

BELARUS COUNTRY GENDER EQUALITY BRIEF



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BELARUS

COUNTRY GENDER

EQUALITY BRIEF



**UN WOMEN REGIONAL OFFICE
FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoE	Council of Europe
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CGEB	Country Gender Equality Brief
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GRB	Gender-responsive Budgeting
HDI	Human Development Index
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
NCDs	Non-communicable Diseases
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP	Optional Protocol
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SIGI	OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UN RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
UNSR	UN Special Rapporteur
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN Women's Country Gender Equality Brief (CGEB) **provides a snapshot of the status of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Belarus**¹, particularly against the gender-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Framed under Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the CGEB also attempts to summarise how/if women from marginalized or vulnerable communities may be doubly challenged in the types of discrimination they face. The CGEB closes with a country-specific Matrix of Gender-related SDG Indicators for Belarus.

Developed using a UN Women corporate methodology and template, through a document review only and in consultation with the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Belarus, the CGEB reflects existing research and statistics. No primary research or analyses was carried out in developing the CGEB, nor did the document review process or interpret raw data.

Findings of Document Review

Belarus ranks 29th of 153 countries in the 2020 World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Gender Gap Report, **exceeding the global average in women's overall economic participation and security, ranking 1st in terms of healthy life expectancy**

¹ UN Women is currently a non-resident agency in Belarus, with programming and partnerships in country led by the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia based in Istanbul.

and of girls secondary and tertiary enrolment rates world-wide.¹ Belarus has signed and ratified all relevant international legal frameworks pertaining to gender equality and the empowerment of women and many legal bodies reflect this commitment to non-discrimination and equality.

The challenges which remain are inter-connected and primarily around: **the lack of standalone, legislative protections against all forms of gender-based discrimination; low levels of women's participation in senior decision-making positions in public and political life; the lack of consistently and comprehensively available primary health and sexual and reproductive health rights and services (SRHRs); lack of robust legislative and service provisions to support women from living a life free of violence; and the lack of support to women's unpaid care work in the home.**

At the root of all of the above challenges hindering the full realization of gender equality in Belarus are the **gender norms** – and subsequent gender stereotypes – which are pervasive in Belarus. These gender norms are perpetuated by families, communities, cultural and political leaders, state policies, education curricula, private sector and media. These norms shape expectations of what it is to be a “good” woman, man, girl and boy, their expectations of each other, their support of each other, and the self-confidence among all to take on non-traditional roles. The impact of these norms – when coupled with other broader social

norms around economic standing, family, disability, orientation, ethnicity – are significant. For the LGBTI community, women living with disabilities, women trying to overcome GBV, women from minorities, rural women, and women living with HIV, the negative impact of a broad range of social norms – including gender – are immense.

Belarus has **no specific, stand-alone legislation on gender equality and the empowerment of women. All legal commitments towards ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women are considered enshrined in the National Constitution, the Family, Labour and Criminal Codes and related legislation, and/or are considered supported by the existence of the National Plans of Action. Belarus does not have a law explicitly focused on ending all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including Domestic Violence (DV). There has been a draft Bill in place for a number of years on the Prevention of Violence in the Family.** In 2018, the Government abandoned the development of the law due to backlash from conservative groups in the country, and with leaders at the highest level, including the President, defining the concept of DV as a “stupid thing borrowed from the West”ⁱⁱ. While the 2014 adoption of the Law on the Fundamental Activities to Prevent Offences is of great importance, it deals only with situations of DV within marriages. Sexual harassment in the workplace also remains unaddressed by the existing legislationⁱⁱⁱ. The legislation protecting against early marriage is in place, although there are allowances for lowering the legal age by a maximum of three years (age 15) in the case of pregnancy or if the person concerned has reached full legal capacity.^{iv} The laws governing land ownership, including agricultural land, do not explicitly ensure equality of rights of ownership between women and men, although the National Constitution and legislation governing rights in the family do uphold equal rights in inheritance. Legislation does not explicitly ensure equal rights to accessing SRHRs in terms of services, information or education.

Based on the above, and in measuring of progress under SDG Indicator 5.1.1,² **Belarus has received a scoring**

2 Scores are arrived at using the SDG Indicator 5.1.1 methodology for measure, which includes consultations, questionnaires and validation with the government. The scores for each country against Indicator 5.1.1 may be found on the UN Women SDG Database.

of 45.5% for overall legislative frameworks on gender equality and the empowerment of women; 66.7% for overall legislative frameworks on GBV; 50% for overall legislative frameworks on Employment and Economic empowerment; and 81.8% for overall legislative frameworks on Marriage and Family.^v

Women’s political representation in national parliaments worldwide ranged from 0 to 61.3% (2019), with an average of 24% an increase from 19% in 2010. At the local level, data from 103 countries and areas show that women’s representation in elected deliberative bodies varies from less than 1% to close to parity, at 50%, with a median of 26%.^{vi} Women’s overall political representation in Belarus at the national and local levels exceeds the majority of Europe and Central Asia (ECA) countries, even in the absence of temporary special measures. Currently, women make up 29% of the Council of the National Assembly and 35% of the House of Representatives (2019).^{vii} In the judiciary, five of the 12 Justices of the Constitutional Court are women (2016)^{viii} and in the Supreme Court, one of the six leaders is a woman (2019).^{ix} Yet, none of the five deputy prime minister posts are filled by women and only one Cabinet post out of 24 is filled by a woman. Since independence, Belarus has never had more than three women Cabinet ministers at any one time. At the local government level, women account for 48.2% of deputies in local Councils (2018)^x however to date there has never been a woman as chair of a regional executive committee, which is the highest position at the regional level in Belarus.^{xi}

Globally, **political parties are the greatest enabler and greatest bottleneck to women’s engagement in political life**, with parties worldwide typically investing significantly more resources – financial support, peer mentoring, media time, public relations support, access to winnable ridings and seats, and key positions within the management of the political party itself – toward young men entering politics instead of young women. While detailed information about women in political parties in Belarus is not readily available, global studies show that women entering and engaging in politics may face high levels of discrimination including sexual harassment from party members; and are often objectified by national media. In Belarus, where one political party has dominated since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the government has generally tried to shift focus during elections from issues such as gender equality, in part because of the discourse

around the prevalence of GBV and lack of progress in tackling this issue. As a former Communist country with strong educational attainment for both women and men, the Government often contends that the situation of women in the country is very strong as compared to many in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and thus generally avoid addressing underlying issues in public discourse or through policy measures. Indications are that despite strong statistics on leadership as compared to other neighbouring countries, women politicians face many of the above challenges captured in global analyses. Politicians, the media and pundits continue to refer to women politicians as beautiful, “pure” or “more clean” as compared to men who have been engaged in politics. As the CEDAW Concluding Observations note, the national media often sexualize women politicians. Even when there are political parties in the country which do take on the gender equality dialogue in elections – such as the opposition party in the recent regional elections – they too reinforce a perception of women politicians being kinder and gentler – and like many political parties world wide, assert that more women in politics will result in better family policies and strong social protection policies.^{xii}

Within the civil service, women make up 67.4% of civil servants, and men 32.6% and women make up 56.2% of Heads/Deputy Heads within the civil service, as compared to only 43.8% of these posts being held by men (2017).^{xiii} In looking at **leadership in both the public and private sector combined, women occupy 47.6% of all management positions (2017)**.^{xiv} In the private and State-owned business sector, as of 2018, 19.2% of firms have women as majority owners, as compared to the ECA Regional Average of 13.7%, and 45.5% of firms have women as joint or part owners, as compared to the ECA Regional Average of 33.2%; and 21.2% of all firms have women as “top managers”, as compared to the ECA Regional average of 18.4%.^{xv}

Women’s leadership roles are hindered by the challenges they face in accessing support for their unpaid care work in the home. This is directly as a result to the social norms which continue to prescribe women’s role as first and foremost, wives and mothers. According to the results of a World Values Survey

(2011), both women and men perceive men as being better equipped to be leaders in business and politics, although men agree more strongly than women with the statement. Most men and women in Belarus still think that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay, with more women agreeing with this statement than men. These views vary also by age group, while in general, older people appear to hold more traditional views on women’s societal roles—for example, as both men and women get older, they (especially older men) increasingly agree on the fact that children suffer with a working mother.^{xvi} Recent surveys show that men in Belarus still believe they are stronger political and business leaders, and that they should be given priority over women when jobs are scarce (2018).^{xvii} Women for the most part do not agree that men should be given priority in the labour market (see below).

Belarus continues to outperform the global averages in terms of near universal enrollment of both boys and girls in primary and secondary education. On average, women and men can expect to receive 12.3 years of schooling, and 87.2% of women and 92.5% of men 25 years and older have at least some secondary level education (2019).^{xviii} At the primary education level, boys continue to outperform girls in terms of Net enrollment, with 95.05% of boys being enrolled as compared to 94.8% of girls^{xix} and with 78.4% of all “out of school” children being girls (2018).^{xx} However, in looking at the figures measuring transition from primary to lower secondary, this shifts with boys being disadvantaged as compared to girls, with Net secondary enrollment rates of 95.13% of boys and 96.18% of girls^{xxi}, and with 62.6% of “out of school” adolescents being boys (2018).^{xxii} By Tertiary level enrollment, young women are significantly outperforming young men with 75.8% of tertiary graduates being women as compared to only 24.2% of male graduates (2017).^{xxiii} However, in 2018, only 27.4% of STEM graduates were women.^{xxiv}

There is **limited gender-responsive analysis available on education trends in Belarus as to why – from lower secondary education onwards – girls continue to outperform boys in terms of enrollment and educational attainment**. Due to social norms – including gender

norms - boys may be at greater risk of drop out because they are under pressure to “earn rather than learn” – as there may be a perception that traditional gender roles require this of young men. Social norms may also foster the belief that the education being offered does not align with economic opportunities in their region or community which would be “appropriate” for boys. For many girls in rural households facing economic insecurity, there may be pressure to take on unpaid care work and domestic work in the home, to alleviate the pressures on the adult women in the family, who in turn may be able to go out to work. Equally however, teenage girls in poorer households may also under pressure drop out of school and get a job, as well as face pressures in some instances to marry early.

