



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women**

List of issues and questions in relation to the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan

Addendum

Replies of Kyrgyzstan**

[Date received: 24 December 2014]

General

1. Please provide more details about the preparation of the fourth periodic report ([CEDAW/C/KGZ/4](#)), including whether the report was adopted by the Government and presented to the parliament, and the involvement therein of non-governmental organizations, in particular women's organizations, in addition to other key actors, such as the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Reply: The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, on 4 July 2012, issued Order No. 318-r on the establishment of an inter-agency commission to prepare the fourth periodic report of the Kyrgyz Republic on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Commission was composed of the leaders of the Zhogorku Kenesh Committees, the leaders of the Supreme Court, the Office of the Ombudsman, the civil service and the national statistical office, the heads of eight ministries and all regions, and also representatives of international and non-governmental organizations. In accordance with the above order an inter-agency working group was established with 27 members to carry out all the work of preparing the report. From July to October 2012, three seminars and seven consultative meetings were held for the members of the working group and work was also conducted in thematic groups. On 16 October

* [CEDAW/C/60/1](#).

** The present document is being issued without formal editing.



2012, national consultations were held, and members of the inter-agency commission and the working group, together with representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, took part in a comprehensive discussion. Those discussions were taken into account in the preparation of the final draft of the report, which was placed on the Government's website to inform the public. The fourth periodic report on implementation of the Convention was approved by Government Decision No. 872 of 31 December 2012. After completion of the preparatory process for the report, the following materials which reflect the entire process were included in a publication: the text of the Convention, the text of the national report and the relevant decisions of the Kyrgyz Government. This publication was submitted to all Zhogorku Kenesh deputies and was disseminated to all national and municipal government departments, as well as partners from international organizations and civil society.

2. Please provide information on measures taken, including public awareness-raising campaigns, to ensure that women in the State party are aware of their rights under the Convention. Please also provide information on whether the Convention has been invoked in cases brought before the courts and on the number and outcome of cases of discrimination against women. Please provide updated information on the process by which the Supreme Court was working to introduce the practice of judicial decisions based on international treaties and indicate whether education for law students and training for judges, prosecutors and lawyers is provided on the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto.

Reply: Regarding the information on application of the Convention in court hearings, we note that at present no such statistics are available from the Kyrgyz courts. However, according to article 6, paragraph 3, of the Constitution, the international treaties to which the Kyrgyz Republic is a party and which have entered into force in accordance with the established procedure and the generally recognized principles and norms of international law are an integral part of the Kyrgyz legal system. The norms of international human rights treaties are directly applicable and take precedence over other international agreements. According to article 93, paragraph 4, of the Constitution, the organization and procedures of the courts shall be defined by law. According to article 94, part 1, of the Constitution, judges shall be independent and subordinate to the Constitution and laws of the Kyrgyz Republic. If during a court hearing an issue is raised in connection with the application of the norms of any convention or international treaty or agreement to which the Kyrgyz Republic is a party and which has entered into force in conformity with the law, then the judge should be guided by those norms together with the norms of national legislation.

We note the following in relation to the number of cases involving discrimination against women and the outcomes of legal proceedings. Order No. 11 of 28 January 2014 of the Chair of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic approved State statistical reporting with gender indicators for the work of the courts on civil cases. In this connection, the aforementioned information is only available for 2014, as previously there had been no statistical reporting with gender indicators for civil cases.

In gender-related cases (10 categories of cases) in 2014, there were 15,860 civil cases, and the plaintiffs were women in 10,913 cases (75.2 per cent of the total).

Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

3. Please provide more details on the key features of the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020 and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2012-2014, in addition to updated information on the development of monitoring indicators, the results achieved and the budget allocated to the planned measures (para. 31).

Reply: The National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020, an integral part of which is the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2012-2014, was approved by Decision No. 443 of 27 June 2012 of the Kyrgyz Government. The main priorities for the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020 are:

- Broadening economic opportunities for women;
- Creating a system of functional education;
- Eradicating gender-based discrimination and fostering access to justice for women;
- Promoting gender parity in decision-making and strengthening women's involvement in political life.

In order to achieve these goals, efforts are being made in the following areas of gender policy.

1. One of the main changes will be a shift on gender issues both by the authorities and society as a whole. The right of women to participate in decision-making will be recognized not only by official institutions, where it is supported by special measures, but also in the private sphere.
2. There will be recognition of women's right to control their lives in such a way that they are not faced with the dilemma of choosing between family and career. Although the practical realization of these rights requires rather a long period of efforts to raise public awareness and work with government, the conditions of the struggle for these rights will have changed by 2020.
3. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic will work flexibly in the area of gender initiatives in order to strengthen the culture of equality, and the Government itself will be an exemplary employer.
4. The culture of zero tolerance to gender discrimination in the public sphere will be the standard for society, which will have an impact on all areas of activity, including work ethics and mass media activities.
5. The State will give greater attention to the gender perspective in the provision of public services. A gender-sensitive mechanism will be integrated into the roster of government services.
6. In order to increase the proportion of women who are economically active, the government and local authorities will provide all possible support to expand the

network of available pre-school facilities, which will enable women to take advantage of work opportunities.

