



Republic of Tunisia

Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors

Report of the Republic of Tunisia

On Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

(BPfA) + 25

Contents

Topic	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I- ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS AND FUTURE PRIORITIES.....	2
1. AT THE LEGISLATIVE LEVEL	2
2. AT THE LEVEL OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS.....	5
3. AT THE LEVEL OF PROGRAMS.....	9
4. TUNISIA IS ELECTED CAPITAL OF ARAB WOMEN 2018-2019 AND CHAIRS ARAB WOMEN ORGANIZATION	12
5. CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES	17
6. FUTURE PRIORITIES	17
II. PROGRESS MADE ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS.....	19
1. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT, COMMON PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK	19
2. POVERTY ELIMINATION, PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES:.....	26
3. FIGHTING AGAINST VIOLENCE AND STEREOTYPES:	31
4. WOMEN-FRIENDLY INSTITUTIONS:	38
.5 WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT:.....	43
.6 WOMEN AND THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT:.....	44
.7 THE GIRL CHILD.....	47
III- NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCEDURES:	48
IV- DATA AND STATISTICS.....	49

Introduction

Promoting the status of women has always represented a commitment by all components of the international community, which was particularly concretized through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women and reaffirmed at the twenty-third special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000. This made it an international framework for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

By the year 2020, the international community is moving closer to a crucial year that combines the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women; the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and the fifth anniversary since the issuance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Such an event requires all countries to prepare their national reviews, which cover achievements and future goals relative to the universal commitment towards all women and girls everywhere in the world.

In this context, the Republic of Tunisia has been working on identifying the achievements, challenges and obstacles during the past few years as well as future priorities; and presenting progress made across the 12 critical areas that have been grouped into six comprehensive dimensions highlighting the alignment of the Beijing Platform for action with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was based on the Policy Paper for Comprehensive Review at the national level that was prepared by UN Women in collaboration with the following five regional commissions: The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA or ECA), The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), and The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA).

I- Achievements, challenges and obstacles during the last five years and future priorities

Achievements made during the years 2015-2019 included the legislative level, the development of national action plans, the adoption of strategies, the design of programs promoting women's rights and empowerment, and moving towards de facto gender equality.

1. At the legislative level

- Enactment of Organic Law No. 46 of 2015 dated November 23, 2015 amending and supplementing Law No. 40 of 1975 dated May 14, 1975 on passports and travel documents:

This law is a new step towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. Indeed, it allows them to travel with their minor children without getting permission from the children's father, reflecting as such the political and legislative will to enshrine stronger protection of women's rights.

The law prohibits the authorities from discriminating against women with regard to leaving the Tunisian territory accompanied with their children. In fact, the amendment consists in adding an article to the Passport Law stipulating that minor's travel is subject to the authorization of only one of the parents, which reflects the Republic of Tunisia efforts to achieve gender equality at the constitutional level.

- Enactment of Governmental Decree No. 626 of 2016 dated May 25, 2016 on the creation of a National Peer Council for Equality and Equal Opportunities between Women and Men:

The Government of Tunisia has created a National Peer Council with a view to integrate the gender equality perspective in public institutions, which is considered one of the best international good practices for the promotion of the status of women, the achievement of comprehensive equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination between women and men.

This Council is composed of members, among senior State officials, representing each Ministry, as well as Heads of governmental and civil society structures concerned with the issue of gender equality. The Council is headed by his Excellency the Head of Government who, if necessary, shall be represented by her Excellency the Minister of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors.

It is an advisory council that works on integrating the gender-based approach in planning, programming and evaluation with a view to eliminate all forms of discrimination between

women and men and achieve equality between them in terms of rights and duties. The council is also mandated to issue opinion on draft Laws relative to women's rights.

This Council also represents an important mechanism for Tunisia's women and men to achieve a balanced society and sustainable development free from all forms of marginalization and exclusion.

- Enactment of Organic Law No. 61 of 2016 dated August 3, 2016 on preventing and fighting against human trafficking: This law aims at preventing and combating all forms of human exploitation, especially against women and children, through preventing human trafficking, restraining offenders, and protecting and assisting victims.

It also aims at enhancing national coordination and international cooperation with regard to combating human trafficking under the framework of the international and regional conventions that are ratified by the Republic of Tunisia.

- Enactment of Organic Law No. 58 dated August 11, 2017 on the elimination of violence against women: This law is a culmination of Tunisian women struggles and a victory for the progressive forces combating all forms of violence against women. This law has been adopted unanimously by all the political currents represented in Parliament (146 votes for without any reservation or objection).

Following the enactment of this Law, the Republic of Tunisia ranked first (01) in the Arab world and nineteen (19) at the international level with regard to the elimination of violence against women.

The Law aims at laying the necessary measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women that are based on gender discrimination, with a view to achieve equality and respect for human dignity. This shall be achieved by adopting a comprehensive approach that is based on combating various forms of violence through preventing it, prosecuting and punishing offenders, and through protecting victims and providing care for them.

- Presidential Decree No. 111 of 2017 dated August 13, 2017 on the creation of The Individual Freedoms and Equality Committee: The committee is mandated to prepare a report on legislative reforms relative to individual freedoms and equality in compliance with: the 2014 Constitution, international human rights standards and contemporary trends in the field of freedoms and equality. Subsequently, the commission is entrusted of making proposals on how to promote the principle of equality, in general, and Gender equality, in particular.

The Commission submitted its final report, which is composed of 220 pages, and published it to the public on its official website on June 12, 2018. The report is composed of, first, a general

introduction on a social and religious approach. Then, a first section devoted to individual rights and freedoms, in which the Commission addressed the provisions violating individual rights and freedoms, reference texts, arguments and the proposal of the draft Code for Individual Rights and Freedoms. Finally, a second section devoted to equality, in which the commission addresses the provisions violating equality through reference texts, arguments and proposals.

- Abolition, on September 15, 2017, of circular No. 216 dated November 5, 1973 on the prohibition of the marriage of Tunisian women to non-Muslims, in addition to the abolition of all circulars relative to the restriction of the Tunisian woman freedom to choose her spouse, which were particularly addressed to Civil Status Registrars on the registration of marriage contracts between Muslim women and non-Muslim men.
- Organic Law No. 2 of 2018 dated January 15, 2018 on the approval of the accession of the Republic of Tunisia to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote).
- Presidential Decree No. 61 of 2018 dated June 6, 2018 on the ratification of the accession of the Republic of Tunisia to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, which consists of 32 articles on the protection of women's rights in various fields. Paragraph 3 of Article 21 thereof stipulates that "women and men shall have the right to inherit the property of their parents in equitable shares", which means that Tunisia shall adopt the content of this Protocol, which guarantees the civil, political and economic rights of women.
- Presidential Decree No. 62 of 2018 dated June 6, 2018 on the ratification of the accession of the Republic of Tunisia to the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In fact, this protocol on the procedure for the submission of complaints and individual communications shall mark the beginning of a new era for the rights of the child, and the strengthening of the legal arsenal of the Republic of Tunisia with regard to the Protection of the rights of the child.
- Organic Law No. 50 of 2018 dated October 23, 2018 on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination: It aims at eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and its manifestations, protecting human dignity and achieving equality among individuals in the enjoyment of rights and the performance of duties in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution and the International Treaties ratified by the Republic of Tunisia.

- The Council of Ministers’ approval of the draft law on equal inheritance rights, which was in its meeting held on November 23, 2018 under the supervision of His Excellency President of the Republic Beji Kaied Essibi.
- On the occasion of the International Women's Day, and at the convening of a Council of Ministers for Women on March 08, 2019, the Head of Government decided the following:
 - ✓ Amendment of the Tunisian Nationality Code: It aims at the Regularization of the status of children from a Tunisian mother who are born outside Tunisia and have not yet obtained the Tunisian nationality,
 - ✓ Approval of the Decree on the creation of the National Observatory on Violence against Women,
 - ✓ Authorizing non-regular public transporters to transport female peasant workers outside the licensed areas: It aims at providing means of transportation that guarantee the safety conditions and respect of the dignity of female peasant workers, in compliance with a number of procedures that shall be laid down by the Ministry of Transport.
 - ✓ Adoption of a maternity leave draft law: It provides for the extension of the paid maternity leave, and for the creation of a paternity leave and a prenatal leave with a view to avoid any potential effects of the mother’s health on the mother’s professional career and on the child’s health.

2. At the level of National strategies and action plans

- The National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas 2017-2020: Under the framework of addressing gender disparities in rural areas on the one hand, and between women in urban and rural areas on the other hand, and as part of the efforts made to promote equality and equal opportunities; the Ministry of Family, Childhood and Seniors - following a participatory approach with various government structures and representatives of civil society including national organizations and associations - prepared this strategy, which was approved at the Select Ministerial Council convened on March 8, 2017.

This strategy covers the following five main axes:

- ✓ Economic empowerment of women and girls in rural areas through increasing their employability, facilitating their access to means of production and markets, and integrating them in the social economy and solidarity structures.

- ✓ Social empowerment of women and girls in rural areas by ensuring decent working conditions, secure transportation and security for women working in the agricultural sector, and facilitating their affiliation to social security systems. Social empowerment goes also through combatting girls' early school drop-out and relapse, and protecting their right to continue education.
- ✓ Qualifying women and girls to participate in public life,
- ✓ Improving the quality of life of women and girls in rural areas through enhancing their access to all kinds of services and improving the quality of the services.
- ✓ Providing updated and accurate data and analyzing them by type.

- The National Multi-sectoral Strategy on Early Childhood Development (2017-2025):

According to the 2017 report of the International Children's Rights Foundation "KidsRights Foundation", Tunisia ranked ninth (09), at the international level, and first (01) in the MENA Region, as a result of its political commitment to childhood.

Given the importance of early childhood as it represents a very sensitive period in an individual's life and development and a significant transitional stage that is characterized of vulnerability , as it lasts from pre-conception until the age of eight years old, during which the fastest development takes place, and given that early childhood also represents a critical period for the development of young children in terms of Physical health and sensory, motor, social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic development;

And In accordance with the desire to achieve goals 2.4, 2.2 and 2.16 of the 2015-2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the National Multi-sectoral Strategy on Early Childhood Development was adopted on August 1, 2018 with a view to ensure, in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, the access of all children (from pre-conception to eight years old), particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged children, to integrated services of physical, cognitive, motor, social and emotional development, under equal and fair conditions.

