportion of seats held by females in the People's Assembly
Indicator 43-2	The percentage of female employees in organizational and professional administrative positions
Indicator 43-3	The percentage of females having the right to vote and stand for elections.
Indicator 43-4	The proportion of female officials, professionals and technical workers (public, private sector).
Indicator 43-5	The female to male ratio of estimated earned income.

Target 44	Ensuring access for all to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Action Plan of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents from their review conferences.
Indicator 44-1	The average number of visits to antenatal care.
Indicator 44-2	The maternal mortality ratio.
Indicator 44-3	The proportion of women aged 15-49 who received care from a service provider four or more times during pregnancy.
Indicator 44-4	The number of family planning services (number of services provided at Ministry of Health centers only, accounting for less than half of coverage prior to the crisis with the remainder in the private sector)
Indicator 44-5	The number of care services for pregnant women
Indicator 44-6	The percentage coverage of antenatal services.
Indicator 44-7	The percentage coverage of childbirth services.
Indicator 44-8	The percentage coverage of postnatal services.
Indicator 44-9	The percentage of detection and treatment of high-risk births.
Indicator 44-10	The proportion of health facilities providing care services (referrals).
Indicator 44-11	The proportion of births attended by skilled health workers.
Indicator 44-12	The proportion of unmet needs of women in the 15-49 year age group
Indicator 44-13	The percentage use of family planning methods by married women.
Target 45	Undertaking reforms to secure equal rights to economic resources for women, as well as access to ownership and disposal rights in relation to land and other properties, along with financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
Indicator 45-1	The number of pieces of legislation, laws and decrees enabling women to exercise their rights to property, financial services and inheritance.
Indicator 45-2	The proportion of females owning real estate
Target 46	Promoting the use of empowering technology, in particular ICT, to promote the empowerment of women
Indicator 46-1	The proportion of females using telephones per 1,000 inhabitants
Indicator 46-2	The proportion of females using mobile telephones per 1,000 inhabitants
Indicator 46-3	The proportion of females using the Internet per 1,000 inhabitants
Indicator 46-4	Proportion of females working in research and development.
Target 47	Adopting sound policies and enforceable legislation, strengthening existing policies and legislation to advance gender equality and empower all women and girls at every level
Indicator 47-1	The number of pieces of legislation and laws serving gender equality issues.
Indicator 47-2	The number of agreements signed by the Syrian government relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.

### Goal One indicators relating to gender

Target 4	Ensuring that all men and women, especially the poor and vulnerable, enjoy the same rights to access economic resources
Indicator 4-1	The proportion of females owning real estate
Indicator 4-2	The percentage of loans and financial facilities granted to females for microfinance and small projects in the period 2010-2015
Indicator 4-3	The percentage of female workers of 15 years and over according to economic activity
Indicator 4-4	The percentage of persons with disabilities by gender benefiting from the rate of assimilation into employment (data of several ministries/central data: Communications, Social Affairs, Planning, Culture, Transport, Finance, Media, Labor, Water Resources)
Indicator 5-3	The number of beneficiaries of rural development centers and rural industrial units
Indicator 7-3	The number of women beneficiaries of reproductive health programs/number of family planning services
	The number of women benefiting from reproductive health programs/ number of care services for pregnant women
Indicator 7-5	The percentage of persons benefiting from literacy programs (male and female)

### Goal Four

<b>Goal Four</b>	- Ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all
<b>Target 29</b>	By 2030, ensuring that all girls and boys enjoy free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to the achievement of appropriate and effective educational outcomes
<b>Indicator 29-1</b>	The net enrollment ratio in the first grade of basic education (males and females)
<b>Indicator 29-2</b>	The net enrollment ratio in basic education (at the official age, males and females)
<b>Indicator 29-3</b>	The average rate of advancement to the fifth grade (male and female)
<b>Indicator 29-4</b>	The drop-out rate from basic education (males and females)
<b>Indicator 29-5</b>	The average number of pupils in the division in basic education (males and females)
<b>Indicator 29-6</b>	The average number of pupils per (teacher + administrator) in basic education
<b>Target 30</b>	By 2030, ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development and care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
<b>Indicator 30-1</b>	The percentage of enrollment in kindergartens

<b>Indicator 30-2</b>	The number of kindergartens
<b>Indicator 30-3</b>	The number of official kindergartens
<b>Indicator 30-4</b>	The number of children in official kindergartens
<b>Target 31</b>	By 2030, ensuring equal opportunities for all women and men to access quality and affordable vocational and higher education, including university education
<b>Indicator 31-1</b>	The proportion of secondary vocational education students to total secondary level students (male and female)
<b>Indicator 31-2</b>	The average number of students per teacher in vocational secondary education (male and female)
<b>Indicator 31-3</b>	The average number of students per division in vocational secondary education (male and female)
<b>Indicator 31-4</b>	The enrollment rate in university education (males and females)
<b>Indicator 31-5</b>	The male to female ratio in university education
<b>Indicator 31-6</b>	The average number of students per faculty member (male and female)
<b>Indicator 31-7</b>	The ratio of the number of private university students to public university students (male and female)
<b>Indicator 31-8</b>	The distribution of students and percentages per discipline of university education
<b>Target 32</b>	By 2030, significantly increasing the number of young people and older people with appropriate skills, including technical and vocational skills, for work, decent employment and self-employment
<b>Indicator 32-1</b>	The distribution of workers by educational status (especially in vocational education)
<b>Indicator 32-2</b>	
<b>Indicator 32-3</b>	
<b>Target 33</b>	By 2030, eliminating gender disparity in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children living in vulnerable situations
<b>Indicator 33-1</b>	The number of women's rights organizations working in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment
<b>Indicator 33-2</b>	Female to male ratios at educational levels
<b>Indicator 33-3</b>	The enrollment rate in educational levels by gender (rural/urban)

<b>Target 34</b>	By 2030, ensuring that a significant proportion of all young adults, men and women alike, are literate and numerate
<b>Indicator 34-1</b>	The literacy rate by gender
<b>Target 36</b>	Building gender, disability and child-sensitive educational facilities, upgrading existing facilities and creating an effective, safe and violence-free learning environment for all
<b>Indicator 37-1</b>	The number of delegates outside of the country

#### Goal Ten

Indicator 82-1	The proportion of youth to population (15-24)
Indicator 82-2	The percentage representation of youth over 18 years in political parties (18-30 years)
Indicator 82-3	The youth (15-24) participation rate in the work force
Indicator 82-4	The percentage of workers from among the youth sector
Indicator 82-5	The percentage of illiterate persons in society by gender
Indicator 82-6	The drop-out rate from basic education
Indicator 82-7	National legislation giving effect to the principles of integrating women's needs in line with international agreements
Indicator 82-8	The proportion of women in the work force
Indicator 82-9	The proportion of female workers
Indicator 82-10	The percentage representation of women in political parties
Indicator 82-11	The proportion of women's representation in the People's Assembly
Target 83	Ensuring equal opportunities and reducing inequalities in outcomes, including through the eradication of discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and reinforcing appropriate legislation, policies and procedures in this regard
Indicator 83-1	Legislation and laws on equality between men and women in various social, economic and political domains
Indicator 83-2	Legislation and laws passed in the domain of the right to education and its being obligatory for all
Indicator 83-3	The proportion of female employment in the public sector out of the total number of employees
Indicator 83-4	The female unemployment rate
Indicator 83-5	The male unemployment rate
Indicator 83-6	Average wages according to gender and sector:

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