Official data states that 70% of **children with special educational requirements are in mainstream schools**. UNICEF analysis shows that this figure reflects mainly those children with mild developmental challenges such as speech disorders. 30 % of children with disabilities, especially intellectual, are in school programmes designed specifically for children with special needs, “segregated from the general system”.^{xxv}

Education systems – both the curriculum and the pedagogy – are key agents of change when it comes to shaping more positive social norms, including gender norms. Despite Belarus’s very progressive investment in ensuring girls and boys equally are valued by families in terms of educational attainment, the Government has yet to address the significantly restrictive and traditional “gender norms” being perpetuated by the current school curriculums at the primary and secondary level. Certain classes – such as “Labour Training” - entrench the gender stereotypes of what is “appropriate” professions and roles that girls and boys should take. Girls are required to study “service work” which is meant to prepare them for their role in the home. The focus of the study is “the formation of general, technical and technological knowledge, skills, experience of labor, economic and household activities through training to perform the social role of the hostess”. Whereas boys study “technical work” which is to “prepare students for work in the dynamically developing society, production, science, information-electronic and other technologies.”³ In Secondary school, boys are then trained in “pre-conscription” training and girls in “medical” training. Further, at the tertiary level, several State institutions of higher

learning, including the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, have a gendered admission policy, which, among other things, restricts the number of admitted female students and/or requires higher passing scores for women.^{xxvi}

Economic security and participation and rights in the workforce is often the nexus through which the gains and bottlenecks in advancing gender equality come together. Despite girls’ strong levels of education, Belarus’s labour force participation rate shows men outperforming women. In looking at employment rates for persons 25 years of age and older, only 57.6% of women as compared to 68.9% of men are employed (2018).^{xxvii} In looking at the overall total employment, 58% of employed persons are in the service industry, 30.6% are in the industrial sector, and 11.3% are in the agricultural sector (2018).

In Belarus, there is a general lack of information about women’s and men’s engagement in the informal sector overall. The agriculture sector, where globally so much of women’s informal work rests, is not well researched from this perspective in Belarus. In a 2016 report, FAO noted that women’s rights to own and manage property is generally respected in Belarus^{xxviii}. The CEDAW committee has flagged as a point of concern the limited participation of women in the decision-making around collective/state-owned farms.^{xxix}

Belarus has an increasing gender wage gap – from 19% in 2001 to 24% in 2014, representing a slight change downwards from the peak of 26% in 2011.^{xxx} The sector with the lowest wage gap is Agriculture where women earned 90.2% of what men earned, closely followed by Public Administration, where women earned 86.4% of what men earned (2014). Both are sectors are ones in which women dominate. The sectors with the largest gender wage gap are those which are dominated by men - that of real estate, renting and business services, where women earned just 71.9% of what men earned, and mining and quarrying sector, where women earned just 72.3% of what men earned (2014).^{xxxi}

More nationally specific analysis is needed, but if the global realities may be applied to the Belarusian context, the challenges to women’s economic security is in large part due to the gender norms, which may result in girls being steered into non-competitive markets, and which prescribe women’s roles in the

3 Extracted from the textbooks for this curriculum.

family. As a recent national survey has shown, and unlike the above perceptions around leadership, when it comes to opportunities in the labour market, women do not agree with the statement that a university education has greater benefits for a boy than a girl; and 84% of women respondents – compared to 59% of men respondents – disagree with giving men priority when job opportunities are limited.^{xxxii} Yet despite the perceptions that women have a right to employment, the pervasive belief in Belarus that women’s role in the home is of greater value than their role in the workplace continues to impact their engagement in the work force. In the country, the total workload of employed women amounts to an average of 70 hours 21 minutes per week, including about 44 hours 6 minutes of professional workload and 26 hours 15 minutes of housekeeping. In comparison, employed men have almost 7 hour less total workload per week, and only 14 hours per week engaged in household tasks. In short, women spend daily on average twice as much time as men on household and child care. In households with children under 10 years old women spend daily more time on childcare than men, that is almost 9% and less than 3% of their time respectively. Overall, 78% of women and 59% of men care for children under 10 years old.^{xxxiii}

Many companies in Belarus, including the State, do not actively advance family-friendly policies such as breast feeding policies, paternity leave, flexible workhours to compensate for family illness – a practice which has proven globally to actually advance productivity rather than reduce – or workplace supported creches. Discriminatory workplace practices which hinder young women’s advancing in particular are not well documented and thus hard to measure the impact of these realities.

The legal prohibition of women to work in 181 professions for their own “wellbeing” perpetuates the concept that women first and foremost must be kept “safe”, that their primary role is as mother and caregiver. It perpetuates the idea that second to maternity, women work but only in certain “appropriate” professions, that women should be “protected” to carry out the mother role. Further, it perpetuates the idea that it is appropriate and acceptable for men to work in dangerous professions,

rather than the idea that the State should ensure that all workspaces should be safe and secure for all. The CEDAW committee also noted that retirement age for women is five years earlier than that of men, reducing pension of women and contributing to older women’s higher risk of poverty.^{xxxiv}

The Labour Code does uphold both maternity leave and paternity leave (Articles 150, 183, 184, 185 and 271). The Labour Code mandates paid maternity leave of 126 days, financed entirely by the government’s State Social Insurance scheme. Further, the Labour Code no longer distinguishes between prenatal and postnatal maternity leave, which gives mothers more flexibility about how to take their leave. The Labour Code also mandates paid parental leave, also financed entirely by the government for a period of up to 1095 days. Parental leave can be taken fully or partially by the father, the grandparents, or other relative of the child up until the child reaches the age of three. However, according to the National Statistics Committee (2016), only 1% of Belarusian men take advantage of paternity leave.^{xxxv}

The CEDAW Committee has flagged with concern the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace in Belarus. The Criminal Code (Article 17) currently contains reference to sexual harassment but given the burden of proof is heavy in criminal cases, and certain discriminator practices in the form of sexual harassment may not amount to behavior punishable under the Criminal Code. Sexual harassment in Belarus is felt to be under-reported, “owing to a fear of stigmatization and dismissal on the part of women. It is further concerned about reports that indicate that a relatively high number of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have been dismissed or pushed to resign following such harassment.”^{xxxvi}

In terms of women’s empowerment and a real and lived equality, **women’s legal rights, access, voice and decision-making authority over reproductive health and sexual rights is central. Globally, only 57% of women aged 15 to 49 who are married or in union make their own decisions about sexual relations and the use of contraceptives and reproductive health services**^{xxxvii}. In Belarus, 72.1 % (2018) ^{xxxviii} use modern contraceptives, and 74.2% of women (WHO 2012)^{xxxix} have their family planning needs met with modern contraceptives. In

Belarus, access to public services play a critical role in supporting women's SRHRs. The CEDAW Committee has flagged with concern the growing anti-abortion movement and the linkages between limited use of contraceptives due to cost and potentially limited availability due to "moral reasons", and calls on the state to strengthen society's understanding of importance of contraceptives and their use; to increase access to safe and affordable modern contraceptives in all regions; and to maintain access to legal abortion under safe conditions.^{xl}

The absence of comprehensive data, however, on women's SRHRs and access to services makes it difficult to ascertain what challenges women may be facing. Based on studies assessing public knowledge around HIV/AIDS, it is evident that women and men and youth living in Minsk are more informed about how HIV is contracted and how it is to be prevented - 93.7% of persons surveyed in Minsk were aware of how to prevent HIV as compared to those in the regions which averaged around 84%.^{xli}

While there is no comprehensive national research available, there are indications **that women living with disabilities may face particular challenges in accessing SRHRs and services, as well as their full right to exercise parental rights. The CEDAW Committee has flagged with grave concern the possibility that there may be instances of women living with disabilities in Belarus who are forced to have abortions based on the written consent of her legal guardian. Women living with disabilities have also faced extensive pressure to place their existing children into State custody.**^{xlii}

Belarus's official statistics show that comparatively speaking, the proportion of the population living below both the international and the national poverty lines is relatively low. In the second quarter of 2019, the national poverty rate was 5.1%, down from 5.9% in 2017 - 5.5% of women and 6.6% of men were living below the poverty line.^{xliii} Nonetheless, the absence of national comprehensive analysis on poverty and the efficacy of the State social services in staving off poverty for those households at risk; and the overall impact the social protection scheme has on poor households' resilience and vulnerabilities limits our understanding of the overall scope of poverty in the country. Lack of state statistics on how/if ethnicity, disabilities, household composition, geography,

gender and health impacts individual and household vulnerability to poverty; and their resilience in the face of economic downturns, is a significant gap in understanding the overall realities in Belarus.

In the case of Belarus, **there is limited data indicating that women "headed" households are more vulnerable to poverty than "men" headed households.** Given the existing gender wage gap in the country, there is a risk that the households headed by women are more vulnerable than those headed by men, but it is an assumption which may be doing a disservice to these households. Household vulnerabilities and resilience in the face of poverty are linked to the education levels, household size, average age, location, ethnicity and overall access to adequate state social services and social protection of the household, as well as the gender of the "head" of household. These households may have additional challenges in accessing social protection as compared to households headed by men, particularly if the social protection laws are "gender neutral", which often disregard specific challenges women may face in that they may not own the house they live in, they may still be legally married but cannot prove lack of child support, may have a husband who has migrated and abandoned them, and may face discriminatory beliefs and attitudes from the public employees working on social protection and social services.

What is known is that in Belarus, one of the strongest determinants of households being vulnerable to poverty is their location – rural households are disproportionately more burdened by poverty than urban households. The poverty incidence for rural areas over 2009-2016 is approximately 10.5 percentage points (or 44%) higher than the national average, while that of the urban areas is nearly 4 percentage points (or 16%) below national average. Moreover, in 2015-2016 urban and rural disparity for poverty widened even more and reached 25.3% for urban vs 40.6% for rural areas.^{xliiv}

The United Nations' Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2018) has flagged with concern the numerous socio-economic difficulties of the Roma population (especially the vulnerability of women in employment), which require additional protection of this ethnic group. Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation is not the case in Belarus, which is contrary

to the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of 2015 and the previous session with the Committee (2013). Experts of the Committee requested information on the state of adoption of such regulatory legislation in Belarus.^{xlv} The adoption of the Presidential decree “On the Prevention of Social Dependency” (2015), which was later replaced by the decree “On Promoting Employment” (2018), which prescribed “non-working” citizens of Belarus to pay the full cost of utility bills and other public services has been particularly hard hitting for the Roma community, which is largely seen as unemployed. Reports indicate that Roma are now at risk of eviction from their homes and/or loss of property.^{xlvi}

“The world is rapidly changing. Families, and the role of women and girls within them, are also changing. Today, there is no ‘standard’ family form, nor has there ever been. In order for laws and policies to support families and meet the needs of all their members, they must evolve and adapt.”^{xlvii} As UN Women’s Progress of the World’s Women 2019-2020 outlines, understanding the challenges and opportunities women face in realizing their full potential is intertwined with the resilience, vulnerability, type and overall status of both the families and households to which they belong. Belarus is representative of emerging trends in Europe around family diversity, size and structure. Europe is a region which has one of the highest rates of couples without children; of lone-parent households and; of one-person households. In Belarus, households are small, with 2.4 persons per household being the national average, and with little difference between rural and urban households (2009). 11% of all “nuclear” households (which up 55.5% of all households) are categorized as “Mothers with children”, as compared to 1.3% of nuclear households categorized as “fathers with children”.^{xlviii} **Belarus’s fertility rate of 1.7 (2010-2015)**^{xlix} aligns with the ECA regional averages, and has been maintained for over a decade at this rate. Nationally, the age of marriage is increasing with only 3% (2018) having been married under the age of 18.^l **For Roma girls, however, this reality is quite different with reportedly just under 50% of all Roma marriages, women were under the age of 18.**^{li}

Women in Belarus are expected to live 11.1 years more than men.^{lii} **Widows in Belarus face a degree of vulnerability to household poverty which is not yet well explored in national data. According to global analysis, based on 2010 figures, 14.6% of women aged 55–59 globally were widowed and in the CIS and Eastern**

European region, Belarus has the fifth largest share of widows (behind Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Russian Federation, respectively) at 19.6% of women in this age group.