This strategy is divided into seven main axes:

- ✓ Axis I: Early Childhood Development Facilities and Services,
- ✓ Axis II: Family and Parenting,
- ✓ Axis III: Integrated activities and services dedicated to vulnerable children
- ✓ Axis IV: Standards and Basic and Continuing Training,
- ✓ Axis V: Quality and Monitoring, Assessment and Research,
- ✓ Axis VI: Advocacy, training and communication for early childhood and family development,

✓ Axis VII: Governance, Financing, Coordination and Partnership.

The cost of the implementation of this strategy for the period 2017-2020 was estimated at 53,506 million TND, of which 28.926 million TND shall be financed on the Tunisian state budget and 24.580 million TND under the framework of international cooperation.

- The National Strategy for the Promotion of the Family Sector (2018-2022): It was developed pursuant to the authorization of the Head of Government on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Families in May 2017. This strategy aims at preserving the family's cohesion and balance and improving its quality of life in order to enshrine the values of citizenship, human rights and social justice between regions and groups based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Its main axes are:

1. Family, Laws and legislation,
 2. The family's basic functions, roles and internal and external relations,
 3. Families with special status,
 4. The Family as the center of sustainable development policies: social, economic, health, environmental and security services to achieve family well-being,
 5. An outreach and information plan for sensitization, awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy.
- The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human beings (2018-2023): This strategy aims at strengthening coordination among the various stakeholders and acquiring the best knowledge of the forms of human trafficking in Tunisia, together with developing appropriate mechanisms for collecting data and statistics, especially that most victims of trafficking are among women and children.

The strategy combines four universally agreed areas, namely: prevention, protection, prosecution, and cooperation and partnerships at the national, regional and international levels.

The strategy's axes are devoted to consider:

- ✓ Establishing a comprehensive approach with regard to preventing human trafficking and raising awareness of the seriousness of this phenomenon, as well as building the capacities of the various actors in the field. On the other hand, the protection aspect focused on identifying victims of trafficking and developing mechanisms to assist them,

- ✓ Enhancing the efficiency of litigation against trafficking crimes, protecting the rights of victims and witnesses and deterring offenders in the litigation phase,
- ✓ The partnership and cooperation axis focused on enhancing coordination between national and international stakeholders and evaluating policies relative to the fight against human trafficking.

It is also worth noting that during the period from January 2017 to January 2018, care was provided to approximately 742 cases of trafficking, including 100 victims with foreign nationalities, most of them are minor children.

- The National Action Plan for the Integration and Institutionalization of the Gender Perspective: It was approved by the Council of Ministers convened on June 20, 2018. It aims at integrating the gender perspective in planning, programming and budgeting with a view to eliminate all forms of discrimination and achieve equality in terms of development, rights and duties among citizens by the year 2020.

The most important challenges of this action plan are reviewing discriminatory laws, supporting women's entrepreneurship, enhancing women's participation in political life and in the conduct of public affairs, implementing the national strategy for violence against women and girls, supporting social and economic empowerment of women with special needs. This is added to combating the phenomenon of early school drop-out among girls and fighting against women's illiteracy in rural and high-density areas.

- National Action Plan for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325: It was launched on July 4, 2018, and its development was based on a participatory process involving several ministries and public structures, as well as representatives of civil society.

Its main goals are to benefit from the global normative framework on women, peace and security, and to contribute to the creation of an empowering environment suitable for the implementation of the commitments relative to women's safety and security in compliance with Security Council Resolution 1325,

The plan is marked for being comprehensive as it includes two basic plans: the first focuses on how to integrate the gender perspective in the transitional justice process, while the second focuses on the role of women in the prevention of violent extremism and in reintegration,

This action plan is the best proof that Tunisia remains committed to supporting the international and regional efforts of enshrining human and universal values, to respecting human rights principles and to guaranteeing freedoms and gender equality.

3. At the level of Programs

- Program to promote gender equality: A partnership agreement was signed between the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors and the European Union in 2015 in order to implement this program, which aims at the accomplishment of programs and projects that will help achieving gender equality in Tunisia at the national, regional and local levels.
- "Raida" women's economic initiative program: It was established to enshrine state policy with regard to employment, in general, and particularly to supporting the private initiative in compliance with the goals of the five-year plan (2015-2020), in particular. The program is being implemented in cooperation with the Tunisian Solidarity Bank (BTS) and it targets women willing to create SMEs. In fact, the program succeeded in financing more than 3000 projects up to the end of 2018, and hopes to reach 8,000 projects by the end of 2020.
- The national integrated program to fight against school dropout especially among girls in rural areas: It was established to limit and reduce the rate of school dropouts (boys and girls) due to economic and social difficulties and to the lack of appropriate conditions and means to continue education inside and outside school. It is noted that 280 students drop out of school each day, which results in incurred loss of 1135 million TND for the State, i.e. 20 % of the budget of the Ministry of Education.

The aim of this program is to address, in a comprehensive and integrated manner, the phenomenon of school drop-out in rural areas and to find pilot and appropriate ways to reduce it.

Hence, the following elements were identified:

- ❖ The Program implementation schedule during the years 2016-2020, following a participatory approach in compliance with the agreement dated April 8, 2016 between the Ministries of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors; Education; Interior; Transport and Cultural Affairs.
- ❖ The Intervention areas, which include "Les Ecoles Préparatoires" (Preparatory Schools) of the Governorates of Kasserine, Bizerte, Jendouba and Siliana.

The main components of the program are:

- ❖ Providing rural school transport,
- ❖ School Restaurants,
- ❖ Preparing and equipping spaces to accommodate children at break times,

- ❖ Economic Empowerment of the mothers of students vulnerable to school dropout because of economic difficulties,
- ❖ Organizing debates and training workshops for pupils of both sexes who are vulnerable to school dropout,
- ❖ Organizing parenting workshops and sensitization and awareness-raising activities on the right of education for girls dedicated to the families,
- ❖ Providing educational and recreational activities for students and their families,
- ❖ Networking at the regional and local levels to fight against the phenomenon of school dropout.

An estimated 66 % program completion rate was recorded for the year 2017. In fact, one middle school and another primary school in Ain Sultan in Ghardimaou, from the governorate of Jendouba (located in the North West of Tunisia), were equipped with two multidisciplinary halls to accommodate pupils during break times.

- Program for the Economic Empowerment of the mothers of Pupils vulnerable to school dropout and of female dropouts in Rural Areas: This program aims at promoting self-employment among the mothers of Pupils vulnerable to school dropout and among female dropouts in rural areas through training, creating microenterprises and providing funding with a view to overcome the economic difficulties leading to school dropout.

This program is implemented in partnership between the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries; during the 2016-2020 period in the governorates of Jendouba, Bizerte, Kairouan and Kasserine. The implementation process goes through:

- ❖ Providing the beneficiaries with training in agricultural specialties and in project creation and management.
- ❖ Studying projects dossier submitted by women entrepreneurs,
- ❖ Financing projects creation through soft loans,
- ❖ Supervising beneficiaries, accompanying them, and helping them enroll in basic professional structures under the framework of Social and Solidarity Economy.

Under this framework, 22 beneficiaries from the governorate of Jendouba were trained in the field of apiculture (beekeeping) and equipped to start their projects. In addition, 30 women from the region of the Al-Fayja in the same governorate, were trained through scheduling awareness-raising sessions for women on the importance of self-employment.

- Program to support women's participation in decision-making and public life: Given the importance of the challenges raised by Tunisia's orientation towards decentralization with regard to development issues and towards the implementation of local governance; and with a view to promote the participation of women, in both rural and urban areas, in public life and decision-making; the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors developed this program starting from 2016 until 2020.

This program aims at supporting women political empowerment through enhancing their participation in public and political life with a view to improve her presence in decision-making and leadership positions. This goal will be achieved through training, capacity building, awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns, and particularly through enabling women lacking national identity cards to obtain them and exercise their right to vote.

- Launching the "TOUFOULATI" Fund: On the occasion of the proclamation of 2017 as the National Year of Childhood, the 'Toufoulati' Fund was launched, which aims at reducing regional and social disparities with regard to providing protection and care for vulnerable children in order to achieve equal opportunities.
- A training program for trainers in the field of caring for women who are victims of human trafficking: This program was designed to strengthen the capacity of interveners in the field of prevention and protection for victims of human trafficking among women and girls during the period from 2018 to 2020.
- A Program to provide care for women who are serving prison sentences and those who are released from prison: The program was launched since 2016 and lasts until 2020. It aims at protecting women who are serving prison sentences and those who are released from prison from the risks of recidivism, supporting them through their rehabilitation for social and economic integration, and helping them access opportunities to earn a living after their release from prison in order to become active citizens.
- The Program "RAWDHETNA FI HOUMETNA" (Our Kinder garden in our neighborhood): It was launched by the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors in 2016. It aims at enshrining the right to access high quality pre-school education services, guaranteeing equal opportunity among children in different regions. The program also aims at increasing the rate of enrolment in licensed kindergartens that are compliant with the Specifications and are adopting an educational pedagogy based on the quality standards required in the field.

By the end of 2018, 2700 needy families benefited from this program. Besides, on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was decided to increase the number of these families to reach 10,000 to be funded on the Ministry's 2019 budget, which means an increase of 300 %.

- Program 'AHMINI': It aims at facilitating the enrolment of working women in rural areas to the social security system. This project is part of the implementation of the "National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas". In fact, it is estimated that this program will enable 500,000 working women in rural areas, including those working in the field of shells collection, to enroll to the social security system by the end of 2020. This is going to be achieved through a system that takes into consideration the specificity of their activities and their financial capabilities, and enables them to benefit from medical care and pension.
- Launching the "Un projet...une région" (A project for each region) initiative: It aims at fighting against terrorism through enhancing community peace, empowering women and improving their economic inclusion in order to contribute to the development of their own regions. This program will include, in its first phase, the region of Mallassine in Tunis, Jazza in El Kef and Sidi Makhlouf in Medenin. The program will help improve the living conditions of women and their families and provide services in these regions.

4. Tunisia is elected Capital of Arab Women 2018-2019 and chairs Arab Women Organization

- The Republic of Tunisia; as represented by Mrs. Naziha Laabidi, Minister of Family, Childhood and Seniors; chairs the Executive Board of the Arab Women Organization for its 2018-2019 session. Her Excellency chaired the work of the 16th ordinary meeting of the Executive Board and the 7th general congress of the Organization entitled "Women Economic Empowerment and Promotion of the Values of Peace, Justice and Citizenship ", which were convened in Muscat, capital of the Sultanate of Oman, on December 18 and 19, 2018. Participants discussed the role of women in enshrining the values of equality and social justice, and the ways to adopt Arab policies to support women's social and economic empowerment, which shall ensure the increase of the rate of their participation in the sustainable development process.