7. Women's economic independence will increase significantly with the change in credit policy and the expansion of access to credit for women entrepreneurs (including those in rural areas).

8. As a result of joint efforts by local authorities and activists, as well as Government support, an active system of functional education for adults is developing as a complement to the formal education system. This system, based on the principles of "lifelong education", is contributing to substantial changes in the area of education, improving outcomes for students and expanding access to new labour markets for adults. Family responsibilities, including child-rearing, are being shared more equally, which is improving the quality of life for individuals of ages. Furthermore, the health care situation is changing too, resulting in improved indices, as the maternal and child mortality indices decrease and the indices for men's health improve.

9. As a result of the work of the functional education system, the structure of employment will change over the next ten years, the level of external and internal labour migration will improve and stabilize, and a significant proportion of the population will be employed in jobs connected with modern information and communications technologies. In particular, this will expand the opportunities for women to combine work and family responsibilities. The National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2012-2014 was designed with indicators to assess the measures taken and the plan's implementation has also been monitored for the first time.

As for the budget allocated to the measures set out in the National Action Plan, resources from the national State budget have been confirmed and included in the mid-term budget for 2012-2014 only in the context of salaries for civil servants involved in the implementation of specific measures. The State budget does not provide additional funding for implementation of the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality.

In this connection, international donor organizations and civil society in the form of organizations working on gender policy issues within the Kyrgyz Republic are significant potential sources of funding. Furthermore, the priorities of the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality may receive support from local budgets.

In 2012 the budget for implementation of the National Plan of Action was estimated for the first time, using data on the needs and potential for funding the five priorities of the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality. Shortfalls in funding for sustainable implementation of measures under these five priorities were also estimated.

The methodology developed and the budget for implementation of the National Action Plan were discussed with representatives of ministries and departments, representatives of provincial government, the mayors of the cities of Bishkek and Osh, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and independent gender experts.

In the course of the meetings, the funding available from local budgets for the implementation of the National Action Plan were defined, and measures to attract

extrabudgetary sources were discussed. With a view to seeking funding for implementation of measures included in the National Plan of Action, in particular to eradicate violence against women and girls, the Ministry of Social Development, in partnership with NGOs, has participated in the competitive process of applying for funding to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The inter-agency Programme Advisory Committee of the Trust Fund approved the application for a grant of \$719,195.

4. Reference is made to Government Decision No. 526, which stipulates that government bodies must conduct a specialized assessment of bills, including from a gender perspective. The State party acknowledges, however, that the implementation of gender-based assessments has been hampered by insufficient capacity in the relevant government bodies and the absence of regular reports and monitoring mechanisms. Please indicate the steps that have been taken with a view to building the capacity of the relevant government bodies and to further refining the mechanisms for legal analysis from a gender perspective.

Reply: Awareness-raising activities are conducted on a regular basis in the context of increasing the capacity of existing services involved in the specialized assessments of bills, including from a gender perspective. In order to improve the gender mechanisms and to improve the assessment of the extent to which provisions of draft legislation comply with provisions for the equality of rights, duties, responsibilities and opportunities of men and women, officials from the Ministry of Justice took part in the following activities during the period 2011-2014: (a) summer school “Tools for improving legislation”; (b) workshop “Techniques of law-making”; and (c) training course “Stages of the law-making process”.

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. It is indicated in paragraph 29 of the report that, in the wake of structural changes in the Government, responsibility for gender policy was transferred to the Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment, which has in turn established a gender policy department. Reference is also made to the National Council on Gender Development (para. 30). Please provide detailed information on the changes made to the institutions responsible for promoting the advancement of women and on the mandates of and the human and financial resources allocated to the National Council and the department.

Reply: On 5 March 2013 by Decision No. 109 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on functional and structural changes in the system of State executive bodies, the functions of gender policy coordination that had been assigned to the newly created Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment were transferred to the Ministry of Social Development.

The Ministry of Social Development is at present the central executive authority entrusted with implementing a unified gender policy. The Ministry has a gender policy department with a staff of six and a payroll of about 900,000 soms.

The National Council on Gender Development was established by Government Decision No. 268 of 2 May 2012. The National Council is a coordinating, consultative and advisory body that coordinates the development and implementation of State policy on gender development issues. The National Council has 25 members, who are members of the Government, deputies of the Zhogorku

Kenesh, leaders of government bodies and local authorities, representatives of the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan, non-profit organizations and international organizations working in the area of gender development and independent gender experts.