Despite the absence of a stand-alone, comprehensive law on GBV, despite strongly worded statements by senior government officials (see above) dismissing GBV as a national or family issue, and despite limited trust in services available, survivors are coming forward in significant numbers. Since 2018, 13,377 protection orders have been issued^{liii} and since 2014, over 450 survivors of domestic violence have accessed “crisis” rooms for support.^{liv} The services provided are not sufficient in terms of providing long-term housing, economic and psycho-social support to survivors of GBV, nor is there sufficient support in terms of accessing affordable legal aid, including in particular in the rural areas. Fear of social stigma still prevents women from coming forward, as does a fear that admitting to DV may lead to their children being taken away and institutionalised.^{lv}

Comprehensive national data on the prevalence, root causes and response to all forms of GBV is limited in Belarus. The latest data shows that 11.8%^{lvi} of women aged 15 to 49 (2018) have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime (2012). According to other government statements and research, one in four women have experienced violence in their lifetime. More recent results of a prevalence survey with a sample size of over 1,500 show that 2.8% of girls under the age of 15 have experienced sexual violence (2019) and 16.8% of women had experience violence before the age of 15 (2019).^{lvii} These figures align with the broader global average, based on data from 106 countries, which show that 18% of women and girls aged 15 to 49 who have ever been married or in a union have experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence in the previous 12 months.^{lviii}

The Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey for Belarus (2012) has found that 40% of women and 30% of men surveyed feel that Belarus must adopt much more stringent legislation to address GBV. As captured in the section above, the strongest provisions against GBV in national legislation are largely confined to marriages. Further, there is no law in place in Belarus that specifically addresses sexual harassment, either in the Criminal Code or the Labour Code. The Criminal Code does include one article on coercion to perform sexual acts through threat, blackmail,

or exploitation of economic dependency (Criminal Code, Article 170). The penalties under Article 170 are up to three years' imprisonment. However, in its Concluding Observations, the CEDAW Committee notes that the burden of proof in such cases falls on the victim, and it is very difficult to secure a conviction. The Committee furthermore has noted concern that sexual harassment in the workplace is under-reported due to women's fear of stigmatization and dismissal, citing reports that a relatively high number of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have been let go or pushed to resign following such harassment.^{lix}

The Government of Belarus has made concerted efforts over the years to tackle and respond to human trafficking, including the adoption of important legislation, cooperation with the CoE around trafficking, and most recently the establishment of provisions to protect victims of trafficking, including the establishment of a mechanism for victim identification and referral. Law enforcement remains weak however, with limited prosecution and convictions of traffickers, despite the fact that Belarus is a known source, transit and destination country. In terms of exploitation of prostitution, the CEDAW Committee has noted that while not well monitored, estimates are that many women are exploited in prostitution due to lack of alternative economic opportunities. Evidence indicates that women exploited by prostitution are at high risk of experiencing GBV, including from the police; and these women face fines or administrative arrest and their place of work, as well as their children's school, are informed of the charges^{lix}.

Data Limitations and Future Considerations

In Belarus, the national statistical body – Belstat – has generated significant amounts of sex-disaggregated data on the overall socio-economic situation in the country. However, for many of CGEB Indicators, Belarus has generated only unprocessed numbers, disaggregated by sex, but not in proportion to the overall population.

Further, despite significant levels of raw data available, there is limited statistics or analyses produced on the socio-economic development of groups who are often marginalized, such as women from ethnic minorities, women living with disabilities, women living with HIV

and AIDS, and rural women, to name a few.

Understanding the opportunities and challenges to advancing the SDGs in Belarus would greatly benefit from the following actions in the future:

- Conducting a survey on the Prevalence of GBV in the country, using the WHO global methodologies, ethics and principles;
- Conducting gender-responsive national research on the root causes of poverty;
- Strengthened national analyses on the challenges and impact of the current Sexual and Reproductive Health services, information, education have on women and men of all ages;
- Conducting Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Surveys, ensuring to include equal parts women and men, girls and boys, on Gender Equality, Women's empowerment, women's leadership, and the role of men in ending discriminatory practices;
- Instituting national level gender-responsive budgeting systems and monitoring therein to assess annual investments towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, and the impact of these investments;

Strengthening national analyses on time use, and the impact of unsupported unpaid care work in the home on the country's overall development.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Scope:

UN Women's Country Gender Equality Brief (CGEB) **provides a snapshot of the status of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Belarus**⁴, particularly against the gender-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In partnership with the broader UN System, UN Women has significantly increased investment world-wide in not only understanding the overall situation of women and girls in each country, but also in supporting the identification of key statistical gaps at the national level which impede national stakeholders' understanding of the gains, gaps and challenges in achieving GEEW.

To this end, the CGEB for Belarus provides an **overview of national and international commitments to GEEW and key statistics in the areas of population demographics, health, education, leadership, labour and economic empowerment, poverty reduction and ending all forms of GBV.**

Framed under Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the CGEB also attempts to summarise how/if women from marginalized or vulnerable communities may be doubly challenged in the types of discrimination they face. The CGEB closes with a country-specific Matrix of Gender-related SDG Indicators for Belarus.

Indicators:

As per a corporate template, the CGEB Indicators were selected by UN Women **as core indicators to measure the drivers, progress, gaps and challenges to GEEW in a country. The CGEB Tables include all gender-**

related indicators of the SDGs⁵ and are grounded in the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). The CGEB indicators were shared with the UN Country Team to ensure relevance, and to modify terminology if required for national context.

The production of CGEBs is a relatively new process within UN Women world-wide, and as the Briefs evolve, and as data analysis grows worldwide, the Indicators included in the CGEBs will be expanded and/or modified as required.

Where possible, statistics for years 2000 and 2010 will be provided along side the most recent statistics, as points of comparison to identify progress, bottlenecks and trends.

Methodology:

As per the UN Women Corporate Guidelines on the development of Country Gender Equality Profiles and Briefs⁶, the CGEB for Belarus:

- Follows a corporately prescribed template, which includes all relevant gender-related SDG indicators, and was developed in consultation with UN Women research and data experts in the ECA region and at Headquarters;
- Was developed through a desk-top document review of existing national and international data, with priority given to national data.
- As only a statistical summary drawing on existing analysis and sources, the CGEB is a UN Women-owned knowledge product to be used primarily to provide the UN in Belarus with a quick and ready resource of the overall status of GEEW.

4 UN Women is currently a non-resident agency in Belarus, with programming and partnerships in country led by the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul, Turkey.

5 There are 53 gender-related indicators under the SDG. In the case of ECA, the SDG Indicator on female genital cutting/mutilation was not included. Thus only 52 gender-related SDG Indicators were included in this CGEB.

6 UN Women Headquarters – Research and Data. (2018) UN Women Guidelines for Country Gender Equality Profiles. 2018 Version.

Consultations and engagement of national stakeholders was not required, given that the document is focused primarily on provision of data to measure key GEEW indicators, and not in providing an overall qualitative analysis.

- Was developed in consultation with the UNCT's Gender Theme Group, which advised on the types of global indicators in the UN Women corporate CGEB template most relevant to Belarus's context; the data sources to be used; and provided substantive inputs into the drafting of the CGEB;
- Was researched and drafted by a two-person consultancy team – a national expert based in Belarus working alongside an international expert supporting CGEBs in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region;
- Underwent a quality control process, whereby UN Women, key UN experts, and UNCT vetted the CGEB methodology, templates and drafts.

Document Review: The CGEB document review included reviewing: relevant national legal and regulatory frameworks as well as national action plans; Reports generated by Government, Civil Society and international organisations on sustainable development, national growth and the status of GEEW in Belarus; national reports⁷ and Concluding Observations emerging from relevant State/International Treaty body dialogues; Voluntary National Reviews on the SDGs; and National Reviews of Beijing +25.

Data sources: Preference was given to national data where possible and where credible, coming from official statistical sources in Belarus including, but not limited to: Population and Census Surveys, Labour Force Surveys, Living Standards Measurement Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Reproductive Health Surveys, Prevalence Surveys on Violence Against Women, Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys, Perception Surveys to name a few. Where no national data was available, regional and global data sets and analyses were used.

Limitations:

The CGEBs are developed through document review only. The CGEB methodology does not allow for processing raw data and independently arriving at statistics to measure the indicators selected. Rather, and based on a document review, the CGEB captures current research and current statistics.

In Belarus, the national statistical body – Belstat – has generated significant amounts of sex-disaggregated data on the overall socio-economic situation in the country. However, for many of CGEB Indicators, Belarus has generated only unprocessed numbers, disaggregated by sex, but not in proportion to the overall population.

In Belarus, despite significant levels of raw data available, there is limited statistics or analysis produced on the socio-economic development of groups who are often marginalized, such as women from ethnic minorities, women living with disabilities, women living with HIV and AIDS, and rural women, to name a few.

7 Including alternative/shadow reports to treaty bodies.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

With 77 percent of its 9.5 million people living in urban areas, Belarus remains a positive example within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of gradual socio-economic growth^{lxv}. As an upper middle-income country, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus's overall human development indicators have witnessed a steady but slow improvement, with the country outperforming the majority of CIS in this regard. Globally, Belarus is ranked 50th of 189 countries (2019) in the Human Development Index (HDI), currently tied with Kazakhstan, and just behind the Russian Federation.^{lxvi} Belarus has an average life expectancy from birth of 74.6 years (79.4 years for women and 69.4 years for men), near universal primary education and high levels secondary enrollment, with people receiving on average 12.3 years of schooling (12.2 years for girls; 12.4 years for boys) (2018)^{lxvii} and with a gross national income per capita of US\$17,039 (US\$13,923 for women; US\$20,616 for men) (2018).^{lxviii} Compared to many in the CIS, Belarus has a relatively low national poverty rate, peaking at 5.9 % in 2017 but has since declined to an estimated 5.1% in the second quarter of 2019, in large part due to the steady growth in wages and overall household income.^{lxix}

Despite vulnerability to external shocks, Belarus's economy has done extremely well in the last twenty years, but now faces a slow down alongside the retraction of the Russian economy. Growth in Belarusian service, industry, agriculture and manufacturing sectors has been impressive nonetheless. However, while over a quarter of century has passed since the transition from a communist to a capitalist economy, the economic transition from State-owned enterprises to private industry is still ongoing, with 46.7% of the country's GDP and 49.6% of its overall employment coming from State-owned/managed corporations^{lxx}.