- In the margins of the 37th Session of the Arab Women's Committee held in Tunis, entitled: "Women for Safe Communities in the Arab Region", the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States has chosen Tunisia as the Capital of Arab Women for the year 2018-2019, in celebration of the achievements made by Tunisian women and in recognition of the pioneering role of the Republic of Tunisia in terms of legislation and texts ensuring women's rights and enshrining their role as active partners in the building of society. Under the framework of the celebration of Tunis: the capital of Arab Women 2018-2019, a program of events was prepared and implemented as follows:

- ✓ The Republic of Tunisia, as represented by the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors, organized the first side event on "Combating Violence Against Women" on March 15, 2018 under the framework of the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in New York. This event was organized in cooperation with the Kingdom of Morocco, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), UN Women, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

This side event was the culmination of our country's commitment to develop policies, plans and programs dedicated to defending the rights of women, especially through the approval of the comprehensive Law on Combating Violence against Women.

- ✓ Organizing an event on "National Policies against Gender-Based Violence" in the margins of the participation of her Excellency the Minister of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors and her delegation in the work of the 62nd Session of the UN United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, in the presence of her Excellency Mrs. Dolors Montserrat - Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality in Spain.
- ✓ The Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors organized a civil society consultation on the national plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on June 29, 2018 in partnership with the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) and UN Women Tunis Office.

This consultation aims at the finalization of the draft national action plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325.

- ✓ The Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors organized a symposium entitled: "No Peace without Women" on July 4, 2018 in cooperation with The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, during which certificates were delivered to the steering group that supervised the preparation of the national action plan; and relative comparative experiences from Palestine, Iraq and Jordan were presented.
- ✓ Holding the Maghreb symposium on "Maghreb Women and the Challenge of Peace and Development", on August 11, 2018, under the patronage of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Béji Kayed Essibi. This conference was organized in collaboration with the Arab Maghreb Union and The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in the margins of the first Ministerial Meeting of the Ministers of Women, Family and Childhood in the Maghreb countries.

The symposium was attended by: Mrs. Ghina Al-Daliya, Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs of the Republic of Algeria; Mrs. Asma Al-Osta, Minister of Women's Affairs and Community Development of The State of Libya; Mr. Tayeb Bakoush, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union; Mr. Mahmoud Ould Sidi Yahia, Secretary General of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family of the Republic of Mauritania; and Mrs. Aisha Al-Abbasi, Chief of Staff of the Minister of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development in the Kingdom of Morocco.

The aim of the conference was to present the challenges related to the participation of women in decision-making and in the efforts to support community peace and social justice, particularly in the diplomatic field. The conference also aimed at presenting women's pioneering role in building and sustaining peace in the Maghreb Region; as well as laying the foundations for a unified Maghreb strategy for the economic and social empowerment of women in rural areas by the year 2020.

This Conference is said to be the cornerstone of a new phase of Maghreb cooperation and integration, and a framework for concerted joint efforts of the Arab Maghreb countries in order to enhance cooperation, integration, community peace and development; and to promote the situation of the family, women and

children in the Maghreb region under current development and security challenges.

In this context, emphasis was put on the fact that Maghreb women play a significant role in communities' development, promotion and advancement.

This Maghreb conference and the first Ministerial Meeting of Ministers in charge of Women, Family and Childhood Affairs in the Maghreb countries resulted in the launching of the Tunis Declaration, which called all national, regional and international institutions and all components of civil society and political parties to make further efforts to enshrine the human rights of women on the ground; and to put into effect their role in preserving security, peace, stability and development,

The declaration also recommended the creation of a joint Maghreb mechanism for cooperation, exchange of expertise and experience; supporting Maghreb women's bodies and networks; in addition to emphasizing the need to institutionalize a Maghreb Council of Ministers in charge of Women's Affairs within the Arab Maghreb Union as the case is with the other sectorial ministerial councils.

- ✓ Holding the preparatory session for the election of Tunisia as the "International Capital of Equal Opportunities 2019" on September 26, 2018 in the Centre for Research, Studies Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF). This session was attended by: Mr. Fredrik Floren, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in Tunisia; Ambassador Ann Bernes, coordinator of gender Equality Program at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mrs. Wided Bouchammaoui, Nobel Peace Prize laureate; Mrs. Radhia Jribi, President of the National Union of Tunisian Women; a number of members of Women's Committee in the Assembly of People's Representatives; as well as a number of representatives of civil society and international partner organizations,

On this occasion, the Tunisian experience was recognized and her Excellency the representative of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over the torch for defending the values of Gender Equality in the world to Tunisia.

- ✓ Holding the Meeting for mid-Term evaluation of the program for the celebration of "Tunis: Capital of Arab Women 2017-2018" on October 26, 2018. This meeting was attended by Dr. Fadia Kiwan, Director-General of the Arab Women's

Organization; and Mrs. Nawal Barrada, Director of Women, Family and Childhood in the League of Arab States.

- ✓ On November 13 and 14, 2018, and under the patronage of his Excellency the Head of Government, the Republic of Tunisia hosted the Regional Forum for the Economic Empowerment of Women in the MENA Region entitled: "From Awareness to Action: Economic Empowerment of Women in the MENA Region". This Forum was organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors.

The work of the Forum was devoted to identifying the most important developments in terms of women legislative framework in the region, and discussing ways to enhance the integration of the gender perspective in policies, budgets and programs being the most important mechanisms to promote gender equality.

- ✓ On January 23 and 24, 2019 Tunisia hosted the 22nd session of the Women's Economic Forum entitled: "The role of Tunisia as a culture, tourism and experimentation hub for the countries of Europe, the Middle East and Africa: Investing in and for women in order to promote Gender". The forum was organized in cooperation between the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors; the Embassy of India in Tunisia and All Ladies League, which is said to be the largest women Union in the world with more than 800 representatives and more than 100.000 members in 150 countries.

Its work led to:

- ❖ A consensus on the importance of financing, capacity building and access to markets as essential elements for the economic empowerment of women. Participants also stressed the importance of strengthening dialogue, establishing exchange relations between women in all fields and laying the foundations for women's networks around the world in order to create investment opportunities and enhance women's influence on their communities.
- ❖ The signing of a number of cooperation agreements between the Ministry of Women, Families, Childhood and Seniors and a number of international organizations and universities in the fields of culture, research,

communication technologies, women's empowerment and local governance, including but not limited to the agreement with RAI University, under which India undertakes to pay the study fees of 30 young women from needy families for seven years in India.

- ✓ On February 9, 2019, the Republic of Tunisia organized an international conference at the Sorbonne University in Paris entitled: "Arab Women in Support of Peace, Stability, Security and Development", which culminated in a statement calling for building peace and security for future generations and recommending decision-makers and researchers to comply with the following commitments:
 - ❖ Directing their research towards human well-being,
 - ❖ Reducing fatal diseases,
 - ❖ Allocating part of their profits to build schools and hospitals,
 - ❖ Enabling young men and women to take part in conflict resolution and prevention and in peacekeeping,
 - ❖ Working toward gender parity in decision-making positions and within the security and defense forces.

5. Challenges and Obstacles

- Lack of human and financial resources,
- A need for streamlining administrative procedures and cutting deadlines,
- Putting into effect decentralization, especially at the level of the implementation of programs and projects,
- Limited available and allocated public funds,
- The need to find external funding and request support from the private sector and partner parties,

6. Future Priorities

- Ensuring the success of the celebration of "Tunisia: An International Capital of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2019",
- Preparing the national program relative to Tunisia's hosting the fourth session of the International Conference entitled "Childhood without Corporal Punishment" for 2020.
- Integrating the gender perspective in public policies and budgets and in sectoral plans and programs at the central, regional and local levels,

- Putting into effect the human rights of women with a view to mainstream gender equality and comply with the provisions of the new constitution and the international treaties ratified by the Republic of Tunisia,
- Combating violence against women and improving services dedicated to women who are victims of violence,
- Promoting women's status, bridging gaps, reducing disparities and enhancing equal opportunities for women,
- Supporting the economic, social and political empowerment of women,
- Preventing early school drop-out and protecting girls' right to education,
- Developing an integrated child protection system,
- Developing a national strategy to protect children from cyber risks,
- Enabling every child to live in a natural family environment or a substitute family environment,
- Creating pilot pre-school educational centers.

II. Progress made across the 12 critical areas

Progress made will be dealt with through grouping the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action under 7 dimensions, namely: Comprehensive development, common prosperity and decent work; Poverty eradication, protection and social services; Addressing violence and stereotypes; Women-friendly institutions; Women and armed conflict; Women and the environment; and the girl-child.

1. Comprehensive development, common prosperity and decent work

Comprehensive development includes human, economic, social and cultural dimensions, especially as its ultimate goal is to raise the citizens' standards of life, reduce the wealth and income gap between the sexes, as well as improve the standard of life in different regions and areas.

In this regard, and starting from the belief that there is a need to strengthen women contribution and status at the economic level and provide the minimum necessities of decent life, and with a view to improve development indicators - such as fighting against poverty and marginalization, reducing unemployment and contributing to the spread of social peace – the "Raida" women's economic initiative program was established by the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors, which is in line with the State policy of promoting investment in all governorates.

In order to ensure the efficiency and success of this program, the Ministry created a women's financing line in partnership with the Tunisian Solidarity Bank (BTS) and allocated 43.5 million TND to finance the program throughout the five-year plan 2016-2020.

❖ Objectives of the Program:

- ✓ Reducing unemployment rate among female higher education graduates,
- ✓ Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs,
- ✓ Raising women's revenues,
- ✓ Reducing the number of women working in informal economy,
- ✓ Decreasing the general unemployment rate thanks to job opportunities created by women enterprises,
- ✓ Reducing regional disparities,
- ✓ Reducing poverty rate,
- ✓ Making women entrepreneurs an engine for the promotion of social and economic development, especially in the interior regions.

❖ Success indicator:

- ✓ Contribution to financing the creation or expansion of 8,000 women's projects.

- ❖ Form and mechanisms for the program realization and implementation:
 - ✓ Spreading a culture of self-employment and private entrepreneurship, especially among female youth and women
 - ✓ Accompanying and counseling women entrepreneurs during the project preparation and study phase,
 - ✓ Training of entrepreneurs,
 - ✓ Financing MSMEs,
 - ✓ Monitoring and supporting entrepreneurs until project stability.
- ❖ Partners:
 - ✓ BTS as a key partner,
 - ✓ Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment
 - ✓ Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts
 - ✓ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources
 - ✓ Ministry of Industry

❖ Qualitative and Quantitative Achievements:

Through the implementation of the "Raida" women's economic initiative program, the Ministry succeeded in financing about 3000 women's projects since the start of the program and until the end of 2018, at a total cost of 24 million TND.

