



**National Monitoring and Review  
of the Sustainable Development Goals  
and Development Justice  
in Kazakhstan**

**2020-2021**



Shyrak Association of Women with Disabilities  
supported by



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Shyrak Association of Women with Disabilities

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	5
<b>1. Country Context</b> .....	6
A. Systemic Barriers.....	15
1. Unjust Trade and Investment Agreement.....	16
2. Corporate Capture.....	18
3. Land and Resource Grabbing.....	19
4. Climate Change .....	21
5. Patriarchy and Fundamentalism .....	23
6. Militarism and Conflict.....	26
7. Patriarchal Authoritarian Governance.....	27
B. Priorities Issues .....	30
<b>2. Assessment on SDGs Commitments and Means of Implementation</b> .....	33
C. Architecture of SDGs Monitoring in the Country .....	33
D. Roles of CSOs in the SDGs Processes .....	36
E. Financing and Resource Mobilization .....	38
<b>3. Planning FDJ Monitoring</b> .....	39
F. Profile of communities or constituencies you work with .....	39
G. Impact Objectives .....	39
H. Goals .....	39
I. Target .....	39
J. SDG/National/Development Justice Indicators .....	40
K. Research Topic.....	40
L. Key Research Questions .....	40
M. Methodologies .....	40
N. Power Mapping .....	41
O. Critical Pathway .....	42
P. Theory of Change .....	43
<b>4. Thematic Analysis – Women’s Priorities</b> .....	44
a. Findings of your research based on the specific goals, targets and indicators you identified.....	44
b. Analysis based on the findings .....	45
c. Women’s initiatives and actions .....	47
<b>5. Common Ground Analysis for the Theme of HLPF 2021</b> .....	48
<b>6. Conclusion and Recommendation</b> .....	51
<b>ANNEX</b> .....	56

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kazakhstan is a unique and diverse country; its rich resources are a great asset to the country's economic development. In fact, Kazakhstan has established itself in many international rankings, which not only provide an evaluation, but also indicate areas for further development.<sup>1</sup> These areas include education, business environment, human rights, job creation, social security for the most vulnerable groups, removing economic inequality, eradication of corruption and violence against women.

Kazakhstan has joined the 2030 Agenda together with other development countries, and took on international commitments to achieve the SDGs. It has established the national structure called the Coordination Board on Sustainable Development Goals at the governmental level, and introduced the working groups on five key directions. Some state programs contribute to the implementation of the SDGs but in many cases do not interlink with civil society initiatives on the SDGs, and lack the monitoring and evaluation criteria to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency. Meanwhile, the post-Covid-19 pandemic recovery measures should be comprehensive, effective and inclusive leaving no one behind ensuring development justice and inclusive recovery.

The present report focuses on two priority goals – Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth'. International data shows that women in Kazakhstan are greatly affected especially by the pandemic, as patriarchal values continue to reinforce women's lack of socioeconomic power and disproportionate susceptibility to poverty. The Kazakhstani government also continues to prioritize enhanced government policies such as image formation events, political modernization, and infrastructure over addressing the systemic and structural roots of unrest such as poverty, unemployment, and the monopolization of resources by corporations. The realization of the SDGs in Kazakhstan is further threatened by the nation's high vulnerability to corruption, prevailing patriarchal views in society and sharp income inequalities. The women represent more than half of the population in Kazakhstan (52%<sup>2</sup>), and they are influenced by these policies and cultures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the women are far left behind by state support programs, leading to an increase in unpaid care work, reduced access to financial resources, a widening economic gap, and more incidences of domestic violence.