A key challenge to overall HDI indicators remains the health care system. Belarus's life expectancy at birth is relatively strong yet, the gap of 10 years between women and men's life expectancy speaks to broader issues linked to the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) continued challenges in accessing affordable and quality primary health care throughout the country.

Inclusion and transparency continue to be challenges in Belarus's overall development, including building the population's trust in the effectiveness of the public administration system, the Police, and Courts. Predominantly ethnic Belarusian (83.7%), the country also has ethnic Russian (8.3%), ethnic Poles (3.1%), ethnic Ukrainians (1.7%), ethnic Tatars (0.1%), ethnic Jews (0.1%), among others.^{lxxi} Belarus has a high level of income inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 0.283 in 2013. Further, despite impressive universal primary enrolment, when looking at the situation of ethnic minorities and vulnerable households, there is a need to improve the educational attainments and employment of vulnerable groups, tackle gender-based violence (GBV) and "ensuring life safety and combatting stigmas, discrimination and negative stereotypes in all areas of life."^{lxxii}

Despite having ratified a number of UN treaties and conventions, and despite the above situation of overall growth in human development, in 2012 the UN appointed a Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus. While not recognized by the Government of Belarus, the UN SR's focus has primarily been on the lack of progress around overall human rights, including the use of the death penalty in the country, restrictions on freedom of expression, association, assembly and freedom of the media following recent amendments to the country's media law. As stated by the UN SR in July 2019 these measures "are clearly intended to intimidate critical voices into self-censorship and prevent them from contributing to public debate."^{lxxiii} Further, there are continued concerns of the situation of children in detention, placed there as part of the Government's strict policy on the reduction of drug use and possession. The UN SR also expressed concern about the on-going discrimination against Roma and members of the LGBTI community. Positively, however, the UN SR has noted recent measures taken by the Government to de-criminalise the activities of unregistered organisations and the simplification of authorization for procedures of mass events. Further, the UN SR has noted a progressive increase by the Government of Belarus to engage with civil society organisations (CSOs), but nonetheless notes that "abusive restrictions to freedom of association and peaceful assembly remain recurrent".^{lxxiv}

SUMMARY OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

This section monitors SDG Indicator 5.1.1: Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and nondiscrimination on the basis of sex. (SDG Indicator 5.1.1.): In measuring of progress under SDG Indicator 5.1.1⁸, Belarus has received a scoring of 45.5% for overall legislative frameworks on GEEW; 66.7% for overall legislative frameworks on GBV; 50% for overall legislative frameworks on Employment and Economic empowerment; and 81.8% for overall legislative frameworks on Marriage and Family.^{lxxi}

International Treaties and Commitments:

- In 1982, Belarus acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); and its Optional Protocol (OP), including individual complains and inquiry procedures since 2004. In 2011, under the OP, the CEDAW Committee reviewed an individual complaint filed by a female activist who was placed in administrative detention for a period of time for putting up posters for a march. The CEDAW Committee found the individual's treatment constituted discrimination and sexual harassment, in violation of the Convention's Articles 2(a)-2(b), 2(e)-2(f), 3 and 5(a), read in conjunction with article 1 and the Committee's General Recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. The CEDAW Committee also took rule 53 of the Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners and the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders into account.^{lxxii}
- Belarus acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, but has yet to agree to the Convention's overall OP on complaints procedures. It has ratified the OP on children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, however.
- Belarus has also accede to or ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Belarus has not issued a Standing Invitation to the UN Special Rapporteurs (UN SRs). This is significant in the Eastern European region where 21 of 23 countries have issued standing invitations to the UN SRs procedures.^{lxxiii}
- In 2012, a UN SR on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus was appointed. The role of the UN SR is not recognized by the Government of Belarus and the current SR has not been permitted to enter the country.
- Belarus is not a member of the Council of Europe (CoE) but does maintain a working relationship with a number of CoE mechanisms. There is an on-going dialogue with the CoE's Parliamentary

⁸ Scores are arrived at using the SDG Indicator 5.1.1. methodology for measure, which includes consultations, questionnaires and validation with the government. The scores for each country against Indicator 5.1.1. may be found on the UN Women SDG Database.

Assembly (PACE), and in 2014 Belarus joined the CoE's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. To keep the important dialogue going between Belarus and CoE, an Action Plan was adopted in 2016 and extended until end 2018.^{lxxiv}

- The Government of Belarus has been an active participant in the development of and implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA); and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

National Constitution and Laws:

- **Gender Equality and the empowerment of women/ Non-Discrimination Legislation:**

- Belarus has no specific, stand-alone legislation on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- All legal commitments in this regard are considered enshrined in the National Constitution, the Family, Labour and the Criminal Codes and related legislation, and/or are considered supported by the existence of the National Plans of Action (see below).
- Article 22 of the National Constitution affirms the principles of non-discrimination and equality, and protects the equality of persons within marriage.
- While the Constitution prohibits non-discrimination of any kind, there is no stand-alone law prohibiting all forms of discrimination. A number of international dialogues with the Government of Belarus – including the CEDAW Committee in 2016 and their second cycle of the UPR in 2015 – it has been recommended that such legislation be adopted, in consultation with a broad range of national stakeholders.

- **Rights in Family and Marriage:**

- As per above, the National Constitution protects the equality of persons within marriage.
- Amendments to the Code on Marriage and Family (2006) reaffirms the equality of spouses

within marriage. Women and men are to have the same inheritance rights under civil law (as married people and as descendants) and to have the same right to initiate divorce.^{lxxv}

- The Marriage and Family Code sets 18 years as the legal age of marriage for both men and women (Article 18), although this can be lowered by a maximum of three years in the case of pregnancy or if the person concerned has reached full legal capacity.^{lxxvi}
- In the event of a divorce resulting from Domestic Violence (DV), marital property may be sold only if both spouses agree, which may force women to continue to live with their violent spouse. In situations of unions outside of marriage, women and their children do not have legal protection in economic matters if a union is terminated.^{lxxvii}

- **Reproductive Health (SDG Indicator 5.6.2: Legislation in place to ensure equal access to RH, information and Education):** Legislation does not explicitly ensure equal access to SRHRs services, information or education.

- **Land ownership (SDG Indicator 1.4.2; 5.a.1 and 5.1.2: Ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex.):** There is no specific legislation in place. The *Code on Marriage and Family* (2006) reaffirms that women and men are to have the same inheritance rights under civil law (as married people and as descendants).^{lxxviii}

- **Labour Code: Article 14** prohibits any discrimination in labor relations, and this is reflected in the relatively strong participation of women in the labour force.

- Nonetheless, and like many countries in the CIS, Belarus maintains legislation which prohibits women's engagement in certain sectors for their "wellbeing". This includes mining, construction, metalworking, factories, jobs requiring lifting weights above a certain threshold, and jobs deemed hazardous or arduous. However, measures have recently reduced the number of professions in which women are prohibited to work from 252 down to 182 professions (2016).^{lxxix}
- In 2013, the Labour Code was amended to include the right to parental leave to care for a child under the age of 3 and to additional days from work

for child-rearing purposes. A provision has been introduced into State Benefits Law to the effect that if a mother is working full-time, and the father, unemployed, is caring for a child under the age of 3, the full benefit is paid (previously, the full benefit was reserved for the mother, and only 50 per cent was paid).^{lxxx}

- There is no law in place in Belarus that specifically addresses sexual harassment, either in the Criminal Code or the Labour Code. The Criminal Code does include one article on coercion to perform sexual acts through threat, blackmail, or exploitation of economic dependency (Criminal Code, Article 170). The penalties under Article 170 are up to three years' imprisonment. However, in its Concluding Observations, the CEDAW Committee notes that the burden of proof in such cases falls on the victim, and it is very difficult to secure a conviction. The Committee furthermore has noted concern that sexual harassment in the workplace is under-reported due to women's fear of stigmatization and dismissal, citing reports that a relatively high number of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace have been let go or pushed to resign following such harassment.^{lxxxii}
- **Human Trafficking:** In 2012, the Government adopted the *Human Trafficking Act* which lays out the legal and organizational procedures and response to trafficking and the rights of the survivors. The Act provides measures for safety, social welfare and rehabilitation, suspending expulsion and deportation; and the provision of assistance from diplomatic missions and consular posts of Belarus.
- **Gender Based Violence (GBV):**
 - Belarus does not have a law explicitly focused on ending all forms of GBV, including Domestic Violence (DV). There is a draft Bill in place for a number of years. In 2018, the Government abandoned the development of the law due to backlash from conservative groups in the country, and with leaders at the highest level, including the President, defining the concept of DV as a "stupid thing borrowed from the West"^{lxxxii}
 - According to the Government, provision of assistance to victims of GBV are contained in the *Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, Law on the Fundamental Activities*

to Prevent Offences, the Procedural Code of Administrative Offences, the Education Code, the Law of June 18, 1993 "On Health Care," the Law of January 7, 2012 "On Psychiatric Care," the Law of July 1, 2010 "On Psychological Care" and the Law of May 22, 2000 "On Social Services". Of specific importance to note:

- In 2014, the Government adopted the *Law on the Fundamental Activities to Prevent Offences*, which criminalizes physical, sexual, and psychological violence against women and establishes specialized procedures for DV cases, including provisions for protection orders within marriage only, and not including marital rape.^{lxxxiii}
- The *Criminal Code*, amended in 2015, contains provisions for liability for a number of acts associated with violence, including those committed against women. Specifically, the Criminal Code defines the liability for rape (article 166), sexual assault (article 167), coercion to perform sexual acts (article 170), criminalizing human trafficking including the use of slave labour (Article 181) as well as the organization and/or use of prostitution or creation of conditions for prostitution (Article 171), use of slave labour^{lxxxiv}
- The *Code of Administrative Offences* contains provisions on the liability for DV. Compensation for harm and losses may be obtained through civil proceedings. (Article 23.34) continues to be widely used and human rights defenders, including women human right and LGBTI defenders, activists and simple protesters are repeatedly fined or harassed – and in some cases detained – for "breaking the order of organizing or conducting mass events."^{lxxxv}

National Policies, Programmes and Action Plans:

- Since 1996, the Government has adopted five National Action Plans for Promoting Gender Equality (including DV), with the fifth plan now on-going (2016-2020). The primary objectives of the current National Action Plan are: developing the institutional mechanisms around gender equality; expanding economic opportunities of women and men; ensuring gender-responsive healthcare; securing gender equality in family relations; combating DV and trafficking in persons;

gender-responsive education. According to the current National Action Plan, financing for its commitments is to come from national and local budgets, as well as “non-budgetary and other sources allowed by law”. The Government states that the implementation of the National Action Plan will support Belarus’s upholding of commitments taken internationally including the SDGs, and its commitments under the country programmes of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.^{lxxxvi}