In addition to creating a livelihood for the project owners, the financed projects contributed to promoting economic mobility in the regions where the project is created and to creating job opportunities for unemployed youth in these regions.

In 2018, priority was given to economic projects with high employability rates covering all sectors, namely: Industry, Agriculture, Services, Handicrafts and Commerce. Among these projects we mention the following:

- Industrial Enterprises: plastic processing, garments design and manufacturing, Biscuit and confectionery making, manufacturing of furniture and decoration items...
- Service Enterprises: Construction and Building Companies, Medical Clinics, Physical Therapy, Nursing Services, Office Services, IT Services, Cyber Centers, Tax Consultancy Services, Legal Consulting Firms, Engineering Consulting Firms, Digital Documentation and Data Archiving, Vocational Training centers, Architecture, kindergartens,

nurseries, entertainment space, Recreational parks, wedding ceremonies' supplies rental ...

- Handicrafts: Grinding spices, Confectionery, Hand weaving, Embroidery, Knitting, Carpet Weaving, Leather Products, Wood Carving, Gypsum Carving, Hairdressing, Drawing And Decoration...
- Agricultural projects: sheep breeding, beekeeping/apiculture, poultry farming, vegetable oil extraction ...
- Commerce: food retail, ready-made clothes retail, household appliances retail, electrical appliances retail, perfume shops, florists, poultry products retail.

The financed projects are spread over all the governorates of the country based on positive discrimination criteria for the benefit of the interior and border regions and women from rural areas.

❖ Phases of Implementation:

- ✓ Information days on the promotion of women's private initiative in all delegations,
- ✓ Good coordination between the Ministry's departments and the regional governmental structures involved in the projects such as: Employment Offices, Agricultural Extension Units, Regional Directorates of Handicrafts, Business Centers, Entrepreneurship Spaces ...
- ✓ Accompaniment and counseling of more than four thousand women and providing necessary training when needed,
- ✓ More than 500 hundred project studies are ready and are being studied.

Besides, employment indicators between 2014 and 2018 witnessed a significant evolution. The number of job seekers who signed up at the Offices of Employment and Independent Work (Bureau de l'Emploi et du Travail Indépendant), decreased from 16915 to 11602 by the end of 2018. Among these, 67054 i.e. 57% are females.

With regard to direct employment or through benefitting from an active employment program, the percentage of female beneficiaries increased from 56% in 2014 to 60% in 2018 (33168 out of 55633 in 2018 compared to 34334 out of 61484 employment operations, among females who signed up in the Employment Offices in 2014).

In 2018, there was an increase in the number of female beneficiaries of the employment programs compared to the last five years. In fact, the number of female beneficiaries of the various programs reached 87089 in 2018 compared to 80554 in 2014, with a slight increase

in the share of females among the total number of beneficiaries, as the percentage of female beneficiaries reached 70% in 2018 compared to 68% in 2014.

As far as independent work is concerned, the number of beneficiaries of the monitoring and accompaniment mechanisms for private enterprises reached 9773, 60% of which are females. As for the number of projects that were studied by the Offices of Employment and Independent Work and later financed, there were 3811 financed projects in 2018, of which 1181 projects for women entrepreneurs, compared to 3425 projects, of which 1546 for women entrepreneurs in 2015.

Evolution of Labor Force by sex

Unit: Number and Percentage

Indicator	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018
Male	2919400	2934000	2939200	2945400	2949200 (71.2%)
Female	1181400	1185000	1186900	1190300	1196300 (28.8%)

Evolution of the number of the employed job seekers by sex

Unit: Number and Percentage

Indicator	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018
Male	2560200	2566800	2573900	2577500	2579300 (71.6%)
Female	912000	913200	918000	920200	923400 (26.4%)

Evolution of the number of crated job opportunity by sex

Unit: Number

Indicator	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018
Male	10100	6600	7100	3600	1800 (40.7%)
Female	4000	1200	4800	2200	3200 (59.3%)

Employment Rate

Indicator	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017
Employment rate	59.9	59.8	59.9	59.8
Male	20.4	20.5	20.5	20.5
Female	39.8	39.8	39.8	39.8

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INS)

With a view to achieve comprehensive development and common prosperity, "A cooperation agreement in the field of accompaniment and assistance for Tunisian women residing abroad for investment in Tunisia" was signed between the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors and Tunisia Investment Authority on August 9, 2018. This agreement aims at putting into effect the contribution of Tunisian women residing abroad to the development efforts and encouraging their contribution to investment and employment in their country of origin, as well as linking the bridges with them in order to urge them to start projects and take initiatives.

The Tunisian Republic has also worked on the implementation of a pilot program on "The contribution of Tunisian women residing abroad to economic and social development in their country of origin" under the slogan: " We Invest in our Country (Nistathmrou Fi Bledna)".

The Pilot Program: "We Invest in our Country (Nistathmrou Fi Bledna)":

Overall objective: This program aims at promoting economic development by encouraging Tunisian women residing abroad to invest, start projects and create job opportunities in Tunisia.

Specific Objectives:

- Supporting entrepreneurs among Tunisian women residing abroad through distance accompaniment, and improving the level of investment-related information and overcoming administrative impediments.
- Developing a policy paper for the preparation of a national action program on facilitating the contribution of Tunisian women residing abroad to migration governance and economic and social development in Tunisia.
- Finding new paths, characterized of flexibility and consistency, among investment stakeholders that rely on talents as creators of wealth and employment, especially for women in vulnerable situations.

This is consistent with and contributes to achieving the goals of sustainable development:

- Component 1.b on developing sound frameworks to accelerate investment in procedures taken to eliminate poverty,
- Objective 5.5 on ensuring the full and efficient participation of women in decision-making in economic life ...
- Objective 3.8 on the promotion of development-oriented policies that promote productive activities, decent work opportunities and access to financial services.

Target group: Tunisian women residing abroad (Talent, businesswomen, students ...) and local female job seekers,

Work completed: A national symposium on "Contribution of female talents residing abroad to the economic and social development of their country of origin" was organized on August 9, 2019.

Budget: 580,000 TND.

Problems raised:

- ✓ Finding the needed funds to implement the pilot program "Nistathmrou fibledna" (We Invest in our Country).
- ✓ The difficulty of finding a special funding line for women entrepreneurs starting projects under the framework of the program.

The Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors is also working on launching an electronic platform dedicated to Tunisian women talents residing abroad in order to introduce them to the public.

E-platform: It is a website that enables the development of a database for Tunisian women residing abroad, assisted by an international hotline and interactive applications.

Objectives:

- ✓ Detecting Tunisian women talents residing abroad in different countries of the world and identifying their characteristics and features through voluntary registration on the platform.
- ✓ Networking Tunisian women talents residing abroad and their local counterparts.
- ✓ Promotion of the "We Invest in Our Country" pilot program, which is designed and tailored to the specificities of Tunisian women residing abroad.
- ✓ Providing information on laws, procedures, new incentives and opportunities in terms of investment.
- ✓ Distance accompaniment of these women and their guidance in a more effective manner to start their projects in Tunisia.

This should contribute to the achievement of objective 5.b of sustainable development on enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, in order to promote the empowerment of women.

Work completed:

Starting the creation of the e-platform dedicated to women talents residing abroad and developing the first core database for the establishment of the website.

Allocated Budget: 50,000 TND

This interest in female talents residing abroad reflects the importance of women's participation in the GDP estimated of 68%, which represents the largest rate of the labor force in the clothing and textile sector, namely 90% and 45% in the sector of pharmaceuticals.

The number of businesswomen in Tunisia reached 19,000, 36% of which in industry, 41% in the sector of services and 22% in the sector of commerce. Besides, women enterprises are characterized by high productivity and the adoption of a rational financing policy.

- Under the framework of its efforts relative to supporting economic empowerment of women and girls and to guaranteeing them decent work and fair remuneration, the Tunisian Government is also committed to:
 - Developing an incubator mechanism dedicated to female and university talents and business women,
 - Stimulating enterprises to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions,
 - Collecting and analyzing live testimonies of women on their career paths in both public and private sectors,
 - Preparation of a project on the promotion of positive discrimination for the benefit of women with regard to career progression management,
 - Organizing awareness and advocacy campaigns to encourage women and girls on entrepreneurship and investment.

- In conjunction with Tunisia's celebration of the International Women's Day, on Friday March 8, 2019, the company Tunisie Telecom signed a partnership agreement with the National Social Security Fund (CNSS), as a culmination of launching the application "AHMINI" on mobile phones, which aims at facilitating the inclusion of women from rural areas that are working in the agricultural sector in the social security system. Under this framework, Tunisie Telecom undertakes to contact the target group in order to collect the enrollment dossiers and transfer them to CNSS. Hence, make these women avoid the difficulties relative to moving to CNSS centers and save incurred expenses.

Once CNSS finishes reviewing the list, it shall notify Tunisie Telecom of whether women included in the list are eligible or not. After that, eligible women will be notified via their mobile phone, and through a code set up for the purpose, of starting the process of automatic deduction of 1 TND every 24 hours from their prepaid lines within the limits of an annual ceiling fixed at 218 TND. Besides, after each deduction operation, the concerned woman shall be notified through an SMS of that operation and of the total amount deduced and deposited in their CNSS

account. This is a non-profit operation, but it is rather a symbolic solidarity and humanitarian action, which aims at ensuring the enrollment of this category of women in the social security system and their access to various services, in particular health services.

This measure is considered to be a real revolution in social security as it will include about half a million women, through the activation of a new application that is characterized by flexibility and user-friendliness.

- Under the framework of the Tunisian government's commitment to fight against child labor, human trafficking, forced labor and modern slavery; the Ministry of Social Affairs organized, on March 28, 2019, a strategic workshop on "Tunisia's commitment as a pioneering country to Alliance 8.7". This is an international alliance established on September 21, 2019 in New York with a view to bring together all stakeholders as a unified force to achieve objective 8.7 of the goals of sustainable development, in particular taking effective and urgent measures to eradicate forced labor, modern slavery and human trafficking, prohibit and eliminate child labor in all its forms, including using children as soldiers; in addition to end all forms of child labor by 2025.

Tunisia joined the group of pioneering countries in Alliance 8.7 in May 2018, and it is the third African country to organize such an event.

