



MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS FOR ARMENIA, GEORGIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE TO PREPARE FOR THE 68TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective

Organized by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia



DRAFT SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

On 20 February 2024, the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia convened a pivotal subregional multi-stakeholder consultation for the Central Asia subregion, involving Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The Governments' representatives from the participating countries, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, UN partners and regional and subregional institutions gathered at this subregional consultation to take stock of progress and critical challenges in preparation for the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) and its priority theme: *“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.”*

The consultation focused on key issues, including poverty alleviation, social protection, the recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work, the promotion of women's participation in the labour force, and the integration of gender perspectives into financing and investment decisions.

Setting the stage for national delegations' participation at CSW68, this document encapsulates the key challenges and recommendations voiced during the consultation, serving as a testament to the shared resolve of the subregion on the priority theme.

A SNAPSHOT OF GENDER AND POVERTY IN ARMENIA, GEORGIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

Poverty is widespread in the region and its incidence is higher among women than men in most countries, particularly among rural women, older women and women who are lone parents or heads of households.

WOMEN'S PROPERTY RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO LAND

In Moldova, **41%** of land plots in the State registry were owned by women in 2014.¹ In Armenia, only **1/3** of home-owners are women.²

ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL GOODS AND SERVICES

In Georgia, only **1/3** of all recipients of driver's licenses in 2016 were women and only **15%** of women owned registered vehicles.³ Regarding health services, out-of-pocket spending in Ukraine accounted for **48%** of total health-care spending in 2020, while the share was **47%** in Georgia and **31%** in Moldova.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND DECENT EMPLOYMENT

A gender pay gap exists across the subregion, reaching **35.7%** in Georgia in 2017, and **28.4%** in Armenia, **18.6%** in Ukraine in 2020 and **15%** in Moldova in 2023.⁴

WOMEN'S UNPAID CARE WORK

In Moldova, most unpaid work is performed by women, with about **66%** of their total working time spent in unpaid work (**4.9 hours/day**).⁵

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In Ukraine, **65.6%** of women have experienced psychological, physical or sexual partner violence since the age of 15.⁶

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INVESTMENT

In Georgia, only **29%** of people receiving old-age pensions are women. Overall in the subregion, only **67.1%** of people receive unemployment protection.⁷

¹ FAO. 2022. *National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods – The Republic of Moldova*. p. 40.

² FAO. 2017. *National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods – Armenia*. p. 15

³ FAO. 2016. *National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods Georgia*. p. 46.

⁴ ILO. 2022. *Gender Wage Gap in Georgia*. p. 30.

⁵ UNDP Moldova. 2014. "*The Importance of Unpaid Work in Moldova*." Analytic Note.

⁶ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. 2018. "*Results of the OSCE-led Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women*."

⁷ National Statistics Office of Georgia. 2021. *Women and Men in Georgia*. p. 60.



1. KEY CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1. ADDRESSING THE MULTIFACETED NATURE OF WOMEN'S POVERTY

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Participants shared noticeable gender disparities in labour market participation, with a low number of active women compared to men. In line with efforts towards their accession to the European Union, countries shared that they have introduced regulations to protect women's employment rights, such as prohibiting firing women during maternity leave and discussing provisions on sexual harassment. Participants also shared best practices to promote women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship through grants, training programmes and support services. Yet, the gender wage gap remains high and acts as another barrier to women's employment. Participants also noted the challenge of persistent gender stereotypes, which dictate caregiving responsibilities within families, and the lack of comprehensive data on care work. Regarding women's entrepreneurship, participants shared concerns regarding the limited access to financial resources and entrepreneurial education for women, which is directly correlated to the high rates of business failure among women entrepreneurs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To implement policies to reduce the gender wage gap and promote equal opportunities for women in the labour market.
- To challenge gender stereotypes through targeted awareness-raising campaigns and educational programmes.
- To improve data-collection methods to accurately capture the extent of care work and inform policy decisions.
- To increase access to financial resources and entrepreneurial education for women entrepreneurs through targeted programmes and partnerships with the private sector.
- To consider the value and opportunity of introducing gender bonds to sustain and expand women entrepreneurship.

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Women continue to shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, which impacts their participation in the labour force. Women also are more represented in care professions, such as in the social work, health and education sectors. Participants noted that these sectors remain underpaid and need to be valued adequately, in line with objectives to empower women in the workforce. Other notable initiatives were highlighted, including new legal amendments and policies enabling support services for families, alternative childcare services and flexible working arrangements for parents. It was noted, however, that gender norms and stereotypes continue to reinforce the expectation that women should prioritize caregiving over paid employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To expand access to affordable childcare and other support services to alleviate the burden of unpaid care work on women.
- To promote a more gender-equitable division of care responsibilities through awareness-raising campaigns and policy interventions.



1.2. MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN FINANCING AND INVESTMENT SYSTEMS/MECHANISMS

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (PFM)

Participants noted that PFM has played a crucial role in establishing targets and monitoring the allocation of resources towards gender equality. Participants shared best practices aimed at mainstreaming gender in PFM and budgets, with direct effects at the local level through the implementation of gender-responsive development plans. Challenges remain due to the limited funding allocated to achieve gender equality targets within PFM frameworks. Participants stressed that the gradual implementation of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) requires sustained political commitment and capacity-development efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To develop and implement national public finance management strategies that incorporate concrete actions, targets and indicators to address gender inequalities.
- To strengthen capacity-building efforts to support the gradual, systemic implementation of GRB across all sectors and levels of governance.
- To conduct cost-benefit studies on the economic returns from investing in the institutionalization of care and use these studies for policy and budget planning, including on use of diverse financial instruments.
- To implement gender-transformative taxation, prioritizing the redistribution of resources.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND INVESTMENTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS' SOCIAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING IN CRISIS-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

Participants shared initiatives to address gender disparities in social protection systems, including the provision of targeted assistance to vulnerable groups, such as victims of domestic violence and families living below the poverty line, as including the provision of temporary shelters for displaced women and girls due to conflicts, community support services and financial assistance to vulnerable populations. Governments have increasingly recognized the importance of applying intersectional approaches to policy planning and of investing and funding social protection for women and girls from vulnerable groups. Despite progress, gaps remain in access to social protection programmes for women, particularly in rural and marginalized communities, and in crisis-affected areas that are affected by displacement and the loss of livelihoods. This is mainly due to limited awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming among policymakers and programme implementers, which hinders the effective implementation of responsive social protection policies and programmes. Additionally, insufficient funding and resources allocated to gender-responsive social protection initiatives, and insufficient data collection and analysis on the impact of social protection programmes on vulnerable populations, impede their scale, implementation and impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To expand access to social protection programmes for women, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.
- To enhance capacity-building initiatives to increase awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming among policymakers and programme implementers.
- To increase funding and resources for gender-responsive social protection initiatives to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.
- To prioritize intersectional approaches in policy development and implementation to address the diverse needs of marginalized communities.
- To improve data collection and analysis to better understand intersecting forms of discrimination.
- To foster collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders to ensure inclusive policy responses that address intersecting inequalities effectively.

This outcome document aims to encourage national delegations and partners to prioritize the presentation and defense of its findings at CSW68. By articulating the region's commitments, recommendations and innovative strategies, stakeholders can amplify their voices on the global stage, advancing the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Beyond CSW68, this document stands as a testament to the collective dedication of participating countries and stakeholders to translate these commitments into tangible actions aligned with the priority theme.