- The 2030 *National Strategy of Sustainable Socio-Economic Development* of Belarus addresses gender equality as one of its priorities. Gender equality issues are also reflected in the analytical report on the implementation of this strategy during the period from 2016 to 2017 and will remain paramount in the revised 2035 Sustainable Development Strategy, which the Ministry of Economy is currently developing.^{lxxxvii}
- **GBV and Human Trafficking Programmes and Action Plans:**
 - All regions of the country have issued a “special Internal Resolution on Domestic Violence” which guides the Police, Health care, and social services on how to respond to cases of DV. Some provisions under these instructions include having women who are at risk of violence to register with the police “for further monitoring”; ensuring communication with Child Protection services when children are present or involved in the DV; and supporting survivors of violence to access mental health clinics for “further compulsory treatment”. “While these measures are protective by design, it is unclear whether they have led to an increase in reporting abuse, or if they refrain women from seeking assistance.”^{lxxxviii}
 - Measures were passed in parliament to adopt Government established “crisis rooms” in the country in 2011, increasing the number of crisis rooms from 31 (2011) to 132 crisis rooms (January 2019) located within the territorial centres of social services. The crisis rooms provide survivors of DV and trafficking with temporary shelter, among other things;
 - In 2015, a national identification and referral

mechanism for victims of human trafficking was launched;

- **On data^{lxxxix}**
 - As mentioned above, the absence of gender-responsive, comprehensive national research on the socio-economic development of Belarus, including all groups, remains a significant challenge to understanding the impact the gains on gender equality and women’s empowerment have made, the challenges which remain, the root causes of inequalities and discrimination, societal perceptions of gender equality, and the degree to which ethnicity, orientation, disabilities, geography and age may result in women facing intersecting forms discrimination;
 - the Government has set up the National Indicators System for monitoring the SDG progress Indicators, and specific government departments and public authorities have been assigned to monitor specific indicators, which are fed back through the National Reporting Platform (NRP).
 - Under the National Indicators System, 13 of the 14 indicators under Goal 5 (Gender Equality) of the SDGs are considered relevant for Belarus. Currently, there is national data for 12 of these Indicators (partially for one) (proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over land, by sex; and share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure). Regarding two indicators are concerned, the following needs to be done:
 - Adoption and implementation of laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education. There is no global level methodology for this. Once the methodology is developed, the indicator will be defined at the national level.
 - Systems adopted and implemented to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment. Currently, it is considered to adapt the international methodology to the national context.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Since 2000, a National Council on Gender Policy of the Council of Ministers has been in place to coordinate and monitor the country's advancement on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Four representatives from women's civil society are part of the Council. Led by the Minister of Labour and Social Protection, and including representatives from state authorities and public associations, the Council meets twice a year. Under the National Council, in 2012 and 2013 in all regions of the country, Expert Working Groups were established, comprised of state authorities. Their role is to address implementation of the National Action Plans on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Research has not provided information on the impact or efficacy of the Working Groups.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is mandated to oversee the implementation of the country's gender equality commitments as contained in the National Action Plans and the laws which include focus on ending GBV. Within the Ministry, the Department of Population and Gender and Family Policy is primarily focused on family issues including GBV and on trafficking. It has been observed that the Ministry is not explicitly focused on advancing or monitoring the principles of gender equality and

women's empowerment, but rather the delivery of certain services.^{xc} In Belarus, the lack of gender expertise within the above mechanisms, as well as the lack of clearly defined legislation around gender equality are two significant hinderances to an effective national gender equality mechanism.^{xc1}

In support of the implementation of the SDGs, an Institutional SDG Management System has been set up which includes an SDG Council, the Parliamentary Group on SDGs, and the Partnership Group for Sustainable Development.

There is no existing national human rights institution in Belarus.

PARTNERSHIPS

There is limited evidence that Government ministries, departments and local administration work closely together around GEEW, excepting in the prevention and response to human trafficking, and to a lesser extent, the support work around the Crisis houses established throughout the country.

The Government of Belarus has a positive and open working relationship with the UNCT, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Bretton Woods institutions, and the CoE.

Recent years have seen a moderate improvement in the relationship between the Government and civil society and activists, in part through the support of multilateral organisations such as the United Nations. The recent decriminalisation of non-registered organisations is an important step, and in the country's second UPR cycle, the Government indicated openness to reviewing parts of the Criminal Code and other bodies of legislation – such as the “Law on Public Associations” which may result in hindering freedom of association, assembly and speech.^{xcii}

Nonetheless, the legislative framework of Belarus is seen as one of the main restrictions in creating a meaningful and sustainable civil society presence in the country. Limited financial resources would be a close second in terms of challenges facing civil society.^{xciii} Intimidation of activists by state organisations would be a third. A number of international bodies, including the CEDAW Committee, have raised serious concern about reports that women human rights defenders and politically active women are “frequently subjected to repression, harassment, violence, threats of sexual assault, forced institutionalization or threats of institutionalization and deprivation or threats of deprivation of their parental rights”.^{xciv}

Women's civil society organisations (CSOs) make up only about 4% of the approximately 32 registered CSOs in the country.^{xcv} A concern of the women's movement in Belarus is the perception that quasi-non governmental organisations which merge with local authorities and receive public funds to carry out work which is at times questionable in the degree to which they are upholding gender equality principles. There is equal concern that these organisations –

referred to as QUANGOS – “exhaust the space of public initiatives with their presence, and in fact social movements sooner or later turn into opposition — not only to government agencies, donor pressure, but also to QUANGOS. This multiple opposition does not benefit the women's movement, which is increasingly pursuing a strategy of short-term alliances.”^{xcvi}

Civil Society in Belarus has been typically the main mechanisms through which women living in the margins have accessed services and support – this includes rural women, women surviving and/or displaced by the conflict, trafficking victims, women living with disabilities, women living with HIV or AIDs, women survivors of GBV, women from ethnic minorities, and the LGBTI communities.

FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

This section monitors SDG Indicator 5.c.1: Whether or not there are systems to track and make public allocations for Gender equality and the empowerment of women. The UN Women Global SDG Database lists Belarus as “approaching requirements” under this indicator. Nonetheless, the document review for the CGEB could not locate evidence of institutionalizing systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Achieving the SDGs requires legislative frameworks which uphold gender equality and the empowerment of women; institutional mechanisms which have capacities, resources and authority to implement, coordinate and monitor the same; strengthened commitment towards partnership and cooperation; and the increased mobilization and allocation of resources towards gender equality.

In Belarus, there is limited available data on the national budgetary allocations towards the legislative and regulatory frameworks mentioned above. This is due to an absence of robust gender-responsive budgeting measures (GRB) that not only allow for enhanced allocation of resources, but rigorous monitoring of these allocations from a gender perspective. Globally, only 19% of sixty-nine countries reviewed by UN Women met the criterion for establishing a comprehensive system to track budget allocations from the perspective of gender equality and the empowerment of women.^{xcvii}

In 2017, the Labor Research Institute of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection carried out a study, the results of which will enable the development of gender-responsive government programs and

strategies. The gender-responsive elements will be tested on the basis of 2 or 3 government social programs that are being developed for the period until 2025.

Under the document review of the UN Women CGEB, no figures were provided on what percentage of official development assistance (ODA) for Belarus is allocated towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. Of the 2017 ODA coming from the OECD DAC members⁹, and through the use of the OECD’s Gender Marker, US\$2.048 million of funds coming into the country were “principally” for gender equality, and US\$ 41,830, 000 of funds coming into Belarus had a “significant” focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.^{xcviii}

9 Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Gender Equality and Sustainable Development – What the Data Tells us

Following a corporate template, the **indicators below have been identified based on the areas and issues identified in the Beijing PfA, SDGs, CEDAW as “drivers” of inequality, as well as indicators by which gender equality and the empowerment of women may be measured. The Tables below contain the majority of relevant, gender-related indicators of the SDGs. Annex I provides a specific SDG matrix for ease of reference.**

The analysis which follows each Table is based on credible national statistics and data, wherever possible. Where national statistics are not available, UN Women’s CGEB has drawn from global databases and analyses produced by the UN System, World Bank, World Economic Forum, EBRD, and OSCE.

Throughout the Indicators below, wherever possible, statistics on marginalized groups is included. The factors which contribute to discrimination and inequalities facing women and girls are interconnected, and are related to socio-economic status, geography, ethnicity, and orientation for example. These intersecting forms of discrimination come together to “create deep pockets of deprivation across a range of SDGs -from access to education and health care to clean water and decent work.”^{xix}

Where possible, statistics for years 2000 and 2010 will be provided alongside the most recent statistics, as points of comparison to identify progress, bottlenecks and trends.

For regular updated statistics on a number of the Indicators below, please also visit the [UN Women Global SDG Database: https://data.unwomen.org/data-portal](https://data.unwomen.org/data-portal)

TABLE 1

Belarus in the Global Rankings

Global Indices	2000	2010	Most Recent
Global Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	0.000 (2000-2008) ^c	0.001 (2005-2014) ^{ci}	MPI Rankings no longer provided for developed countries (2019).
Human Development Report Index (HDI)	57 th of 174 countries, or score of 0.683 (2000) ^{cii}	-----	50 th of 189 countries or a score of 0.817 (2019). ^{ciii}
HDR Ranking (Inequality Adjusted)	----	HDI is 0.732 but falls to .664 when adjusted for inequality (2010). ^{civ}	HDI is 0.817 but when adjusted for inequality, falls to 0.765 (2019) ^{cv} .
HDR Gender Development Index (GDI)	---	1.021 placing Belarus in group 1 of countries (2014) ^{cvi}	1.010 placing Belarus in group 1 of countries (2019) ^{cvii}
HDR Gender Inequality Index (GII)	---	2010 (no GIJ Ranking); 31 st of 188 countries or score of 0.151 (2014) ^{cviii}	27 th of 189 countries, or score of 0.119 (2019) ^{cix}
World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Gender Gap Index ^{cx}	23 rd of 128 countries or score of 0.711 (2007)	32 nd of 142 countries or score of 0.730 (2014)	29 th among 153 countries or score of 0.746 (2020)
WEF Sub-Index: Economic Participation and Opportunity	20 th of 128 countries or score of 0.728 (2007)	6 th of 142 countries or score of 0.820 (2014)	5 th of 153 countries or score of 0.837 (2020)
WEF Sub-Index: Educational Attainment	74 th of 128 countries or score of 0.9835 (2007)	35 th of 142 countries or score of 0.99 (2014)	Ranked 39 th of 153 countries or score of 0.999 (2020)
WEF Sub-Index: Health and Survival	37 th of 128 countries or score of 0.9791 (2007)	37 th of 142 countries or score of 0.979 (2014)	58 th of 153 countries or score of 0.977 (2020)
WEF Sub-Index: Political Empowerment	39 th of 128 countries or score of 0.1546 (2007)	89 th of 142 countries or score of 0.121 (2014)	81 st of 153 countries or score of 0.172 (2020)