During the reporting period, there have been four open meetings of the National Council on Gender Development, chaired by the Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Temporary special measures

6. Please provide clear information on the temporary special measures that have been established by law and their implementation. It is acknowledged that, the introduction of special measures notwithstanding, the generally uneven representation of men and women at the decision-making level has not changed, for such reasons as the persistence of stereotypes concerning the place of women in society and the fact that mechanisms in place to monitor the measures have proved weak (paras. 46-47). Please elaborate on the measures envisaged by the Government to strengthen those mechanisms.

Reply: The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is aware of issues related to the representation of men and women at the decision-making levels. In 2014, at a meeting of the National Council for Gender Development, measures to ensure gender representation in government bodies were considered, and recommendations on gender quotas in the electoral law were adopted. These included recommendations to support the initiatives of deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh (parliament) to incorporate into electoral law standards designed to promote gender representation in the Zhogorku Kenesh and in the local councils; to recommend to the Zhogorku Kenesh that measures in electoral law to ensure the representation of women in the Zhogorku Kenesh and local councils include, for example, measures to ensure that at least 30 per cent of deputies elected to the Zhogorku Kenesh and local councils are women, through such mechanisms as adapting the requirements for the proportion and ranking of men's and women's names on the lists of candidates; and incorporating a mechanism for guaranteed representation for women candidates on the list, for example, "If, after voting day and prior to the allocation of seats, a candidate informs the relevant local electoral commission that his or her name is to be removed from the lists of candidates and that he or she will not be serving as deputy, that candidate's slot on the list shall be filled by the next candidate on the list who is of the same gender." It was also recommended that political parties in the Kyrgyz Republic should adopt internal mechanisms to ensure equal opportunities for representation of women and men in the party lists of candidates for deputy to the Zhogorku Kenesh and local councils. The media were encouraged to conduct broad information campaigns in support of women's political leadership and greater participation by women in elections to local councils and the Zhogorku Kenesh.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

7. The persistence of gender stereotypes in the State party, including in the education sector, is acknowledged. In addition to the information supplied in paragraph 52, please provide more detailed information on measures taken to eliminate gender-based stereotypes.

Reply: The competent authority responsible for implementing gender policy, the Ministry of Social Development, works closely with civil society to eliminate gender stereotypes in all spheres of society, through educational initiatives. Learning materials for use in training workshops, special classes and other educational activities held primarily for the purpose of eliminating the gender stereotypes everywhere present in public life were published in 2014 for dissemination in local communities, secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. These materials included a manual for committees working to prevent domestic violence, a manual for religious leaders and a learning module on women's rights in Islam, in Kyrgyz.

Moreover, the Kyrgyz Republic has for 16 years been a participant in the global United Nations campaign entitled 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. During this period, schoolchildren, college students and young people from local communities actively participate in campaign activities, which also include educational and awareness-raising events to eliminate gender prejudices.

Violence against women

8. It is indicated that Act No. 136 of 25 July 2012 amending the Administrative Liability Code was aimed at increasing the effectiveness of measures to prevent domestic violence through the introduction of stiffer penalties, whereby such offences are punishable not only by fines, but also by administrative detention of up to five days (para. 18). Please explain the distinction between offences that are subject to administrative penalties and those that are subject to criminal penalties under the current applicable legislation and provide statistical data on the number of cases brought under each category. Please indicate how violence against women is defined in the Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence Act adopted in 2003 (or by law) and provide a clear definition of the persons covered by the law. Please also indicate the range of circumstances justifying the use of restraining orders and provide updated figures on the number of shelters, both those run by the State and those run by non-governmental organizations, currently available to victims of domestic violence in all regions.

Reply: A new bill on protection against domestic violence has been drafted at the initiative of the Ministry of Social Development, jointly with experts. An assessment of how the Act on social and legal protection against domestic violence has been implemented over the decade since it went into effect and an analysis of its provisions point to the need to review its norms with a view to elaborating a more effective mechanism to protect persons affected by domestic violence.

The proposed bill clarifies principles of law, reconsiders the terms employed and expands the concept of domestic violence to encompass economic violence and threats of domestic violence.

The number of entities involved in enforcing the bill has been expanded. The bill sets out the responsibilities of the law enforcement body responsible for coordinating and collaborating with the entities involved in providing protection against domestic violence, distinguishes among the duties and responsibilities of State bodies and local self-government bodies and determines who is eligible to apply to the internal affairs agencies for an order of protection, or to the courts to

require the imposition of certain restrictions on someone who commits violence. It determines who must furnish evidence in domestic violence cases.