1 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN 2019

2 Население Казахстана (countrymeters.info)

# 1. COUNTRY CONTEXT



## STATISTICS:

**Country Population:**  
18,776,707 million (1.21 %, 64<sup>th</sup>/235)<sup>3</sup>

**GDP Per capita:** 8,528,4 US \$<sup>4</sup>

**Wealth Inequality index – Palma Ratio:** 27.5<sup>5</sup>

**UNDP Gender Inequality Index Value:** 0.190<sup>6</sup>

**UNDP Gender Inequality Index Rank:** 44<sup>7</sup>

## GOVERNMENT BUDGET EXPENDITURE

**Military Expenditure (2020):**  
1,732.9 USD millions (4.6% of Gov't spending)<sup>8</sup>

**Health Expenditure (2020):** not available

**Education Expenditure (2020):**  
13992.58 (13.84% of Gov't spending)<sup>9</sup>

**Total External Debt (2020):**  
24,715,617,690<sup>10</sup>

## COVID-19 Context

- Number of confirmed cases as of [December 2021]: 1 072 999 <sup>11</sup>
- Number of deaths [December 2021]: 18 236<sup>12</sup>
- Number of workers affected by COVID-19 crisis: 7.2 per cent<sup>13</sup>
- Number of documented cases of violence during COVID-19:

400 women<sup>14</sup> die as a result of domestic violence every year in Kazakhstan. Domestic violence takes place in every 8<sup>th</sup> Kazakhstani family. During the pandemic the number of domestic violence cases<sup>15</sup> increased by 20-25 percent. During quarantine, the organization's hotline has received 42,000 calls over a four-month period. But only 8,000 of those calls have led eventually to trials and just 4,000 have received justice.

3 Population by Country (2022) – Worldometer (worldometers.info)

4 Kazakhstan Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank

5 | Human Development Reports (undp.org)

6 | Human Development Reports (undp.org)

7 | Human Development Reports (undp.org)

8 SIPRI Military Expenditure Database | SIPRI

9 UIS Statistics (unesco.org)

10 World Development Indicators | DataBank (worldbank.org)

11 Kazakhstan: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data | WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data

12 Kazakhstan: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data | WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data

13 COVID-19: Stimulating the economy and employment: ILO: COVID-19 causes devastating losses in working hours and employment

14 400 казахстанок в год погибают от домашнего насилия – комментарий эксперта | КТК (ktk.kz)

15 Under COVID-19, Domestic Violence Intensifies in Kazakhstan – The Diplomat

The ethnic composition of the Republic of Kazakhstan is diverse, with more than 100 ethnic groups and representatives of 18 religions living within the territory.

Kazakhstan is a unique and diverse country; its rich resources are a great asset to influence the country's economic development<sup>16</sup>.

The progress demonstrated by the country was achieved as a result of consistent economic and social reforms, an effectively built system of national planning, as well as internal policies aimed at strengthening tolerance in society, ensuring intercultural and interfaith harmony and respect for every individual.

In accordance with international rankings with regard to the territory and other parameters:

- Kazakhstan ranked 59<sup>th</sup> among 140 countries in the GCI 4.0 World Economic Forum ranking;
- Kazakhstan ranked 34<sup>th</sup> among 63 countries in the IMD-2019 International Institute for Management Development ranking;
- Kazakhstan has the ninth largest territory of the world and a low population density. The 2.0 average population density is 6.8 people per km;
- Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country in the world;
- The ethnic composition of the Republic of Kazakhstan is diverse, with more than 100 ethnic groups and representatives of 18 religions living within the territory;
- Kazakhstan ranks sixth in the world in terms of natural resources. The explored resources of Kazakhstan are estimated at about \$10 trillion; Almost all chemical elements can be found in Kazakhstan. The country ranks first in the world in terms of wolfram reserves, second in uranium and chromium reserves, fourth in manganese and silver, fifth in lead and zinc, and eighth in total iron ore reserves (16.6 billion tons);
- Kazakhstan is located at the intersection of the transport transit corridors of Europe and Asia;
- Kazakhstan ranked 58<sup>th</sup> among 189 countries in the 2018 UNDP Human Development Index, joining the group of countries with a very high level of development;
- Kazakhstan ranked 28<sup>th</sup> among 190 countries in the Doing Business 2019 World Bank ranking.