TABLE 2

Demographic Overview

Indicator	2000	2010	Most recent year
Population Size	9,871,635 (2000) ^{cxii}	9,420,576 (2010) ^{cxiii}	9,452,409 (2019) ^{cxiii}
Age and sex, by % of population	---	---	<p>46.6% of population are male, 53.4% are female</p> <p>Average age of population is 40.5 years (men, 37.7 years; women 43.0)</p> <p>Average age of Urban Population 39.3 years (men 36.6; women 41.7)</p> <p>Average age of Rural Population – 44.7 years (men 41.3; women 47.8)</p> <p>Rural population: men and women – 44.7; men – 41.3; women – 47.8.</p> <p>Latest population data indicates that Belarus represents an aging population, and a decreased share of children. 1 out of 5 citizens are of pension age. (January 2019)^{cxiv}.</p>
Literacy rate	99.59 Overall - 99.42% of women and 99.79% of men (1999) ^{cxv}	99.62% Overall: 99.49% of women and 99.79% of men (2009) ^{cxvi}	99.76% Overall: 99.73% of women and 99.79% of men (2018) ^{cxvii}
Marital Status, by % of population	---	---	---
Average Life span, by sex	<p>68.1 overall - 76 for women, 62.3 for men (2000)^{cxviii}</p> <p>Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth: 65.3 years for women and 56.5 years for men (2000)^{cxix}</p>	<p>69.6 overall (2008). Global HDRs did not provide sex disaggregated Life expectancy rates during that time.</p> <p>Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth: 67.0 years for women and 57.7 years for men (2010)^{cxx}</p>	<p>74.6 years overall - women 79.4% and men 69.6 years (2018)^{cxxi}</p> <p>Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth: 69.3 years for women and 61.4 years for men (2016)^{cxvii}</p>
Fertility Rate	1.3 (1995-2000) ^{cxviii}	1.4 (2005-2010) ^{cxviii}	1.7 (2018) ^{cxv}
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) (SDG Indicator 3.1.1)	26 per 100,000 (2000) ^{cxvii}	5 per 100,000 (2010) ^{cxvii}	2017 – 2 per 100,000 ^{cxviii} ,
Location of residence (locale, by region and urban/rural), by % of population	---	---	78.4% of the population live in Urban areas; 21.6% live in rural areas (2019). ^{cxix}

TABLE 3

Women in Leadership

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year ^{cxxx}
Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments (SDG Indicator 5.5.1)	9.1% of House of Representatives (2000) ^{cxxxi}	31.8% of House of Representatives (2010) ^{cxxxii}	35% of House of Representatives (2019) ^{cxxxiii} Council of the National Assembly: 29% (2019) ^{cxxxiv} Local Government: 48.2% (2018) ^{cxxxv}
Proportion of women in managerial positions overall (SDG Indicator 5.5.2)	---	46.3% (2009) ^{cxxxvi}	47.6% (2017) ^{cxxxvii}
% of Mayors, by gender	Not applicable in Belarus		
% of Cabinet Ministers, by gender;	3 women cabinet ministers (2004-2005).	From 2014-2017, there were 2 women Cabinet ministers (Minister of Labour/Social Protection; and the Minister of Information)	1 Minister (Minister of Labour and Social Protection) out of 24 Cabinet posts (2017-2019) Up until December 2019, only one of the five Deputy PMs are women. Currently, none of the Deputy Prime Ministers are women.
% of appointed central government managers, by gender	---	---	One woman – appointed as the Chairperson of the Belarusian Statistical Committee (2019). The majority of State committee chairs are male, as are majority of deputy chairs and regional state committee chairs. ^{cxxxviii} (2019) A woman is the head of the Presidential Administration (2019); In the judiciary, out of the 12 justices on the Constitutional Court, 5 are women ^{cxxxix} One of the six Supreme Court Judges are women (2015). ^{cd}
% of appointed local government leaders, by gender	---	---	Women account for 48.2% of deputies in local Councils (2018). ^{cdi} There has never been a woman as chair of a regional executive committee, which is the highest executive position at the regional level. ^{cdii}
% of civil servants, by gender (and by level) (SDG Indicator 16.7.1)	---	---	Total civil servants of which in positions: 67.4% women, 32.6% men (2017) ^{cdiii} , of which: Heads/Deputy Heads: 56.2% are women and 43.8% are men; Executive Assistants, Advisors, Consultants: 70.4% are women and 29.6% are men; Legal professionals: 60.9% are women and 39.1% are men.
Proportion of women who are owners and managers in private sector.	---	---	As of 2018, and according to the World Bank's Global Enterprise Survey, in Belarus ^{cdiv} : - 19.2% of firms have women as majority owners, as compared to the ECA Regional Average of 13.7% and the Global average of 14.3%; - 45.5% of firms have women participating in their ownership, as compared to the ECA Regional average of 33.2% and the Global average of 35.9%; - 21.1% of firms have women as “top managers”, as compared to the ECA Regional average of 18.4% and the Global average of 18.2%;

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
<p>Perceptions of women and men as leaders and as decision-makers, and overall perceptions of gender roles (SDG 16.7.2.)</p>	<p>---</p>	<p>According to the results of a World Values Survey (2011), both women and men perceive men as being better equipped to be leaders in business and politics, although men agree more strongly than women with the statement.</p> <p>When it comes to opportunities in the labour market, women do not agree with the statement that a university education has greater benefits for a boy than a girl; and 84% of women respondents – compared to 59% of men respondents – disagree with giving men priority when job opportunities are limited. 60% of women respondents believe women’s independence is increased by having a paid job, compared to only 39% of men.</p> <p>Most men and women in Belarus still think that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay, with more women agreeing with this statement than men. These views vary also by age group, while in general, older people appear to hold more traditional views on women’s societal roles—for example, as both men and women get older, they (especially older men) increasingly agree on the fact that children suffer with a working mother.^{cxiv}</p>	<p>Recent surveys show that men in Belarus still believe they are stronger political and business leaders, and that they should be given priority over women when jobs are scarce (2018)^{cxvi}</p>
<p>Data on women’s engagement in peace-building</p>	<p>This does not apply to Belarus.</p>		

TABLE 4

Gender Dimensions of Education

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Primary School Enrollment, by % (SDG Indicator 4.5.1)	---	<p>Net: 91.05% (2010 – no sex disaggregation) ^{cxlvii}:</p> <p>Net: 93.23% Overall – 94.13% of girls and 92.39% of Boys (2013) ^{cxlviii}:</p> <p>Out of school children: 6,252 of which 43% were girls and 56.9% were boys (2013). ^{cxlix}</p>	<p>Net : 94.93 Overall -94.8% of girls; 95.05% of boys ^{cl};</p> <p>Out of school children:</p> <p>5,544 children of which 78.4% are girls and 21.6% are boys (2018) ^{cli}</p> <p>While there are not thorough statistics on the situation of children living with disabilities and special needs, the Government indicates that as of 2016, there was a 14% increase in the number of children living with disabilities since 2011, although they do not provide what proportion of the population this represents. ^{clii}</p> <p>Official data states that 70% of children with special educational requirements are in mainstream schools. UNICEF analysis shows that this figure reflects mainly those children with mild developmental challenges such as speech disorders. 30 % of children with disabilities, especially intellectual, are in school programmes designed specifically for children with special needs, “segregated from the general system”. ^{cliii}</p>
Secondary School Enrollment, by % (and by lower and upper secondary)(SDG Indicator 4.5.1)	---	<p>Net: 94.91% Overall – 95.06% of girls and 94.77% of boys (2010)</p> <p>Out of school adolescents: 9,458 Overall, of which 5.9% were girls and 94.1% were boys (2010) ^{cliv}</p>	<p>Net: 95.64% Overall -96.18% of girls; 95.13% of boys (2018) ^{clv}</p> <p>Primary to secondary transition rate: 98.16% transition to secondary school (97.64% of boys and 98.71 of girls) (2018) ^{clvi}</p> <p>Out of school adolescents: 4,886 overall of which 37.4% are girls and 62.6% are boys (2018). ^{clvii}</p>
Tertiary School enrolment, by % (and Tertiary School completion, by %) (SDG Indicator 4.5.1)	56.4% of tertiary graduates are women (2000) ^{clviii}	<p>Gross Enrollment: 79.58% Overall – 94.59% of women and 65.39% of men (2010) ^{clix}</p> <p>66.9% of tertiary graduates are women and 33.1% are men (2010) ^{clx}</p>	<p>Gross Enrollment rate: 87.43% (95.09% of girls; 80.18% of boys) (2018) ^{clxi}</p> <p>75.8% of tertiary graduates are women and 24.2% are men (2017). ^{clxii}</p>

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
% of women and men graduating at Tertiary level with degree/diploma in a STEM-related field	---	26.3% of STEM graduates were women (2015) ^{clxiii}	<p>27.4% of STEM graduates were women (2018) ^{clxiv}</p> <p>In maths, physics, biology and chemistry, women are 52.4% of graduates, and within this field, account for 70% of graduates in chemistry and biology. (2017) ^{clxv}</p> <p>Women make up 17% of those holding a higher doctorate in natural sciences and 43% of higher doctoral candidates. ^{clxvi} (2017)</p> <p>In 2018, a private tertiary school was opened just for girls and is focused on IT ("The Princess Academy").</p>
% of women and men with Graduate level degree or higher; (SDG Indicator 4.5.1)	---	<p>The share of women who get "higher education"¹⁰ remains larger than share of men – 53.7% of graduates are women as compared to 46.3% of graduates being men (2017/2018 academic year). ^{clxvii}</p> <p>At the post graduate level (aspirantura) tends to become equal: 52.2% of graduates are women as compared to 47.8% being men in 2015/2016; 52.0% women compared to 48% men in 2016/2017; 51.1% women compared to 48.9% male graduates in 2017/2018, but previous pre-dominance of men in the highest possible stage of professional education in Belarus, doktonatura: 48.9% of all graduates were women as compared to 51.1% being men in 2015/2016; 44.7% women as compared to 55.3% male graduates in 2016/2017; 42.0% women as compared to 57.9% male graduates in 2017/2018. ^{clxviii}</p>	
Top three areas of study (Tertiary level) for women, and for men.	---	---	---
Enrollment into pre-primary/ day care, by sex (SDG Indicator 4.2.1 and 4.2.2);	---	Net enrollment: 91.46% Overall – 91.21% of girls and 91.7% of boys (2010)	<p>Gross enrolment ratio of pre-primary education (ages 1 to 5) was 79.4%, with considerable disparities between rural and urban settings. In rural areas, the gross enrollment ratio for pre-primary was only 51.7% as compared to 86.8% gross enrollment in urban areas (2018). (Belstat data) ^{clxix}</p> <p>According to UNESCO, the Net Enrollment Rate was 94.65% Overall – 93.6% of girls and 95.65% of boys; (2018). ^{clxx}</p>
Degree to which gender equality concepts have been mainstreamed into primary, secondary levels; and in tertiary levels (may be sectoral) (SDG Indicator 4.7.1)	There is limited evidence of this in Belarus.		

10 Government does not define "higher education", but it is assumed to include tertiary, graduate and post graduate schooling.