Amendments and supplements to other regulatory legal acts have been necessary in connection with the elaboration of a new draft law on protection against domestic violence, aimed at creating a system for various bodies to interact in the field of family relations. There is a draft law amending and supplementing certain legislative acts of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Act on the bases of social services proposes amendments and additions to the section of article 3 on crisis centres, advisory and preventive centres and shelters (temporary residence facilities for domestic violence victims). These organizations are essential for integrated service delivery and for a more effective government response to domestic violence. Once the law has been adopted, those services should be included in the register of public services.

The bill on protection against family violence was negotiated with ministries and agencies, and is now under consideration in the executive branch.

Under the Code of Administrative Liability, any deliberate actions (physical, psychological, sexual) committed by one family member against another constitute domestic violence, if these actions violate the constitutional or other rights and freedoms of a family member, cause light injury, physical or mental suffering, or harm the physical or mental development of a family member, regardless of age or sex, and if those actions do not contain elements of offence that would place them in the category of criminal liability.

Criminal liability is incurred when the relevant elements of offence are present and should go into effect in cases where one family member kills, drives or induces to suicide another family member, causes grievous or actual bodily harm, or engages in trafficking in persons, sexual offences or other offences specified in the Criminal Code.

During the first eight months of 2014, the law enforcement agencies instituted 102 criminal proceedings for domestic violence against women.

Nationwide, there are 13 community-based crisis centres that aid victims of violence. The crisis centres carry out various programmes that encompass a broad range of social support services. Almost all of the crisis centres provide psychological rehabilitation, legal assistance (advice, representation in court, assistance in drafting statements of claim and document recovery, inter alia) and medical consultations. There are confidential hotlines and financial assistance is offered to the extent possible, as is help in finding work. At some centres, there are also shelters where victims of domestic abuse can find temporary safe housing. Each year, some 10,000 women contact the crisis centres, the internal affairs agencies and elders' courts on matters related to family and gender-based violence.

Through local budgets, the State is co-financing the Sezim Crisis Centre in Bishkek. Moreover, through the national procurement system, 443,000 soms were allocated to that Centre from the national budget in 2012, and 296,800 soms in 2013.

Each year, the Ministry of Social Development organizes a competitive process among non-governmental and community organizations through the national and social procurement mechanism. In 2013, a total of 797,300 soms was allocated

to the House of Peace foundation to open a crisis centre for families, including for men in difficult situations, in order to prevent domestic violence.

9. Please provide information on measures taken to strengthen and further develop training programmes tailored for judges, police officers and other law enforcement officials on violence against women, its causes and consequences; improve access to justice and effective remedies, including through the provision of legal assistance to victims of sex- and gender-based violence; and strengthen the capacity of service providers working with survivors of violence at the national and local levels.

Reply: The judges' training centre of the Supreme Court held the following workshops for judges:

(1) International gender equality standards and national gender equality legislation, for municipal court judges from the cities of Osh, Karakol and Bishkek, attended by 56 municipal court judges (in 2010).

(2) Gender crime statistics: collecting data on domestic violence and improving the quality of domestic violence statistics, for court officials and staff of the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court (November 2013).

(3) A 4-day training course for trial judges on national and international legislation on protecting the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities in the courts, attended by 15 trial judges (Bishkek, 2013).

(4) From 18 to 19 November 2013, the Judges' Training Centre conducted a training course for court officials and officials of the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court on collecting domestic violence statistics, which also addressed general gender theory issues, international standards and national gender equality legislation. There were 30 people in attendance.

(5) Courses for judges and court officials are planned for the second half of the year on the following topics:

1. Capacity-building for judges on gender discrimination and violence and gender-based crime. domestic violence and court orders of protection.
2. Capacity-building on the collection of gender crime statistics for officials of the courts and the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court.

As a result of these training courses, judges have been encouraged to adopt the practice of basing judicial decisions on international treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

10. Please provide updated information on the development of a national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on the role of women in promoting peace and security.

Reply: By its Decision No. 78B of 18 February 2013, the Government approved the National Plan of Action for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on the role of women in promoting peace and security. In accordance with paragraph 1.1 of this plan, the Ministry of Social Development drafted and the Government adopted Order No. 14-r of 22 January 2014 on the establishment of an interministerial working group to assess security sector legislation to ensure

compliance with the requirements of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Development of a training programme for judges on women, peace and security and of workshops for judges is provided for under paragraph 5.2 of the National Plan of Action for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

Development of the training programme for judges on women, peace and security and the provision of training for judges are timely steps. The Training Centre for Judges, the Supreme Court and the Council of Judges are jointly planning to establish a working group to develop and test the women, peace and security training programme for judges. The 2015 continuing education curriculum includes seminars for judges on violence against women.