In this context, and with technical support from the International Labor Office (ILO) and a tripartite participatory approach, Tunisia developed the "National Plan for Combating Child Labor 2016-2020", which was approved in January 2016. With the support of the International Labor Office, this plan aims at addressing the findings of the first national study on child labor in Tunisia, which was conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) in 2017, indicating that 189.900 i.e. 7.9 % of children between the 8 and 17 years old were forced to work, and 6 % are working in dangerous jobs.

As far as human trafficking is concerned, the National Authority against Trafficking in Persons has taken in charge 430 victims, including 31 children.

2. Poverty elimination, protection and social services:

- ❖ Under the framework of the program for the care provided to women with special needs, a training and capacity building program was developed with a view to rehabilitate women, who

are serving prison sentences and those who are released from prison, for social and economic integration. Consequently, the following were equipped:

- 19 training workshops (sewing, pastry making, jewelry manufacturing, 'Halfa' industry, hairdressing and beauty, IT and Arabic calligraphy) according to the women prisoners' preferences and the availability of spaces in prison units,
- 05 training units in both the Civil Prison of Manouba and the Girls' Rehabilitation Center in Al-Mughira,
- Training 15 prison officers in order to become trainers,
- Allocation of 325 thousand TND for the equipment of the workshops,
- Enabling 06 released women prisoners to start their private projects,
- Special allocations for this program estimated at 400 thousand TND were budgeted for 2019,
- Allowing partnership with civil society to provide trainers and reintegration coaches.
 - ❖ Under the framework of the fight against terrorism, extremism and causes of poverty, the Economic Empowerment Program for poor and low-income families that are headed by women and girls was developed in order to ensure livelihoods in priority interventions governorates, where 430 families in 16 governorates benefited from this program .
 - ❖ Besides, the implementation of the Program for Social Empowerment of Families started since 2017. This is reflected in the implementation of awareness, education and rehabilitation programs to prepare young people for conjugal life, parenting, family reconciliation and prevention of negative behaviors and migration. The program targets various age groups of girls, mothers, youth and seniors from the governorates of Mahdia, Kairouan, Gafsa, Beja, Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid; at an estimated cost of 305 thousand TND, with a view to change mentalities and reduce the high rates of late marriage and divorce in Tunisia.
 - ❖ With regard to the program to promote families' participation in public life and local affairs, it was launched in 2015 at a total cost of 690 thousand TND, in cooperation and partnership with the German Hanns Seidel Foundation. Indeed, in the period 2016-2017, the following activities were completed:
 - Organizing 8 regional training sessions on the basic principles of administrative and financial management of municipalities, elections, human resource management and strategic planning for the management of local affairs for 600 female university graduate facilitator,

- Organizing 12 in-depth training sessions for managers on political communication for the benefit of about 400 university graduate facilitator,
- Implementing an experience-exchange visit to Germany for the benefit of the 10 most excellent beneficiaries of the training program,
- Organizing a training session for 48 coordinators among women and girls who excelled in the training sessions,
- Organizing a training session for Regional Directors and Heads of Women and Family Affairs Departments, and preparing an executive action program in the regions for awareness raising campaigns dedicated to the families.
- Training 70 girls among those trainees who expressed their desire to stand for Municipal Elections,
- Organizing a training session for 48 coordinators among women and girls who excelled in the 2017 training sessions,
- Developing an action plan for the implementation of the program in various regions throughout 2017 through formulating the interim goals, identifying activities, scheduling implementation and determining results measurement indicators. Among the most important
 - Introducing the program in the 24 governorates,
 - Enabling women and men to obtain National Identity Cards,
 - Raising awareness of the various family members of the importance of participating in civil life in 350 municipalities,
 - Involving different age groups in all regions of the country to participate in local affairs,
 - Ensuring efficient participation of family members in local affairs,
- Developing a guiding manual to assist facilitators in their field work: it includes a set of practical tools and messages that will assist facilitators in carrying out awareness-raising activities for families on municipal work and local governance/2017,
- Implementing 3 regional training sessions to train the Ministry's regional senior officials, and 600 Regional female coordinator and local female facilitator on the development of the manual and initiation of the awareness-raising campaigns.

- Producing and distributing support for communication on the program (posters, brochures, etc.) in order to facilitate awareness-raising and education sessions for families in different regions of the country.
 - Organizing the Family Marathon at the regional level (24 Governorates).
 - Organizing awareness-raising and education campaigns for the benefit of at least 3500 families from different governorates of the country based on the facilitators' guidebook starting from May 2017,
 - Organizing a workshop on October 13, 2017 with the participation of facilitators and Heads of Women and Family Departments with a view to conduct a mid-term assessment of the program at the field level,
 - Reviewing some components of the executive program in the regions, in particular those relative to the regional activities, their content and networking with the relevant structures.
 - Approximately 5200 families, i.e. 20800 family members, were targeted in 350 municipalities in 24 governorates throughout the first phase of awareness-raising campaigns from May to September 2018,
 - Organizing a Media Encounter with the participation of the various stakeholders – Media, Civil Society, Representatives of Government Structures, People's Representatives and Experts – to provide data on the achievements of the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood, and Seniors. The Media Encounter was attended by about 100 person.
- ❖ As regards the health sector and under the framework of celebrating the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, "**Pink October**", the Ministry had been conducting for the last four years a sensitization campaign on early-stage screening for breast cancer throughout October in each year.

OBJECTIVE: Sensitizing as many women as possible to the importance of early-stage screening for breast cancer.

Target group: Age group of women over 18 years old.

Work completed:

Slim Shakir's early-stage screening for breast cancer Campaign was organized throughout October 2018, during which free medical examinations were conducted for women and girls, and dubious cases were given access to mammography. This is part of the framework of the desire of the Republic of Tunisia to achieve Sustainable Development Goals Including points 3.7 and 6.3 on access to sexual and reproductive health care services. A partnership agreement was also concluded with the Association of Cancer Patients (AMC) with a view to support awareness-raising and

preventive action relative to the promotion of women's health and family protection. That is in addition to supporting the Association's developmental and pilot projects for the benefit of women "infected with cancer", while supporting her creation of a livelihood through the Ministry's programs which shall help achieving goal 1.1 of sustainable development goals on the elimination of extreme poverty for people wherever they live.

This campaign was marked by the enactment of the procedure relative to the exemption of breast cancer patients' special bra from the customs duties (30%) and VAT (19%) stipulated for in Article 58 of the 2019 draft Budget Law. This is taking into consideration the difficult economic and social conditions infected women and girls patients face due to the high costs of treatment.

These campaigns represented an occasion through which men also expressed their desire to participate in and intensify these awareness-raising campaigns within the framework of the desire to increase awareness of the disease and to ensure equal opportunities between sexes in terms of health.

The percentage of participants who benefited from contraceptives' use was 82.5% for women and 17.5% for men.

❖ In order to further improve the situation of poor and low-income groups, the Social Security Program was enacted in compliance with the provisions of Organic Law No. 10 of 2019 dated January 30, 2019. It aims at:

- ✓ Ensuring the right to a minimum income and the right to health benefits for poor and low-income groups,
- ✓ Promoting the status of poor low-income groups, improving their living conditions and ensuring their access to basic services such as health, education, vocational training, employment, housing and transport,
- ✓ Strengthening the mechanisms of economic inclusion and empowerment and enshrining the principle of self-sustainability,
- ✓ Eliminating poverty, preventing relapse into it and preventing its inheritance,
- ✓ Fighting against exclusion, reducing social and regional disparities, enhancing equal opportunities, and enshrining social justice and solidarity.

3. Fighting against violence and stereotypes:

Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 dated August 11, 2017 is marked for its comprehensiveness as it addresses all forms of violence: Corporal, Verbal, Economic, Political, Psychological, Sexual and violence in public and private spaces, in addition to its compilation of all isolated and partial legal texts relative to violence against women under one accurate legal text.

Besides, this law is not limited to the criminal provisions of the law against violence, but it rather extends the State's intervention and makes it responsible for providing all methods of prevention of violence and commits it to work for spreading the values of equality and rejection of discrimination within the various environments, whether at school, in the workplace, in the street or within the family environment..

This law is described as being more severe in terms of penalty compared with the relative provisions in the Penal Code, take for example its abolition of Article 227 bis, which allows the aggressor to marry the minor raped girl while exempting him from all legal prosecutions.

This Law is also considered to be a legislative mechanism adopted by the State to affirm its commitment to promote rights and benefits without discrimination, to protect male and female citizens from various violations and discriminatory practices, and as respect the principle of equality and human rights. This result was achieved through (a) the implementation of many national awareness-raising and mobilization activities dedicated to all actors including governmental institutions, civil society and community lobbying, and (b) holding working sessions organized by the Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) with decision makers, and (c) organizing meetings by the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors with journalists in order to present and discuss the provisions of this law.

In the same context, awareness-raising campaigns were carried out at the national and regional level, including the campaign carried out in 2017 under the slogan "Law stands by you" (Elqanoun Maak), during which the four axes on which the law is based; namely general provisions, prevention and protection, care services, as well as the punitive level and prosecution. The campaign was implemented through displaying photographic and digital posters in different regions of the country, conducting awareness-raising campaigns on the social network "Facebook", and broadcasting sensitizing spots on television and Radio throughout the 16 days campaign to combat violence against women.

The Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) also developed many communication media relative the Law before and after its adoption. This was through issuing special booklets, posters and murals; and conducting an awareness-raising campaign entitled "Al-Mutaharrich Mayerkebh" (Harrassers shall not get on) under the framework of a partnership with the Ministry of Transport where giant posters were designed and covered public means of transport with a

view to raise people's awareness on the harasser's behavior in public transport. The implementation of this campaign was accompanied by several press interviews.

Moreover, and in order to manage the process of introducing the provisions of this law and of its enforcement and enshrining at the national and regional levels, efforts were made to ensure the training of government senior officials, various stakeholders and partners that are eager to enforce this Law.

In addition to the fact that it was issued in three languages: Arabic, French and English, this Law was also translated into Braille language to enable persons with special needs to identify their rights and enjoy them.

Besides, the Program for the Promotion of Gender Equality established and supported care centers for women who are victims of violence in partnership with a number of national associations, which were entrusted with the task of caring for and supporting the rights of women victims of violence and their children. Under this framework, financial support was granted to 6 associations, namely:

- "BAYTI" Association (جمعية "بيتي"), which was supported to promote and establish Sidi Ali Azzouz Center to shelter women victims of violence, and women in vulnerable situations,
- Family and Social Balance Association (جمعية التوازن الأسري و الاجتماعي); through supporting the Listening and Counseling Center for Women Victims of Violence in the Governorate of Ariana,
- Kairouan Branch of the National Union of Tunisian Women; through the establishment of the Shelter Center for Women Victims of Violence in the Governorate of Kairouan,
- L'Association Massarat Nissaia: In order to establish the Shelter Center for Women Victims of Violence in the Governorate of Jendouba,
- L'association de développement Gafsa sud: In order to establish the Shelter Center for Women Victims of Violence in the Governorate of Gafsa,
- Sfax Branch of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women: In order to support the Listening and Counseling Center for Women Victims of Violence,
- The Association for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation in Zarzis, Governorate of Medenine; through the establishment of the Listening and Counseling Center for Women Victims of Violence.