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex (SDG Indicator 4.1.1)	---	---	---
Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	88.9% of girls and 90.5% of boys (2004) ^{clxxi}	91.6% of girls and 93.6% of boys (2010) ^{clxxii}	95.7% of girls and 98.5% of boys (2017) ^{clxxiii}
Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex (SDG Indicator 4.3.1)	---	---	---
Proportion of population in given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex (SDG Indicator 4.6.1)	---	---	---
Proportion of schools with access to (a) electricity, (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes, (c) computers for pedagogical purposes, (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities, (e) basic drinking water, (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities and (g) basic handwashing facilities; (SDG Indicator 4.a.1.)	---	---	100% of schools (2016/2017) for all, and approximately 99.8% of schools for access to internet (2016/2017) ^{clxxiv}

TABLE 5
Gender Dimensions of Health

Indicator	Data ^{clxxxv}		
Average life expectancy;	68.1 overall - 76 for women, 62.3 for men (2000) ^{clxxvi}	69.6% overall (2008). (Life expectancy not disaggregated by sex for a number of years in global HDRs)	74.6 years overall - women 79.4% and men 69.6 years (2018) ^{clxxvii}
Death by communicable diseases, by type, gender, age, location;	TB related Deaths - 1,200 cases (2004) ^{clxxviii} HIV Deaths – less than 100 (2000)	---	Comprehensive Data is not available. According to the WHO Global Observatory ^{clxxix} , there is no data for the majority of communicable diseases, many of which are likely not prevalent in Belarus. TB-related deaths – 510 cases (2018), illustrating a gradual decrease since 200. HIV deaths – Less than 500 cases (2018), illustrating a gradual increase since 2000.
Mortality rate, attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (probability)	22.1% of women and 47.2% of men (2000) ^{clxxx}	18.4% of women and 45.2% of men (2010) ^{clxxxi}	13.8% of women and 35.2% of men (2016). ^{clxxxii} Interesting to note that men are 3,5 times more likely to die through death due to external causes (accidents, suicides and homicides). -For men, the top three causes of external deaths are Suicide, alcohol poisoning, and traffic accidents. -For women, it is alcohol poisoning (men's death by this cause is three times higher than that of women); suicide (men's death by this cause is five times higher); and traffic accidents (men's death by this cause is almost 3 times higher). (2017). ^{clxxxiii} .
Frequency of health visits in a year; by sex;	---	---	According to WHO's Global Monitoring report, Belarus has an index of 74 in terms of provision of Universal Health Coverage (2015) ^{clxxxiv}
HIV rates, by gender, age, civil status (married, single, divorced, widowed), and location.	---	<p>Only 0.5% of the population is living with HIV (2018)^{clxxxv}</p> <p>Belarus in third place in Europe in terms of HIV incidence (2018). ^{clxxxvi}</p> <p>Significantly more men than women live with HIV and in both, prevalence is highest among persons between the ages of 20 and 39 (2018)^{clxxxvii}:</p> <p>Women: 17.7 women per 100,000 (2016) and 18.3/100,000 (2017), with HIV being most prevalent among women aged 20 to 29 (30.7/100,000) and 30 to 29 years (50/100,000).</p> <p>Men: 33.7 men per 100,000 (2016) and 34.8 men p 100,000 (2017), with HIV being most prevalent among men aged 20 to 29(41.1/100,000) and 30-39 (96.4/100,000)</p> <p>As of 2016, of the persons living with HIV^{clxxxviii}:</p> <p>25.1% were intravenous drug users;</p> <p>6.8% were sex workers</p> <p>5.7% were gay men and men who have sex with men;</p> <p>In 2016, WHO certified that mother-to-child transmission had been eliminated in Belarus.^{clxxxix}</p> <p>In measuring the HIV incidences by region (2017) and by gender:</p> <p>The majority of new case were in Gomel (342 women and 463 men), followed by Minks city (188 women and 435 men). The regions with the least number of new cases are Grodono (women 39, men 76) and Vitebsk (women 52 and men 56)^{xc}</p>	

Indicator		Data	
Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations (SDG Indicator 3.3.1)	0 overall (2000) ^{cxci}	0.2 per 1,000 overall: 0.3: Women ages 15-24 0.3: Women ages 15-49 0.2: Men ages 15-24 0.4: Men ages 15-49; 0.1: Men ages 50+ (2010) ^{cxcii}	0.3 per 1,000 overall: 0.4: Women ages 15-24 0.4: Women ages 15-49 0.1: Women ages 50+; 0.3: Men ages 15-24 0.6: Men ages 15-49; 0.1: Men ages 50+ (2017) ^{cxciii}
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FEIS);	---	---	---
% of population facing stunting;	The national prevalence of under-five stunting is 4.5%, which is significantly less than the developing country average of 25%. Belarus' under-five wasting prevalence of 2.2% is also less than the developing country average of 8.9%. (2005) ^{cxciiv}	---	---
% of population facing malnutrition;	---	---	---
Fertility Rate	1.3 (1995-2000) ^{cxciv}	1.4 (2005-2010) ^{cxci}	1.7 (2018) ^{cxci}
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) (SDG Indicator 3.1.1)	26 per 100,000 (2000) ^{cxci}	5 per 100,000 (2010) ^{cxci}	2 per 100,000 (2017) ^{cxci}
Use of modern contraceptives, by % of population;		72.1% (2008) ^{ccii}	72.1% (2018) ^{ccii}
Most common forms of modern contraceptives used;	---	According to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2012), the most common forms of modern contraceptives used were Intrauterine device and hormonal contraception and condoms.	---
Awareness of modern contraceptive use;	---	No comprehensive data is available based on gender, age and location. However, research has shown that women surveyed (between ages 15 and 49) were very aware of modern contraceptives: 99.9% were aware of the condom; 98.9% were aware of hormonal contraceptives; and 98.1% were aware of the intrauterine device. (2012) ^{cciii}	---

Indicator		Data	
Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods (SDG Indicator 3.7.1)	---	74.2% of women (WHO 2012) ^{cciv}	51.2% (Belstat 2018) ^{ccv} , illustrating a significant decline from the 2012 WHO data. Given the variations in methodology used by the two sources, it is difficult to draw assumptions on what the varying between 2012 and 2018 reflect in terms of family planning needs being met. According to UNDP's 2019 Human Development Report, 7% of women have unmet needs for family planning. ^{ccvi}
Proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care (SDG Indicator 5.6.1)	---	---	---
Average age of first birth;	---	---	26.5 years of age (2017) ^{ccvii}
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (SDG Indicator 3.1.2)	99.9% (2000) ^{ccviii}	99.9% (2010) ^{ccix}	99.8% (2018) ^{ccx}
Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years, aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group (SDG Indicator 3.7.2);	33.0 per 1,000 (2005) ^{ccxi}	22.3 per 1,000 (2010) ^{ccxii}	14.5 per 1,000 women (2015-2020) ^{ccxiii}
% of planned pregnancies verses unplanned pregnancies;	---	---	---
% of Total Induced Abortions	---	---	25,249 abortions were carried out. It is not specified if these are induced or spontaneous. Of these, 71% were of women between the ages of 20 and 34, and 27% were of women 35 years and older; 4% were of young women between the ages of 15 and 19 (2017). ^{ccxiv}
% of women accessing gynecological care, by age, status, location;	---	---	---

TABLE 6
Gender Dimensions of Labour and Economic Empowerment

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) , by sex and by industry.	Employment Rate for persons age 25+: Women 51.1%, Men 61.8% (2000) ^{ccxv}	Employment Rate for persons age 25+: Women 57.3%, Men 69.1% (2010) ^{ccxvi}	Overall: 70.9% (76.1% men; and 66.2% women) (2018) ^{ccxvii} According to ILO, 58% is the share of services in total employment, 30.6% of industry, and 11.3% is the share of agriculture in total employment. (2018). Employment Rate for persons age 25+: Women 57.6%, Men 68.9% (2018) ^{ccxviii}
Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities (SDG Indicator 8.5.2)	---	---	Overall unemployment rate is 5.6% (4.0% among women and 7.2% among men)(2017). ^{ccxix} Youth unemployment rate was 10.7% (2018), with young men at 12.7% and young women at 8.4% ^{ccxx} For women over the age of 25, the unemployment rate was 3.7% and for men it was 6.8(2017) ^{ccxxi}
Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training (by sex)	---	12.1% overall, girls at 13.8% and boys at 10.5% (2009). ^{ccxxii}	---
% of unemployed persons accessing adult education/ workforce skills development	---	---	---
Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location; (SDG Indicator 5.4.1.)	---	---	The total workload ^{ccxxiii} of employed women amounts to an average of 70 hours 21 minutes per week, including about 44 hours 6 minutes of professional workload and 26 hours 15 minutes of housekeeping (2014). The total workload of employed men is almost 7 hours less (62 hours 53 minutes) than women. On average, men spend almost 49 hours per week at work and about 14 hours per week engaged in household tasks. (2014) The ratio of paid (working hours) to unpaid labor (hours spent doing household tasks) in 24 hours is 63% to 37% for employed women and 77% to 23% for employed men, respectively. (2014) This breaks down as follows: -Women spend daily on average twice as much time as men on household and childcare. -As many as 90% of women and 44% of men engage in cooking; -83% of women and 31% of men wash dishes; and 82% of women and 44% of men clean their dwelling. -In households with children under 10 years old time spent on household and childcare is 4 hours 16 minutes, of which 1 hour 29 minutes is dedicated to child care. -In households with children under 10 years old women spend daily more time on childcare than men, that is almost 9% and less than 3% of their time respectively. -Overall, 78% of women and 59% of men care for children under 10 years old (2014) ^{ccxxiv}

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
% of population who have migrated (internally), by sex, by location and by sector.	---	Overall percentages of population are not provided. However, State statistics, which are in crude number format, for 2009-2010 show that women have more migratory activity than men. Minsk city saw the greatest amount of migratory activity, and Gomel region the least (2019-2010). In 2011, Minsk city continued to see the largest migration turn over – arrivals and departures - (34.8 thousand people) and Minsk region (23,9 thousand people), followed by Brest (12.3 thousand), Gomel (10.3 thousand people), Vitebsk (10.0 thousand people), Grodno (9.5 thousand people) and Mogilev (9.1 thousand people) ^{ccxxxv}	---
% of population who have migrated (externally), by sex, by age, by location and by sector	54.2% of external migrants were women (2000) ^{ccxxxvi}	54.2% of external migrants were women (2010) ^{ccxxxvii}	11.3% overall – of this, 54.2% were women (2019) ^{ccxxxviii}
Average hourly earnings of women and men employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities (SDG Indicator 8.5.1)	19% (2001) ^{ccxxxix}	26% (2011) ^{ccxxxix}	According to state statistics, the average hourly earnings BYN3.86. For women, it is BYN3.37 as compared to men who earn BYN4.47/hour. (2017). ^{ccxxxi} 24% (2014), representing a gradual increase in the wage gap overall, despite the peak in 2011. ^{ccxxxi} The sector with the lowest wage gap is Agriculture (women earn 90.2% in 2014 compared to men), closely followed by Public Administration (86.4% in 2014) – both sectors in which women dominate; as compared to the sectors where the wage gap is the highest, that of real estate, renting and business services (women earned just 71.9% of men in 2014), and mining and quarrying sector (72.3% in 2014), sectors which are dominated by men. ^{ccxxxi}
Proportion of the population employed in part time labour, by sex	---	3.0% of women, all ages and 1.4% of men, all ages (2014) ^{ccxxxiv}	3.0% women of all ages and 1.3% of men of all ages. (2017) ^{ccxxxv}
% of population who own their own business (SME);	---	In the EBRD/World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS), a tool only for the former CIS and Eastern Europe, and with a sample size of 300 firms ^{ccxxvii} : -In 2012, 43.6% of the firms surveyed had women as owners or co-owners; -In 2012, 32.7% of firms were managed by women.	In a World Bank global Enterprise Survey of 600 firms in Belarus (October 2018 to April 2019): - 19.2% firms had a majority female ownership, as compared to the ECA average of 13.7% - 45.5% of these firms had female participation in ownership, as compared to the ECA regional average of 33.2%; - 21.1% of the firms had women in top management positions, as compared to the ECA regional average of 18.4%. ^{ccxxxvii}