11. It is indicated that, although action plans have been drawn up, measures to combat violence against women have largely remained on paper because funding for them has not been forthcoming under the State budget. Please provide information on the steps that have been taken to ensure the allocation of adequate resources within the government budget for the implementation of the various initiatives and plans of action listed in the report.

Reply: To increase the representation of women in decision-making positions under the parliamentary system, it is important to introduce compulsory rules for political parties on the representation of women in higher party bodies. In addition, amendments and additions to the constitutional law on the election of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and of deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh, and to the law on the election of deputies to local councils (*kenesh*), in particular the rule that the rankings of men and women on party lists must be maintained even when candidates are replaced, will guarantee that women's representation in government bodies will remain at 30 per cent.

In order to improve the electoral system and ensure the transparency of the 2015 parliamentary elections, an intersectoral working group comprising representatives of the Government and civil society organizations has been set up under the country's sustainable development strategy. The competent authority intends to submit proposals to the working group on strengthening the quota mechanism for women's political advancement. Also of particular relevance is the issue of strengthening parliamentary and prosecutorial oversight of the enforcement of the Constitution and of gender equality and election laws, especially with regard to women's representation in elected and appointed office at decision-making levels.

Trafficking in persons and exploitation of prostitution

12. Please provide comprehensive disaggregated data on the patterns and dynamics of trafficking in the State, including on the existing and envisaged mechanisms, both legal and social, to combat internal trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls, as well as to better monitor the situation of migrant women and identify and prevent trafficking and exploitative situations. Please provide detailed information on the implementation of the National Action Plan for 2008-2011 on Combating Human Trafficking, including in relation to budget allocations for related activities.

Reply: Trafficking in persons is recognized under international law as one of the most dangerous forms of transnational organized crime.

There are a number of factors that create conditions conducive to trafficking in persons. These factors include difficult socioeconomic circumstances such as unemployment, which leads to an increase in the number of migrants both within the Republic and to other countries, as people seek higher incomes and better living conditions. Trafficking in persons is also facilitated by the fact that it largely goes unpunished, since it is perpetrated in hidden and disguised forms; this is indicative of its high latency, especially in view of the mentality prevalent in Asia. For this reason, it is not possible to track patterns of trafficking in persons.

In recent years, Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies have gained some experience in combating human trafficking. In their investigative work, they have discovered criminal groups engaged in human trafficking and have brought them to justice. In 2013, the Kyrgyz law enforcement authorities filed 10 criminal cases concerning trafficking in persons, as compared to 6 cases in 2012, 9 cases in 2011 and 13 cases in 2010.

An analysis of statistics on criminal cases attests to the difficulty of bringing this type of criminal activity to light. Law enforcement officials require specialized knowledge and training in order to deal with offences of this kind.

The investigative units of the State Committee on National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic have identified and shut down more than 10 human trafficking corridors and have instituted criminal proceedings. Units of that Committee also work on an ongoing basis to detect crimes such as the counterfeiting, manufacture, sale or use of forged documents, official decorations, stamps, seals and forms, and illegal crossing of the State border.

Under the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, human rights and freedoms are upheld as supreme values, and slavery and trafficking in persons are prohibited. On the basis of these constitutional provisions, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic takes ongoing measures to systematize and coordinate the State's actions to combat trafficking in persons.

The implementation of the programmes adopted has enhanced the effectiveness of State agencies' actions to combat the modern slave trade; addressed a number of issues relating to the alignment of Kyrgyz legislation with international law; and enhanced the effectiveness of law enforcement activities.

After the completion of the National Action Plan for 2008-2011 on Combating Human Trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic, it became necessary to adopt a new Programme to Combat Human Trafficking and an Action Plan for its implementation.

On 14 January 2013 the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted Decision No. 14, "Programme of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to Combat Human Trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013-2016".

The Programme provides for the planning and coordination of the activities of government agencies and for strengthened cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of actions for effectively preventing, detecting and stopping human trafficking and for protecting and assisting the victims of such trafficking.

Participation in political and public life and in decision-making

13. Please provide information on specific measures taken, not only to achieve but also to maintain (or exceed), the target of 30 per cent representation of women among parliamentary deputies and to ensure the effectiveness and expected results of other quota systems in place, including at the local level, with a view to ensuring the effective participation of women in political and public life.

Reply: In 2012, elections were held for 416 local councils (*ayil kenesh*) and only 25 city councils; i.e., the vast majority of women candidates stood for election under the majority system, which is unfriendly to women candidates owing to the prevalence of gender stereotypes, especially in rural areas, and to the limited resources available to women. Thus, women candidates' poor showing in local election results is a logical consequence of the lack of special measures in electoral legislation.

The number of women elected as deputies from party lists based on gender quotas is much higher. For example, women accounted for 26.7 per cent of the deputies elected to the Bishkek city council and 24.4 per cent of those elected to the Osh city council.