Consequently, there was an increase in the number of care centers for women victims of violence, from 1 center, "Al-AMEN", in Sidi Thabet to 7 centers, through the creation of 6 new centers (4 centers for listening, counseling and shelter, and 2 centers for listening and counseling only).

These associations were supported through:

- Purchasing basic equipment and means of operation in order to provide an adequate and appropriate environment for better protection of women and children victims of violence,

- Accompanying them in terms of administrative and financial management and technical aspects of multi-sectoral care for women victims of violence.
- Follow-up visits, coordination and ongoing support performed by the Unit for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Tunisia,
- Designing communication media with an average distribution of more than 1500 copies,
- Stimulating the associations to develop the Centers' Rules of Procedure and to determine the action lines for the technical coordination committees and the procedures manuals.

These associations managed to create Dialogue Groups at the regional level, with 900 women and around 120 children accompanying them benefiting from the care services provided by the centers.

The process of caring for women victims of violence is not limited to psychological assistance, but extends to medical care, legal assistance and training. Indeed, more than 500 women victims of violence were trained in various fields: cooking, financial management, painting, jewelery, sewing, entrepreneurship, leadership...

Data on women benefitting from the care services provided by the listening and accommodation centers managed by the associations that were supported by the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors

<u>Centers</u>	Sfax (Listening Center)	Gafsa (Accommodation+ Listening)	Zarzis (Listening Center)	Jendouba (Accommodation + Listening)	Tunis+ Kairouan (Accommodation+ Listening)
Number of women taken in charge in 2017	119	133	98	55	147
Number of women taken in charge during the first half of 2018	38	62	59	26	62

Number of residents in Al-AMEN Center

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
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Number of women	45	68	46
Number of children	46	94	51
Total Number	91	172	97
Number of overnight stays	5844	7861	6583

Total number of residents since the initiation of accommodation services in Al-AMEN Center	140 women
Total number of children accompanying their mothers	168 children

<u>Total number of women by length of stay</u>	
<u>Between 1 and 30 days</u>	70 women
<u>Between 1 and 3 months</u>	39 women
<u>From 3 to 6 months</u>	16 women
<u>More than 6 months</u>	15 women (who were trained with a view to achieve their economic empowerment)

State grant for operating budget

<u>Years</u>	2015	2016	2017	2018
<u>Amount</u>	100.000 TND	300.000 TND	300.000 TND	330.000 TND

With regard to the provided services that are varied and appropriate for the victims of violence, efforts were made to support the Hotline to receive and direct calls related to violence against women and to establish a permanent hotline, which is 1899, in order to ensure the continuity of its service. In fact, a special communication signal was designed for this hotline, in addition to the development of information media and a digital application that enables the storage of private data received through the calls. This will enable the collection of statistical data related to the calls, the forms of violence against women, and measures taken for the purpose.

In this regard, a number of training sessions were organized for the professional interveners in the field of care provision for women victims of violence, especially on the techniques of psychological assistance, networking, management of care centers for women victims of violence, listening and hearings, nonviolent communication, social and economic rights.

In this regard, records indicate that 1436 citizens benefited from the hotline services during the first quarter of 2018, including 457 cases of violence and 979 for other services.

As for the statistical level, the Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) succeeded in developing a national strategy to collect statistical data on gender-based violence in partnership with the front-line intervening sectors, namely the Ministries of Justice; Interior Health; Social Affairs; and the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors. In this context, 24 statistical indicators were identified, which can be monitored relying on the administrative documents of the relative structures.

Besides, and in order to combat violence against women, a partnership agreement with the American Bar Association was signed on December 10, 2018, under which framework two Round Table meetings were held on: "Mechanisms for enshrining the provisions of Law on combating violence against women relative to procedures, services and institutions", and on "Problems relative to the enforcement of Law No. 58 on combating violence against women in the health sector ". These meetings were attended by many of the intervening bodies, especially the front-line ministries mentioned above.

Moreover, during the period starting from February 2018, the date of entry into force of the Law on the elimination of violence against women, until December and throughout the whole country:

- More than 40000 cases of violence against women and children were recorded,
- More than 6500 calls on the hot line were received,
- 1600 women victims of violence in 24 governorates were taken in charge by the Regional Directorates for Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors, at an average of 6 cases per day: 62% of them were subject to corporal violence and 5% were subject to sexual violence.

Under the framework of fighting against this phenomenon and the efforts made to change attitudes and behaviors and stereotypes about women, which were reinforced especially through the media, the Independent Higher Authority for Audio-Visual Communication as created with a view to ensure respect for the following principles:

- Human dignity and private life.
- Freedom of conscience
- Child Protection
- Protection of national security and public order.
- Protection of public health
- Encouraging culture and national media and communication production.

The work of the Authority complies, in addition to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Tunisia, with the approved international treaties conventions such as: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC or UNCRC), The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The Authority made efforts to promote women's rights by enshrining the necessity of the compliance of the audiovisual communication enterprises with the principles of equality and non-discrimination; the obligation to break with the stereotyped image of women in the media, and the necessity of ensuring their presence in media programs and their active participation in dialogue spaces, as well as the obligation to treat women on the basis of their competence, away from negative stereotyping.

In this regard, the Authority exercises a supervisory role, especially through its Monitoring Unit, which includes a number of observers who were trained for the purpose in order to monitor the extent to which media enterprises comply with the provisions relative to the presence of women in the media. In this regard, a number of measures have been adopted for the purpose (10), ranging from disciplinary warning to resolutions.

Despite the fact that 60% of journalists and 70% of the students of the Institute of Journalism and News Sciences in Tunisia are women, the presence of women in the media is limited to only 11% with regard to their participation in public debates. While the percentage of women specialists intervening in the media is limited to 0.38%, and is less than 10% for the participation of female MPs in the media. In addition, the presence of women in evening radio programs is too limited, as it is estimated at less than 8% compared to men. Moreover, women presence the media is usually linked to social and cultural themes, while her presence in programs devoted to subjects related to foreign, security economic or political affairs is described to be too limited.

In response to this problem and based on the belief in the importance of the role of the media in achieving gender equality, the Authority implemented the following activities in 2015:

- Organizing a training session for journalists and producers of audiovisual programs on December 21, 2015, on “Gender and media treatment of women's issues”, in collaboration with the National Union of Tunisian Journalists, UNESCO and The Center of Arab Woman for Training and Research (CAWTAR).

The two-day training session dealt with two main axes, namely:

- 1- Gender mainstreaming in media production,
- 2- Media and stereotypes from a gender perspective.

- Preparing a report on the presence of women in television channels:

This work was based on monitoring political pluralism over three months: March, April and May. Hence, the report included the general and detailed results of monitoring all interventions of political and civil society actors in television programs. The objective was to identify the air time devoted to women and men in the overall monitoring sample and the extent to which women contributed to enriching the debate on issues of public concern.

This gender-based work was reported as part of the effort to improve women's participation and to consolidate the reality of gender equality through providing a realistic and balanced picture of women's representation in the discussion of various issues, whatever their field is.

The report was also presented as part of an integrated project to improve Tunisian media performance with regard to gender equality, and to limit the broadcasting of programs with a content that reinforces discrimination and stereotyping against women. This was achieved through conducting a quantitative and qualitative monitoring of women's presence in the television channels and measuring the extent of their contribution to the discussion of various issues of public concern, whether political, economic, social or cultural.

- Conducting a study on "The image of women in the Tunisian dramas produced in 2015"

This study was conducted under the framework of a joint project with The Belgian Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA). Its aim was to highlight the presence of women in drama works in terms of stereotypes, with a view to raise the awareness of actors in drama production (producers, screenwriters and directors) of the role of media in spreading the rights of women and in building the society's popular imagery.

The study examined the extent to which Tunisian woman's image in the media is consistent with her achievements provided for in national legislation and in the international treaties and conventions approved by the Republic of Tunisia. This was measured through drawing a comparison with the image of man in the media. In fact, drama productions whatever their form is - series, films or short films - play a catalytic role for social transformation and can be used as a tool to combat discriminatory practices and stereotypes of women and men, in addition to their contribution to the dissemination of alternative values and practices.

The study also aimed at:

- Providing accurate statistical data for an objective understanding of the image of women in Tunisian television dramas,
- Identifying the general features of women's image and the stereotypical and non-stereotypical images of women in dramas through numbers and data that can serve as a starting point and reference for academic research.
- Preparing a reference document on the media handling of women's issues: Under the framework of the regulatory role it plays since its creation, and in order to improve the quality of media contents through the accompaniment of journalists and audio-visual enterprises; the Commission requested journalists to contribute to the elaboration of a number of professional principles to be included in reference documents on a range of themes, including media treatment of women's issues, in the framework of training workshops and workshops supervised by specialist experts, and in partnership with the National Union of Tunisian Journalists and civil society's structures and organizations,

This reference document aims at:

- ✓ Consolidating media culture and practices that are based on the universal principles of human rights, on respecting women dignity and combating all forms of discrimination or exclusion against them.
- ✓ Ensuring women's right to express, defend and handle their issues objectively and professionally.
- ✓ Further engaging women in discussing issues of public concern and enabling them to participate effectively in decision-making in their local communities.
- ✓ The full development of the human potential of women.
- ✓ Promoting women's sense of dignity and self-esteem and enhancing their independence.
- ✓ Promoting society's respect for women's rights and fundamental freedoms,
- ✓ Promoting the presence of women with disabilities in media channels and in public space.
- ✓ Developing women's personalities, talents, creativity and highlighting their contributions to their communities.

4. Women-friendly Institutions:

Under the framework of the Tunisian Republic's commitment to achieve equality between the two countries, the following activities were implemented:

- ❖ **Establishing the Unit for the Promotion of Gender Equality**: It is a unit that is responsible for the implementation of the joint program with the European Union based on 3 main axes:
 - Building the capacity of the senior officials of the Ministry of Women, Family, childhood and Seniors and of its partners from governmental and non-governmental institutions with regard to the integration of the gender perspective,

- Improving women's participation in economic and public life,
- Contributing to the reduction of gender-based discrimination and violence.