# World Development Indicators database: Kazakhstan (2020)<sup>17</sup>

Kazakhstan



## Country Profile

	1990	2000	2010	2020
<b>World view</b>				
Population, total (millions)	16.35	14.88	16.32	18.75
Population growth (annual %)	0.6	-0.3	1.4	1.3
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	2,724.9	2,724.9	2,724.9	2,724.9
Population density (people per sq. km of land area)	6.1	5.5	6.0	6.9
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)	..	..	..	4.3
Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP) (% of population)	..	9.0	0.1	0.0
GNI, Atlas method (current US\$) (billions)	23.38	18.87	121.37	163.37
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	1,430	1,270	7,440	8,710
GNI, PPP (current international \$) (billions)	111.72	107.94	272.72	457.65
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)	6,820	7,250	16,710	24,400
<b>People</b>				
Income share held by lowest 20%	..	6.7	9.5	9.8
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68	65	68	73
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	2.7	1.8	2.6	2.9
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)	51	34	30	29
Contraceptive prevalence, any method (% of married women ages 15-49)	..	66	51	53
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	99	98	99	100
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	52	42	20	11
Prevalence of underweight, weight for age (% of children under 5)	..	3.8	3.7	..
Immunization, measles (% of children ages 12-23 months)	89	99	99	99
Primary completion rate, total (% of relevant age group)	..	93	107	102
School enrollment, primary (% gross)	115.7	97.0	108.8	100.3
School enrollment, secondary (% gross)	101	94	98	104
School enrollment, primary and secondary (gross), gender parity index (GPI)	7	1	1	1
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population ages 15-49)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
<b>Environment</b>				
Forest area (sq. km) (thousands)	34.2	31.6	30.8	34.5
Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total territorial area)	..	..	Активация ↑	3.2
Annual freshwater withdrawals, total (% of internal resources)	..	34.6	Чтобы активировать, перейдите в раздел	34.9
Urban population growth (annual %)	0.4	-0.2	1.5	1.
Energy use (kg of oil equivalent per capita)	4,493	2,397	4,235	..
CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita)	14.53	7.71	13.70	12.0
Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)	5,905	3,170	4,728	..
<b>Economy</b>				
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	26.93	18.29	148.05	171.0
GDP growth (annual %)	-11.0	9.8	7.3	-2.
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	96.4	17.4	19.5	4.
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)	23	8	5	..
Industry (including construction), value added (% of GDP)	39	38	41	3
Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)	74	57	44	3
Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)	75	49	30	2
Gross capital formation (% of GDP)	32	18	25	2
Revenue, excluding grants (% of GDP)	..	11.3	21.4	14.
Net lending (+) / net borrowing (-) (% of GDP)	..	0.1	4.6	-0.
<b>States and markets</b>				
Time required to start a business (days)	..	32	25	..
Domestic credit provided by financial sector (% of GDP)	..	..	..	40.
Tax revenue (% of GDP)	..	10.2	15.7	11.
Military expenditure (% of GDP)	1.1	0.8	1.0	1.
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	0.0	1.3	119.4	134.
Individuals using the Internet (% of population)	0.0	0.7	31.6	85.
High-technology exports (% of manufactured exports)	..	..	35	3
Statistical Capacity Score (Overall Average) (scale 0 - 100)	..	..	96	7
<b>Global links</b>				
Merchandise trade (% of GDP)	29	76	62	4
Net barter terms of trade index (2000 = 100)	..	100	197	17
External debt stocks, total (DOD, current US\$) (millions)	35	12,890	119,151	162,97
Total debt service (% of exports of goods, services and primary income)	..	32.4	Активация ↑	56.
Net migration (thousands)	-1,439	45	Чтобы активировать, перейдите в раздел	..