The trends that have emerged in women's representation in local councils highlight the need to change the way in which local elections are conducted and to include mechanisms and special measures to ensure that different social groups are represented in elected bodies, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Special measures to support women's political participation at the local level were formalized by the Local Council Elections Act of the Kyrgyz Republic. No more than 70 per cent of the candidates nominated on the electoral lists of political parties and voters' groups for elections to district and municipal councils may be of the same sex, and the difference in rankings between men and women on the lists may not exceed two positions.

According to consolidated data from the State Human Resources Office, in 2014 the actual number of women in the civil service was 42.4 per cent of the total number of civil servants. In 2013, the actual percentage of women among municipal employees stood at 35.1 per cent. In 2014, women's representation reached 60 per cent among Supreme Court judges, 50 per cent in the Office of the Ombudsman and 33.3 per cent in the Central Elections and Referendums Commission and the Chamber of Accounts of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In order to improve the electoral system and ensure the transparency of the 2015 parliamentary elections, an intersectoral working group comprising representatives of the Government and civil society organizations has been set up under the country's sustainable development strategy.

In order to increase women's representation, it is necessary to introduce legally established mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality and compulsory rules for political parties on the representation of women in higher party bodies, and to improve the existing quota mechanism.

Education

14. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that all girls, including those belonging to minorities, have equal access to free, compulsory and high-quality education. Please indicate what measures have been taken to fill the gap in the collection of statistics on the number of girls who fail to complete their schooling and the underlying causes, paying specific attention to the high dropout rate among girls living in rural areas.

Reply: Since 2002, the organizational units of the Ministry of Education and the entire educational system have begun to collect more comprehensive gender-disaggregated statistical reports (enrolment and dropout rates by education level), which will allow for a more conclusive analysis of the situation and will guide efforts to address gender issues in education, with a view to ensuring universal access to basic education.

Employment

15. Please provide information on any steps taken to give full legislative effect to the principle of equal pay for an equal amount of work in order to ensure full compliance with the provisions of article 11 of the Convention and to reduce the persistent gap between the wages of women and men. Please provide detailed information on specific legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace. Please also provide detailed information in relation to measures taken to support and protect the high number of women who are employed in the informal sector without guaranteed pay and social security.

Reply: According to figures compiled by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic in “Women and men of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2007-2011”, in 2011 average remuneration for men (10,675 som) was 1.3 times the average for women (8,366 som). This is because women predominate in the fields of education, health care and social services, where pay levels are lower than in the real sectors of the economy, in which the majority of workers are men.

To improve remuneration for education, health-care and social service workers, as well as material incentives for workers, in 2011 a number of decisions were taken by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, under which a revised pay system for these workers, involving the introduction of sector-wide pay levels coupled with pay increases, went into effect on 1 May 2011. Accordingly, pay levels for workers in the educational, health-care and cultural fields were raised to an average of 2 to 2.5 times their previous levels. The increases brought pay levels for men and women, respectively, to 2.3 and 2.7 times their 2007 levels.

The highest pay levels were among women working in the financial sphere: 18,257 som, which is 2.2 times the average pay of women nationwide.

Higher remuneration in the social sphere will attract men to this sector and will reduce the wage gap between men and women.

The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth drafted a programme for the promotion of employment and the regulation of external labour migration for the period up to 2020, which was approved on 6 September 2013 by decision No. 485 of the Kyrgyz Government. The programme provides for the creation of conditions conducive to productive employment, the reduction of unemployment and steps to

redress the imbalance between supply and demand in the labour market through employment promotion measures intended to make fuller and more rational use of the labour force, while protecting the rights of Kyrgyz citizens working abroad.

Number of unemployed persons benefiting from labour market measures

<i>No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of beneficiaries</i>	<i>Paid public employment</i>	<i>Vocational training</i>	<i>Microcredit</i>
1	2012	Total	19 800	6 514	3 549
		Women	7 089	3 726	1 448
2	2013	Total	21 078	7 335	2 190
		Women	7 586	4 223	1 020
3	2014 (up to 3rd quarter)	Total	19 721	6 568	861
		Women	7 355	3 742	385

The data indicate that fewer than half of all those benefiting from labour market measures are women. In the main, they are engaged in landscape improvement and other lighter work and account for some 42 per cent of the total number of persons engaged in such work.

Employment figures in 2012 and 2013 were quite healthy, standing at 58.8 per cent and 57.3 per cent, respectively. However, employment among women fell from 46.9 per cent in 2012 to 44.4 per cent in 2013.