The program components are implemented in cooperation with the partner government structures, the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF), and the Associations active in the field, both at the national and international levels.

Axis 1: Integrating the gender approach:

The implementation of the first axis is based on three basic mechanisms that are concretized through 3 program contracts:

- An International Technical Assistance Contract to build the capacity of the senior officials of the Ministry of Women, Family, childhood and Seniors and of its partners from governmental and non-governmental institutions. In this regard, A contract was signed with the International Development Centre for Innovative Local Governance (CILG-VNG), which undertook to build the capacities of institutional actors, civil society and the media with regard to gender approach, to integrate the approach in the Tunisian statistical system and to support the executive directors of the General Directorate for Women and Family Affairs through general and specific training at both levels. National and regional,
- Giving a grant to the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) to support the institutionalization of the gender approach through monitoring mechanisms and training of senior civil officials,
- Signing a framework contract to support the General Directorate for Women and Family Affairs and the members of the Peer Council for Equality and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Subsequently, 18 training sessions were organized for the senior officials of the General Directorate for Women and Family Affairs at the central and regional levels, during which 7 main themes were addressed that are related to: Gender , Gender Standardization Frameworks, Conflict Management, Negotiation Techniques, Gender Sensitive Budget, Support Request Writing Techniques, as well as developing a plan and manual for training on gender.
- Besides, two training sessions were organized for members of the Peer Council on equality and equal opportunities for women and men on the integration of gender approach and gender-sensitive budgeting. Moreover, an information meeting was organized for members of the Peer Council to highlight its important role and its mandated functions.
- In addition, two training sessions were organized for Program Managers in the Pilot Ministries (Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources; Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research; Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood, and Seniors; Ministry of

Equipment, and the Presidency of the Government) on the integration of the gender perspective in programming, planning and budgeting processes.

The program also prepared an evaluation of the gender-sensitive budget through convening several consultative meetings with partners and senior officials of the Ministry of Finance.

Axis 2: The Economic Empowerment of Women

The implementation of this axis is based on 5 program contracts concluded with associations that work on promoting women's participation in economic and public life through coordination and planning, communication and vision, awareness-raising and training, study visits and special Newsletters:

- Promoting women's participation in economic life: Through two contracts:
 - ✓ The First contract, which concerns the FLAG (Women, leadership, Assistance and Management) project, was concluded with TAMSS, OXFAM ITALIA Group, ONLUS ASSOCIAZIONE and the Tunisian Center for Social Entrepreneurship at a budget of 82,654 Euros over a period of 26 months. Under this framework, 5 regional technical committees were created in Gafsa, Kairouan, Mahdia, Tunis and Ariana to coordinate, implement, monitor activities, communicate and evaluate the project, as well as convene meetings with the regional structures that enhance coherence and consistency among the different partners.
 - ✓ The Second contract, which concerns the CLEF: CosmétoLogie Et Femmes, émancipation et égalité de la femme rurale ("Cosmetology and women, emancipation and equality for women in Rural Areas"), was signed with the Association de l'Environnement pour le Développement Durable (Environment for Sustainable Development Association), L'Association des Jeunes de Zammour 'AJZ' (Zammour Youth Association), and CSEI CATANIA; through their valuing and marketing of regional resources at a budget of € 90,363 over a period of 26 months. Under this framework, several events were organized, namely:
 - 8 coordination meetings
 - 5 panel discussion to raise awareness of the effective economic participation of women in rural areas, which were attended by an average of 35 participants in Gafsa, Kairouan, Jendouba and Tunis,
 - 8 training sessions to build the technical capacity of women in rural areas in the fields of agrifood and honey derivatives, which were attended by an average of 20 participants from Kairouan, Medenine and Gafsa,
 - 8 study visits: 4 visits to determine the launching of natural cosmetics production line, and 4 other visits for the verification of PAM production lines and make operational the quality process. The number of participants was 25, including 6 men.

- Promoting women's participation in public life: Through three contracts:
 - ✓ The Third contract, which concerns the project “**Parole aux femmes**”, was signed with CIDEAL GROUP: The Center for Research, Cooperation and Development, at a budget of 20,946 euros over a period of 28 months,

Under this framework, the following events were organized:

- 05 meetings of the Regional Coordination Committees since February 2018,
- Briefings in the governorates of Kairouan, Mahdia and Jendouba states with the participation of civil society and municipal councils,
- 5 training sessions on gender approach.

- ✓ The Fourth contract, which concerns the "Women's Participation for Promotion and Innovation" project, was signed with **ALDA** Group (the European Association for Local Democracy), the Coalition pour les Femmes de Tunisie (Coalition for Tunisian Women), and the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), at a budget of 500,000 euros over a period of 24 months;

Under this framework, the following events were organized:

- The project launch conference on November 28, 2018 with the participation of more than 100 women,
- A National campaign on voting in the Municipal Elections, during which 1500 Brochure were distributed,
- 39 training sessions for 180 women in the governorates of Jendouba, Greater Tunis District, Gafsa, Kairouan, Mahdia and Kebili, on participatory democracy, electoral cycle, women's rights, project management and leadership techniques,
- An Awareness-raising campaign on media coverage for the activities of women politicians, which targeted about 50 journalists and interveners in media.

- ✓ The Fifth Contract, which concerns the project “Women”, was implemented in partnership with the Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) Group and the Tunisian-Mediterranean Center (TU-MED), at an estimated budget of 342,354 euros over a period of 26 months,

Under this framework, the following events were organized:

- Meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors to identify associations and partner municipalities from urban, semi-urban and rural areas,
- A Planning workshop with the civil society organizations.

Axis 3: Combating violence against women

In line with the implementation of the components of the national strategy for combating violence against women, a special axis was devoted to combating violence against women, which is being implemented in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and a number of local associations and which includes three components:

- At the level of the Unit for Promoting Gender Equality in Tunisia,
- At the level of the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF),
- At the Regional level,

The Unit for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Tunisia was mandated to intervene mainly in the process of approval of the Organic Law on Combating Violence against Women and in the establishment of care centers for women victims of violence in the interior regions of the Republic of Tunisia.

❖ Peer Council for Equality and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men:

It was established by virtue of Government Decree no. 626 of 2016 dated May 25, 2016. It was stated thereof: Shall be created within the presidency of the Government an Advisory Council called the “Peer Council for Equality and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men”, which shall be referred to through the expression “Peer Council for Equality”. However, this decree has not been enshrined until March 2017, following the designation of its members by a Government Resolution dated January 25, 2017.

- The Council is mandated to:
 - Prepare the national plan to incorporate gender approach,
 - Approve the annual sectoral operational plans for the national plan to incorporate gender approach and monitor their implementation and evaluate them,
 - Monitor the difficulties impeding the incorporation of gender approach, and provide proposals with regard to legislative and regulatory reforms and administrative procedures to overcome these difficulties.
 - Prepare a national training program on gender approach.
 - Prepare annual periodic progress reports about the implementation of the plan to incorporate the gender approach, which include quantitative and qualitative indicators on the economic, social, cultural and political empowerment of women,
- Generally, the Peer Council for Equality also issues an opinion on the draft legal texts relative to women's rights, which are submitted to it by the Head of Government.

- The Council is also considered as one of the best international best practices with regard to the promotion of women status, the achievement of universal equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination between women and men. Besides, the Council was created in line with Tunisia's enactment of the Organic Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and in support of Tunisian women's achievements, which qualified them to hold the most prominent leadership and Administrative positions, and to contribute to upgrading women's image and that of Tunisia among nations.

5. Women and armed conflict:

Under the framework of promoting the active participation of women in combating terrorism and contributing to the spread of peace and security at the national, regional and local levels, the National Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted by the Council of Ministers on August 6, 2018.

This plan, to be implement throughout the period 2018-2020, aims at empowering women and girls; promoting their participation in building sustainable peace and stability; contributing to the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination and working to immunize society against the dangers of conflict, extremism and terrorism.

This main objective is divided into specific sub-objectives as follows:

- ✓ Protecting women and girls from all forms of violence before, during and after conflicts, crises and natural disasters, and under the threat of terrorism,
- ✓ Ensuring the protection of women and girls from all forms and types of violence and gender-based discrimination during conflict and terrorism conditions, and ensuring their safety and physical, psychological and mental health and security; in addition to ensuring their enjoyment of human rights and facilitating their access to justice,
- ✓ Promoting the participation of Tunisian women and girls in political life, in the conduct of public affairs and in decision-making in order to sustain peace, resolve conflicts and combat terrorism,
- ✓ Ensuring the active participation of women and girls in public and political life, in the conduct of public affairs and in decision-making,
- ✓ Enhancing the role of women and girls in building and sustaining peace, in reconstruction and in combating terrorism.

Based on the main objective and the specific sub-objectives, the plan included five main axes:

- Prevention
- Protection

- Participation
- Relief, building and sustaining peace and reconstruction,
- Awareness-raising and Advocacy.
-

Among the most important expected outcomes of the implementation of this national plan are the following:

- Developing a unified and updated database among all public structures,
- Enacting laws, legislation and regulations that take into account the principle of gender parity in terms of membership of all elected and independent bodies and in terms of positions at both the national and local levels,
- Making the national procedures and mechanisms for the protection of women and girls from violent extremism and terrorism in line with international standards,
- The evolution of security measures with regard to combating violations of the rights of women and girls,
- Increasing the proportion of women in decision-making positions and in high-level civil, judicial and military positions,
- Making the legislative and regulatory texts in line with the Constitution and international standards,
- Increase in the number of programs and actions dedicated to promoting the employment of women and girls.