## Human rights and democracy situation

As of the end of 2021 Kazakhstan has ratified most of the main UN Treaties, and has a stable trend on the ratification of the rest of the international documents to demonstrate adherence to the internationally accepted norms and standards. Although as independent experts notice, it is quite important to undertake a number of actions to introduce these standards not only in the legislative area but in practice.

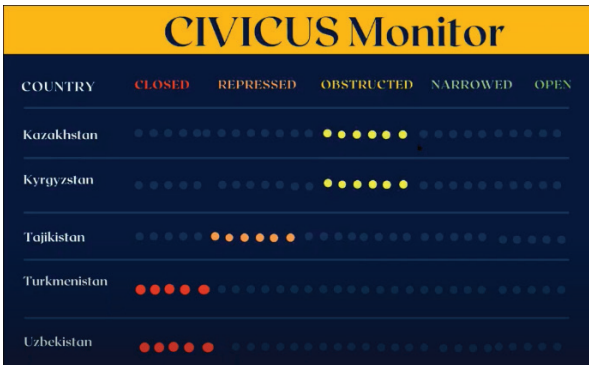
### RATIFIED (14 out of 18):

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1994): CRC OP AC (armed conflict) (2003) and CRC OP SC (sales of children) (2001)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1998): CEDAW OP (2001)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1998)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1998): CAT OP (2008)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2006)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2006): CCPR OP1 (complaint) (2009) and CCPR OP2 (death penalty) (2021)
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2009)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015)

### NOT RATIFIED (4):

- CRPD-OP - Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- CRC-OP-IC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

On 02 January 2021, Kazakhstan announced its ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, becoming the 88th party. This Protocol aims at making irreversible the abolition of the death penalty, already enshrined in Constitution of Kazakhstan in 2007. The death



penalty is an inhuman and cruel punishment, which fails to deter criminal behavior.

CIVICUS Civic Space<sup>18</sup> Monitoring Violations of freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression rated Kazakhstan civil society as Obstructed (2020).

The government has used the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to silence critics and adopt new repressive regulations. International watchdog Human Rights Watch named Kazakhstan as one of the countries where the situation with freedom of speech has deteriorated amid the pandemic. The new resolution of the Central Elections Commission RK (CEC) dated 04 December 2020 was issued prior to the elections. A newly adopted CEC resolution required that non-profit organizations intending to observe elections have in their statute a declared objective of “implementation and protection of the political rights and freedoms of citizens”.

Starting October 2020, the Ministry of Information and Social Development RK initiated **the draft law on public control** aimed at prevention of corruption at local and national levels. The Ministry plans to organize public discussions to discuss issues of the draft law with the participation of experts and representatives of the public. The CSO experts express their concerns over the draft law since it contains provisions restricting NGO activities, and may adversely affect the CSO operational environment.

*Freedom of Association:* Prior to the elections many prominent NGOs received fines and a suspension of their activity, based on unclear legal grounds. Between October and November 2020, at least 15 organisations were notified that they had violated Article 460-1 of the Code of Administrative Offenses for allegedly failing to properly inform the authorities about foreign funding received. At least three organisations have been suspended for at least three months as of 25 January, and at least three more organisations were heavily fined, on the basis of unclear legal grounds. In February the decision of the authorities was made to cancel the fines & allow all these NGOs to resume their activities.

*Freedom of Assembly:* Following the Parliamentary elections in January 2021 peaceful demonstrators were detained, and concerted measures which prevented some domestic election observers from effective observation.

18 CIVICUS Civic Space Monitoring <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/kazakhstan/>

## Democracy Index 2020<sup>19</sup>

“...Belarus, Azerbaijan and four Central Asian states (**Kazakhstan**, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) remain dictatorships, the leaders of which have sometimes stayed in place for decades. In most of these countries, the score upgrades were led by a rising confidence in governments and political parties. However, the lack of any viable political alternatives, as well as a repressive state apparatus that clamps down on dissenting voices, may result in exaggerated support for political elites in public opinion surveys...”