Health

16. It is indicated that maternal mortality remains at a high level, although it is declining (para. 136). It is also indicated that contraceptive coverage in the country stands at 30.1 per cent and that the decline in the use of contraceptives results in part from the growing influence of religion in the population (para. 144). Please provide information on the impact of the measures taken to increase awareness among women and girls about access to contraceptives. Please indicate whether any study has been conducted to determine whether there is a link between early and unwanted pregnancy and early marriage. Please provide detailed information about the introduction of new initiatives, or the improvement of existing ones, related to sexual and reproductive health education in schools and vocational education.

Reply: A number of initiatives are being implemented as part of strategic programmes, for instance, the national strategy for sustainable development and the strategy for educational development by 2020. The Government has also been steadily working to encourage healthy lifestyles in vocational schools. Young people attending such schools are from 14 to 28 years of age. Since biological, psychological and social maturity is developed at this age, the school subject “Healthy lifestyles” is considered the most important and effective tool for teaching young people how to lead healthy lifestyles and adopt safe practices.

Since 2005, the curricula of vocational establishments include a 20-hour “Healthy lifestyles” programme. “Healthy Lifestyles”, designed as a preventive

programme for students, teaches them about developing healthy lifestyles and critical thinking, and about self-development, decision-making, and accountability.

Since 2011, a number of initiatives have been introduced, in partnership with the National Health Promotion Centre of the Ministry of Health and with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with a view to enhancing the “Healthy Lifestyles” programme in vocational schools:

1. “Healthy lifestyles” course manuals for sexual and reproductive health peer educators were drafted and subsequently approved by the scientific council of the State Scientific Methodology Centre of the Agency for Vocational Education in November 2013 and recommended for use in teaching “Healthy lifestyles”.

2. A strategy for introducing the “Healthy lifestyles” programme was developed and approved. The principal aim of the strategy is not only to introduce “Healthy lifestyles” into the education system as a school subject, but to make it part of the general student culture, thus improving and maintaining student health.

3. In 2012-2013, “Healthy lifestyles” training was given to a total of 48 people, including peer educators and specialists from Talas and Naryn provinces. In 2014, 35 teachers of “Healthy lifestyles” from the Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad provinces were given training, as part of a skills development programme of the State Scientific Methodology Centre.

In March 2014, monitoring of the “Healthy Lifestyles” programme was carried out in schools in Bishkek, Osh, Jalal-Abad, Naryn and Talas provinces in which the programme was being piloted or was already established. An office was set up and equipped, as were a health centre and first-aid station.

In 2014, a decision was taken to establish resource centres for teachers of “Healthy lifestyles” at the State Scientific Methodology Centre in Bishkek; at vocational school No. 6 in the town of Kokoy, Talas district; and at vocational school No. 87 in the city of Naryn, Naryn province.

In accordance with order No. 137 of 7 February 2013 of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Health, on a plan of action for the health promotion offices of district and province family health centres, campaigns were carried out on safe motherhood, hygiene and sanitation; the Gulazyk project; tuberculosis and malaria prevention; and the monitoring of nutritional programmes (for children under the age of 2 and pregnant women) using innovative technology.

Contraceptive coverage in the country stands at 35.1 per cent: this in turn has led to a decrease in the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, as well as a reduction in deaths caused by post-abortion complications. However, there is no system for making contraceptives available, and limited resources make procurement impossible, meaning that the country is dependent on donor supplies (from UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)). Kyrgyzstan is currently experiencing a decrease in donor supplies; urgent measures must be taken to address the lack of a system for supplying contraceptives.

Since 2006, the Ministry of Health has implemented a national strategy designed to improve reproductive health by 2015, which was approved under Presidential Decree No. 387 of 15 July 2006, in which the reproductive health needs

of adolescents are recognized as priorities in government policy and are reflected in target No. 5, on the improvement of reproductive health.

Rural and elderly women

17. It is reported that many challenges are faced by women in rural areas, including in the fields of education, participation in political and public life, and access to health care. Please provide information on measures taken to improve the participation of rural women in political and public life, and to enhance their access to justice, provide them with protection, support and assistance when they are subjected to gender-based violence, and ensure their access to health care, employment and land ownership and management, in addition to other economic opportunities. Please provide information on the situation of elderly women, including on their access to health and social services and to protection against violence, and indicate programmes and strategies designed to meet their specific needs.

Reply: Kyrgyzstan has a solid legal framework for protecting the rights of the elderly, including: a national law on elderly citizens in the Kyrgyz Republic; a section devoted to elderly citizens in the 2012-2014 strategy for the development of social protection for the people of Kyrgyzstan (Government Decision No. 755 of 13 December 2011); Government Decision No. 635 of 11 November 2014, setting out the basic social services to be provided to elderly citizens at day centres and social welfare establishments; and standard home support services for the elderly and persons with disabilities (Government Decision No. 365 of 5 July 2011). The Ministry of Social Development has set up six residential social establishments for the elderly and for persons with disabilities. As at 1 December 2014, the number of people receiving services was 747, including 433 men and 314 women. A total of 433 were elderly persons. As at 1 November 2014, 9,000 people were receiving home visits; 7,000 of these were elderly persons. As at 1 November 2014, 76,000 people were receiving a monthly social allowance. Of those receiving an allowance of 1,000 soms, 1,000 were elderly and 485 lived in high-altitude districts. A total of 185 “heroic mothers” — a category which applies to mothers raising a large number of children — received a monthly allowance of 2,000 soms.