6. Women and the Preservation and Protection of environment:

Through its 2016-2020 Development Plan, the Republic of Tunisia undertakes to intensify its efforts in terms of environment preservation and protection through: consolidating the process of sustainability, promoting decentralization, spreading environmental services, promoting the adoption of renewable energies, providing guarantees for decontamination and conservation of environmental systems. All this would contribute to:

- Improving the quality of sanitation services in urban and rural areas,
- Improving the quality of treated water and promote its reuse in various fields, especially in the fields of irrigation, fodder production and ground water recharge,
- Improving hygiene conditions and consolidate waste management systems in urban and rural areas through: Continuing the program for the building of waste treatment units, the gradual phase-out of the landfill operation and moving towards waste reclamation and recycling, launching the adoption of the waste selective screening process, Fighting against the phenomenon of scattering plastic bags in

the ocean; and developing street and public squares sweeping means and methods. All these measures would contribute to the creation of new job opportunities,

- Addressing the problems of industrial pollution through: improving the environmental situation in a number of the most polluted industrial enterprises, developing environmental rehabilitation programs for industrial enterprises; and carry out industrial water treatment operations in order to limit the sources of pollution,
- Sustaining environmental systems and rationalizing the exploitation of natural resources through protecting ecosystems and biodiversity from the risks of pollution and destruction, and preserving the ecological balance in order to ensure the sustainability of their developmental, social and environmental roles,
- Resilience to climate change and mitigation of its effects in order to limit the impact of natural disasters and the negative effects of global warming, especially the increased frequency of floods and drought. This could be achieved through: strengthening national capacities in terms of forecasting natural disasters; improving early warning processes for disaster prevention and mitigation of their effects; and incorporating resilience to climate change impacts within the priorities of vulnerable sectors,
- Promoting green economy through: Stimulating entrepreneurship in the field of renewable energies and efficient eco-technology; establishing clean production methods, rationalizing the exploitation of primary resources; increasing the consumption of renewable energies; waste reclamation; as well as promoting promising sectors, - such as agriculture, water, forests, energy, transport, constructions and tourism - which would contribute to creating environment-friendly jobs while reducing pollution and gas emissions,
- Promoting and developing the areas of communication, awareness-raising and environmental education in coordination with the Ministry of Education and the associations active in the field, and benefiting from the Global Action Program on Education for Sustainable Development, which is supervised by UNESCO,
- Develop decentralization and laying the foundations of local and regional environmental governance through strengthening local governance processes and the participatory approaches at the local and regional levels, and assisting in the development and implementation of local 21 agendas and urban development strategies,
- Implementing the 2050 Sustainable Cities Program in order to concretize the most important national indicators in the areas of sustainable development, climate change and green economy; and to meet Tunisia's commitments towards the international community. Moreover, reliance on the technical, technological, financial assistance mechanisms, which were approved for the purpose. This will be achieved through identifying investment projects in a number of Cities, which shall be implemented

under the framework of Public-Private Partnership (PPP), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and international cooperation mechanisms.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following reforms have been sought:

- Developing networks for monitoring and follow-up of the environment situation and sustainable development, especially through making the Tunisian Observatory for the Environment and Sustainable Development (OTEDD) more efficient by giving it administrative and financial autonomy, in line with the State's commitment in terms of good governance,
- Promoting decentralization and developing strategic action programs for sustainable development at the level of municipalities and rural councils,
- Incorporating the national strategy and the regional and local programs related to the environment and sustainable development in the economic and social development plans.

The above-mentioned reforms and programs will contribute to the achievement of several indicators, the most important of which are:

- Reaching a rate of access to sanitation networks of 90 % in the entire urban area and 92.5% in municipalities adopted by the Office National d'Assainissement (National Office for Sanitation) (ONAS) within 2020,
- Improving the quality of treated water in 50 old water purification plant through their rehabilitation and expansion in order to ensure the quality of treated water in compliance with Tunisian standards,
- Using modern technologies in the sanitation system, which can help energy saving by about 30%,
- Increasing the exploitation rate of sanitation networks by the private sector from 18 %, Currently, to 25% in 2020,
- Increasing the rate of household and similar waste treatment from 80% to 95 % of the collected waste by 2020,
- Gradually decreasing to 40 % the quantities of waste transferred to landfill after treatment, until 2020,
- Decreasing greenhouse gas emissions by 19% by the end of 2020 in order to reduce the negative impacts of climate change.

The 2014-2020 National Strategy for Sustainable Development also included nine development challenges, namely:

- Laying the foundations of sustainable production and consumption patterns,
- Promoting an equitable and strong economy, guaranteeing social justice and fighting against regional disparities,

- Rationalizing the exploitation of natural resources,
- Laying the foundations for a balanced Land-Use Planning based on an efficient and sustainable transport system,
- Ensuring a better quality of life for citizens,
- Developing energy efficiency and promoting renewable energies,
- Strengthening resilience to climate change,
- Laying the foundations for Knowledge Society,
- Adapting governance to further promote sustainable development.

7. The girl child.

Based on faith and awareness that healthy childhood means an aware and coherent society; Mrs. Naziha Labidi, Minister of Women, Family, Childhood and Senior; and with the permission of the Head of Government; launched the event: “2017: The National Year of Childhood”. This year recorded the following data:

- The number of children in 2017 (from 0 to 19 years old) reached 3,558,666, i.e. more than 31% Of the total population,
- The number of children registered in nursery schools reached more than 6060 in 2017-2018,
- The number of children registered in kindergartens reached approximately 21,2000 in 2017-2018,
- The Number of children in the preparatory sections reached 58156 in 2017 compared to 52238 in 2016,
- The number of notifications in terms of Social Protection of Vulnerable Children increased from more than 10.000 in 2016 to more than 16.100 notification in 2017, i.e. an increase of 60%.
- Based on a scientific diagnosis and on a set of indicators that reflect the reality of childhood in Tunisia, the Multi-sectoral Strategy for the Development of Early Childhood (2017/2021) was developed, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in August 2018. The aim was to adopt a participatory approach to develop the necessary programs that would enable the girl-child to access High-quality early childhood development services, which ensures that the girl-child will reach her full potential in compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and equity, while taking into consideration the best interests of the child,
- The Ministry of Women, Family and Children⁷ also worked on:
 - Implementing the "Communication Strategy on the cessation of violence against children within the family", in five governorates; namely Siliana, Jendouba, Kairouan, Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid,
 - Developing a national strategy to protect children from the risks of cyberspaces,
 - Creating "AMALI" Center to accommodate and guide children in the street in order care for them and provide protection, counseling; and assistance; which will help reintegrating them into family and social life and protect them from different forms of violence,

- Equipping 46 spaces for early childhood within the public institutions of childhood that under the Ministry's supervision, in order to ensure the right of all children to access pre-school services in the interior areas,
- Supporting children from disadvantaged families and children without families by registering them in kindergartens, which will cover all the governorates, and hence the number of beneficiaries will reach 8145 children in 2018 compared to 2704 beneficiaries in 2017,
- Establishing pilot pre-school centers through the formulation of quality standards in early childhood related to buildings and pedagogical equipment.

III- National institutions and procedures:

The issue of gender equality and women empowerment enjoy a prominent place in the priorities of the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors, which makes every effort to contribute to the international prestige of Tunisia and to develop national indicators related to respect for human rights, in general, and the rights of women and the girl-child in particular; in addition to its work on implementing the goals of the 2030 development agenda. All these efforts have had positive effects on Tunisia's ranking in international classifications. Indeed, Tunisia ranked first (01) in the Arab world and nineteenth (19) at the international level with regard to the elimination of violence against women; and ranked ninth (09) at the international level among 165 countries in 2017 with regard to the Rights of the Child.

The Ministry ensured that all its efforts were devoted, following a holistic approach, to reducing disparities, achieving equality, ensuring equality of opportunities between the sexes in the urban and rural areas, and eliminating the problems that impede the comprehensive empowerment of women, which negatively affect social and economic development as a whole.

In the same context, the Ministry has attached the utmost importance to contributing to the achievement of social justice, the fight against terrorism and extremism, providing care for groups of specific sensitivities, and promoting the rights of women and children and guaranteeing them,

In this framework, and in addition to its focus on the integration of the gender approach in public policies, plans and sectoral programs at the central regional and local levels; and parallel to the continued work of the Unit for the Equality of Women and Men in Tunisia and the Peer Council for Equality; the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors takes in charge the review of all discriminatory Laws against women and develop action plans that in the medium term shall modify interventions to effectively protect women and girls and contribute to their economic and social empowerment. This is in addition to making the Ministry's activities horizontal through coordination between the various actors in the relevant fields,

including, but not limited to the ministries charged of Health, Social Affairs and Education, in addition to representatives of civil society and international organizations.

IV- Data and statistics

Demographic Data

Indicator	Women	Men	Total
Distribution of Population by Sex (2014)	50.2 %	49.8 %	
Number of births by sex (2018)	107032	112409	219441
Life Expectancy at Birth (2016)	78.1 years	74.5 years	75.4 years
Number of deaths by sex (2016)	26410	36191	62601

Health

Number of services provided in the reproductive health sector (2016)	866119
Number of antenatal visits (2016)	563242
Number of postnatal visits (2016)	103221
Rate of contraceptive use (2016)	62.2 %
Beneficiaries of contraceptive use (2016)	*Among women: 82.5 % *Among men: 17.5 %

Education (School/Academic Year 2017-2018)

Indicator	Females %	Males %
Distribution of pupils enrolled in pre-school Phase(Année préparatoire)	49.1	50.9
Distribution of pupils enrolled in primary education (Public Education)	48.1	51.9%
Distribution of pupils enrolled in primary education (Private Education)	47.3	52.7
Distribution of pupils enrolled in Preparatory and Secondary Education (Public Education)	54.6	54.4
Distribution of pupils enrolled in Preparatory and Secondary Education (Private Education)	35.3	64.7

School enrolment rates of children aged 6 years old	99.6	99.5
School enrolment rates of the age group 6-11 years old	99.3	99.1
School enrolment rates of the age group 6-16 years old	# 97.1 #	93.8
School enrolment rates of the age group 12-18 years old	87.4	76.4
School dropout rate in primary education (Public Education)	0.7	1.2
School dropout rate in preparatory education (public education)	6.2	14.3
School dropout rate in Secondary education (public education)	9.9	15.2
Percentage of students enrolled in public universities	65	34
Percentage of students enrolled in private universities	44.4	55.6
Percentage of higher education graduates in public universities	68	32
Percentage of higher education graduates in private universities	49.5	50.5

Economic Participation and Opportunity

Indicator (2018)	Females %	Males %
Unemployment rate	22.9	12.5
Unemployment rate among higher education graduates	39	18.4
Job demands	60	40.7
Job offers received	61.1	38.9

Women in Public/Civil Service

Indicator (2016)	Females %	Males %
Distribution of the Officials of Public Service	36.5	63.5
Sub-Category A1	32	24.8
Sub-category A2	36	27.5
Sub-category A3	20.2%	12.2

Category B	6.7	14.1
Category C	4.6	13.4
Category D	0.5	7.9
Secretary General of Ministry, Director General or similar positions	5.9	8
Director	12.4	14.1
Deputy Director	21,8	24
Head of Service/Department	59.8	53.9

Women in the Assembly of the Representatives of the People (ARP)

Indicator	Women %	Men %
Members of ARP	36.1	63.9
Members of ARP in Standing Committees	37.8	62.2
Members of ARP in Special Committees	40.6	59.4
Members of ARP in Non-parmanent Special Committees	31.9	68.1