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex (SDG Indicator 2.3.2)	---	---	---
% of population who are self-employed; who are home-based workers; who are seasonal workers (by sector)	1.8% of women are own-account workers (2000-2015). ^{ccxxxviii}		2.3% of women are own-account workers (2018) ^{ccxxxix}
% of population who are active in the informal/unprotected workforce (by sector);	---	---	---
Proportion of informal employment in non agricultural employment, by sex (SDG Indicator 8.3.1)	---	---	8.2% overall - 10.7% of women and 5.9% of men. (2017) ^{ccxi}
Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age (SDG Indicator 8.7.1)	---	1.4% overall (1.5% of girls and 1.4% of boys) (2012). ^{ccxli}	---
Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status (SDG Indicator 8.8.1).	Fatal: 1.3 per 100,000 women and 12.0 per 100,000 men (2000) ^{ccxlii} Non-fatal: 102.8 per 100,000 women and 302.6 per 100,000 men (2000) ^{ccxlii}	0.5 per 100,000 women and 10.1 per 100,000 men (2010) ^{ccxliiv} Non-fatal: 30 per 100,000 women and 90 per 100,000 men (2010) ^{ccxliiv}	2.2 per 100,000 employees overall: 0.4/100,000 women; 4.3/100,000 men (2017). ^{ccxliiv} Non-fatal: 19.1 per 100,000 women and 61.1 per 100,000 men (2017) ^{ccxliiv}
% of population accessing paid paternity/maternity leave;	---	---	Comprehensive data is not available. Paid and unpaid Maternity leave (prenatal and post natal) as well as parental leave are granted under the Labour Code.

TABLE 7
Gender Dimensions of Poverty

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Proportion of population below US\$1.90 per day, by sex. (SDG Indicator 1.1.1)	7.1% (2000) ^{ccxlvi} Proportion of employed women (ages 25+) living below the international poverty line: 4.3%; and for men 2.9% (2000) ^{ccxlix}	0 (2010) ^{ccli} Proportion of employed women (ages 25+) living below the international poverty line: 0.1%; and for men 0.1% (2010) ^{ccli}	0 (2017) ^{cclii} Proportion of employed women (ages 25+) living below the international poverty line: 0.1%; and for men 0.1% (2016) ^{ccliii}
National Poverty Rate/ Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex (SDG Indicator 1.2.1)	---	---	In the 2 nd quarter of 2019, the national poverty rate was 5.1%, down from 5.9% in 2017 ^{ccliv} According to the 2017 5.5% of women and 6.6% of men were living below the poverty line. ^{cclv} In 2015-2016 urban and rural disparity for rates of poverty increased, reaching 25.3% for urban vs 40.6% for rural areas. ^{cclyi}
Population without own income, by age and sex.	---	---	---
Multidimensional poverty, by sex. (SDG Indicator 1.2.2.)	0.000. Population at Risk of MPI 0.8 (2000-2008) ^{cclyii}	0.001 (2005-2014) ^{cclyiii}	2017 - MPI rankings no longer provided for developed countries.
Proportion of people below 50% of median income, by sex. (SDG Indicator 10.2.1)	---	---	Overall 5.% (4.7% of women and 5.4% of men) (2017). ^{cclyix}
Consumption data (household expenditure), by type;	---	---	According to a sample survey ^{cclyx} of the living standards of Belarusian households, in Q1 2018 disposable resources per household totaled Br1,135.9 per month. Including Br1,211.9 per month in towns and cities and Br940.4 per month in rural areas. Cash expenses per household per month reached Br1,063.8, including Br806.1 (75.8%) due to consumer spending. The breakdown of consumer spending is as follows: food – 40.8%; non-food — 29.8%; services — 26.2%. Families with children with disabilities are at greater risk of falling into poverty; and 44% of the children in institutional care are children with disabilities. ^{cclyxi}

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Household composition and size	---	<p>As of 2009:^{cclxii}</p> <p>Average household size:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National average is 2.4 persons; -Urban average is 2.5 persons; -Rural average is 2.3 persons. <p>Single Person Households – 29.7%</p> <p>“Nuclear” Households – 55.5%</p> <p>11% of all households are categorized as “Mothers with children” households which include: households of 2 persons (30.5% of these households); 3 persons (9.8% of these households); 4 persons (1.9% of these households); 5 or more persons (1.1% of these households);</p> <p>1.3% of all households are categorized as “Fathers with Children” Households, which include: households consisting of 2 persons (3.7%); 3 persons (0.9%); 4 persons (0.1%); and 5 or more persons (0.1%)</p>	---
Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/ systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work injury victims and the poor and vulnerable. (SDG Indicator 1.3.1)	---	---	Data is not yet available – plans are underway to fill this information gap.
% of population accessing child-care and creches;	---	---	---

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
% of population accessing elderly care; care for severely disabled;	---	---	<p>Comprehensive data is not available. State reports indicate that disabled pensioners and those who have reached the age of 80 receive an additional care allowance on top of their occupational pensions. Statistics show that these allowances are mostly received by elderly women: 61% of the former category and 77% of the latter.</p> <p>Home-based social services are in high demand among the elderly, especially those in rural areas. Elderly persons, mostly with disabilities, are assisted with preparing food and eating, house cleaning grocery and medication shopping, hygiene, etc. These services are provided to low-income citizens free of charge.^{ccbiii}</p> <p>Children with disabilities and special needs comprise about 10% of the total child population in Belarus (1.9 million are children (51.1% boys and 48.9% girls) (2017).^{ccbiv}</p> <p>Families with children living with disabilities are vulnerable to poverty in Belarus, as such 48% of children at institutions are children with disabilities (2017).^{ccbv}</p>
Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing, by sex (*)	---	---	---

TABLE 8

Gender Based Violence in Belarus

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Proportion of ever partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological, economic violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and age. (SDG Indicator 5.2.1).	---	11.8% with a significant difference in terms of prevalence between currently married and formerly married women (10.1% and 21.7% respectively). (2012) ^{cclxvi}	2.8% of girls under the age of 15 have experienced sexual violence (2019). ^{cclxvii} 16.8% of women had experienced violence before the age of 15 (2019). ^{cclxviii} In 17.8% of cases, sexual violence was committed by a member of the family (2019). ^{cclxix}
Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years or older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence. (SDG Indicator 5.2.2);	---	---	Of the above figures, in 33.3% of cases, girls suffered sexual violence from a complete stranger, in 20.0 % cases from an acquaintance or a friend, in 15.6% cases from a person with whom they recently met. The proportion of cases of sexual violence related to staying in school (by a teacher or another person in school) is 11.1 % of cases. Half of the cases of sexual violence were committed against girls aged 14--15 years, in 20 % of cases the victims were girls aged 12--13 years, in 10 % -- girls aged 7 years. Sexual violence against girls was committed by men of different ages, but most often by those aged 30--39 and 20--29. ^{cclxxx}
Proportion of young women and men aged 18 to 20 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 (SDG Indicator 5.2.2. and 16.2.3);	---	---	---
Victims of physical or sexual harassment, by sex. (SDG Indicator 11.7.2)	---	---	---
% of women who have faced GBV who accessed support services (by type);	---	Of the 11.8% of women who had experienced violence, 60% did not seek assistance from anyone – neither state/NGO or family/friends; 70.7% of women victims with tertiary education, and 61% in the top income quintiles did not seek help, compared to less than half of women with a secondary degree, and 45% of the poorest women (2012). ^{cclxxi}	175 people used the “Crisis” room or house (2014). By 2018, this had increased to 679 persons, of which 457 victims of domestic violence (274 women, 49 men and 134 children) (2018). ^{cclxxii} Under Belarus law, 139 social and educational centers provide social assistance to children between the ages of 3 and 18 who are victims of violence (most of them girls). 127 of such centers have a children’s social shelter (2018). ^{cclxxiii}

Indicator	2000	2010	Most Recent Year
Number of protection orders issued	---	---	Seven thousand Protection Orders for domestic violence were issued in 2018; In the first 10 months of 2019, 6377 Protection orders were issued. ^{cclxxxiv}
Number of GBV cases, including sexual violence, processed by the Courts.	---	---	According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, about 85 thousand calls about domestic violence are received by the police during the year, and only 50 thousand family aggressors are brought to administrative courts and about two thousand to criminal courts. An increasing number of cases are around sexual violence, particularly involving minors (2018). ^{cclxxxv}
% of women over the age of 15 who have experienced cyber-violence;	---	---	---
Proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (SDG Indicator 5.3.1.)	0% under the age of 15 (2003) 3% under the age of 18 (2003) ^{cclxxxvi}	0% under the age of 15 (2012) 3.2% under the age of 18 - By residence: Urban: women 2.8%; and Rural women 4.6% (2012) ^{cclxxxvii}	0% under the age of 15 (2018) 3% under the age of 18 (2018) ^{cclxxxviii} In 2014-2015, reportedly under 50% of all Roma marriages (both registered at Civil Registry Offices and factual), the woman was under the age of 18. A recent study reports that the average age of marriage of Roma girls is 16 to 17 years old. ^{cclxxxix}
Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age. (SDG Indicator 16.1.1)	---	2.7 women per 100,000 and 6.0 men per 100,000(2010) ^{cclxxx}	2 women per 100,000 and 3 men per 100,000 (2018) ^{cclxxxxi}
Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation. (SDG Indicator 16.2.2)	625 cases, all ages and sex (2005) ^{cclxxxii} ;	362 cases, all ages and sex (2010) ^{cclxxxiii} ;	75 cases, all ages and sex (2017) ^{cclxxxiv} ;; 1 per 100,000 persons: 2 women per 100,000; and 0 men per 100,000 (2017) ^{cclxxxv}

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