Marriage, family relations and bride kidnapping

18. Please provide detailed information about the measures taken by the Government and the Office of the Ombudsman referred to in the report, such as the setting up of a telephone helpline, and measures aimed at raising awareness among all sectors of the population about bride kidnapping, early/child marriage, polygamy and unregistered marriage. Please provide detailed information on measures taken to tackle the prevalence of bride kidnapping. Please indicate what measures have been taken to increase the rate of cases brought to prosecution (only a single conviction during the reporting period) and the effective implementation of the existing legislation. Please also describe the measures taken to record and investigate those cases and prosecute the perpetrators, in addition to indicating the efforts made to improve knowledge of the law, address persisting stereotypes and ensure victims’ equal access to justice.

Reply: Under the Social and Legal Protection against Domestic Violence Act and other laws and regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic, public prosecutors are mandated to monitor the lawfulness of the actions of State entities, take measures to rescind unlawful procedural and other decisions, and ensure full and timely recording and registration of domestic violence complaints.

The Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic contains a separate article on the abduction of a woman for the purpose of marriage against her will. Until recently, the maximum penalty under that provision was three years' imprisonment. Since 2013, the sentence has been increased to seven years, or ten years if the victim is a minor.

Over the first eight months of 2014, a total of 25 criminal cases were filed, as compared to 16 over the same period in 2013. In addition, there were 6 cases carried over from previous years (11 in 2013), 17 cases that went to court (16 in 2013), 21 individuals convicted (36 in 2013), 5 cases terminated (5 in 2013), 4 cases suspended (4 in 2013) and 5 cases being investigated (1 in 2013).

Thus, the prosecutorial authorities of the Republic are taking all measures available under the laws in response to cases of bride kidnapping, and are focusing in particular on the lawfulness and validity of the procedural decisions taken by investigative and judicial authorities.

19. Please provide information in relation to the proposed amendments aimed at stiffening the penalties for offences under articles 129 (on rape) and 153 (on bigamy and polygamy) of the Criminal Code and at removing the discriminatory provisions of articles 154 and 155 that affect article 123 (on kidnapping), which would put the offence of abducting women for the purpose of coercing them into marriage on an equal footing with that of kidnapping. Please elaborate on information provided that there continue to be many unregistered marriages.

Reply: The Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic contains a separate article on the abduction of a woman for the purpose of marriage against her will. Until recently, the maximum penalty under that provision was three years' imprisonment. Since 2013, the sentence has been increased to seven years, or ten years if the victim is a minor.

Statelessness

20. Please provide detailed information on steps taken by the Government to improve the national asylum system and to address the phenomenon of statelessness in the country. Please indicate whether the State party is planning to ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Reply: The Kyrgyz Republic became a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the Protocol thereto in 1996. Since acceding to those instruments, Kyrgyzstan has consistently complied with its international obligations with respect to refugees. For example, it has provided protection to more than 20,000 refugees, taken effective measures to improve legislation and procedures, implemented durable solutions for refugees and engaged in fruitful cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In addition, the Refugee Act, which includes provisions for ensuring the rights of refugees, has been in force in the Kyrgyz Republic since 2002.

A law amending and supplementing the Refugee Act was adopted on 17 March 2012. Its purpose is to harmonize the Act with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and with other international legal instruments and standards. For example, the Act's preamble is worded as follows: "The Kyrgyz Republic shall accord all refugees equal status under the law without any distinction on account of sex, race, language, ethnicity, religion, age, political or other opinion, education, country of origin, property or other status, or other circumstances". Moreover, the definition of "refugee" was brought into conformity with article 1 of the 1951 Convention; provisions restricting access to the procedure for granting refugee status in cases where the person concerned is in the country illegally were eliminated; and provision was made for issuing documents to foreign nationals pending the outcome of appeals against decisions taken by the competent authority. These amendments are intended to improve the legislation on refugees, in particular by strengthening measures to ensure the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, including women.

At the same time, refugees enjoy certain advantages in the acquisition of citizenship. Under article 13, paragraph 2 (4), of the Citizenship Act, the period for which a person is required to reside in Kyrgyzstan before applying for citizenship is reduced to three years for those who have been recognized as refugees.

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

21. Please indicate what progress has been made towards the acceptance of the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention.