**EIU Democracy Index**

Year	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Rank (/167)	Score (/10)	Rank (/167)	Score (/10)	Rank (/167)	Score (/10)	Rank (/167)	Score (/10)	Rank (/167)	Score (/10)
<b>Central Asia</b>										
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	139	3,06	141	3,06	144	2,94	139	2,94	128	3,14
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	98	4,93	95	5,11	98	5,11	101	4,89	107	4,21
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>	161	1,89	159	1,93	159	1,93	159	1,93	159	1,94
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	162	1,83	162	1,72	162	1,72	162	1,72	162	1,72
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>	158	1,95	158	1,95	156	2,01	157	2,01	155	2,12

Full democracy	8,7	9,10
Flawed democracy	6,7	7,8
Hybrid regime	4,5	5,6
Authoritarian regime	1,2	2,3

### COVID-19, Democracy/Civic Space, and Economic/Human Development

Country	COVID-19 <sup>1)</sup> (/219)	COVID-19 <sup>2)</sup> (/98)	Democracy <sup>3)</sup> (/167)	Civic Space <sup>4)</sup>	GDP per capita <sup>5)</sup> (/194)	HDI <sup>6)</sup> (/189)	SDG <sup>7)</sup> (/166)
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	100	47	128	Obstructed	72	51	65

1) Rank by Confirmed Deaths per Million by World O Meter (as of 2020, Feb. 13)

3) Democracy Index Rank by EIU

5) GDP per capita, current prices (U.S. dollars per capita) (as of 2020)

7) SDG index score by SDSN

2) Rank by COVID-19 Performance by Lowy Institute

4) Data by CIVICUS Monitoring

6) Rank of Human Development Index by UNDP

On 28 January 2021 the global anti-corruption movement Transparency International published the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2020. Remarkably, Kazakhstan significantly improved its anti-corruption rating. By the end of 2020 Kazakhstan gained 38 score and was ranked 94, and was placed at the same level as such countries as Brazil, Ethiopia, Peru, Serbia, Sri-Lanka, Suriname and Tanzania. The rank was given based on 9 sources: experts of 4 ratings agencies evaluated anti-corruption measures taken by Kazakh government highly; the rest of the agencies did not change the ranking (the same as the previous year) [25]. Please see below the table with details.

#	Source of Research	CPI 2020	CPI 2019
1	Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index	33	33
2	Economist Intelligence Unit Country Ratings	20	20
3	Freedom House Nations in Transit Ratings	24	24
4	Global Insight Country Risk Ratings	47	35
5	IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook	61	55
6	PRS International Country Risk Guide	58	43
7	Varieties of Democracy Project	17	17
8	World Economic Forum EOS	47	47
9	World Justice Project Rule of Law Index	38	36
	TOTAL:	38	34

### *Decent work and the economic crisis*

Due to the global crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, livelihoods and income generation of the people especially the minimum wage workers have been negatively affected. The growth of real wages has slowed down. Real monetary incomes of the population continued to decline.

The rise in unemployment, and the general level of prices for goods and services, has led to an increase in the number of the poor or citizens whose incomes are below the subsistence level. According to the Bureau of National Statistics for the second quarter of 2020, there are 1.07 million poor in Kazakhstan (5.7% of the population) - 4.2% in the city, and 7.8% - in rural areas. According to the World Bank, the share of the poor in Kazakhstan in 2020 grew from the projected 8.3% to 12.7%, which in absolute terms means an increase in the number of poor by 800 thousand people.

In his interview to [Forbes.kz](https://forbes.kz) the political scientist Dosym Satpayev drew attention to the fact that, before the pandemic, the Kazakh authorities did not have a clear understanding, clear figures about the level of unemployment and real poverty, due to maneuvers with data on the self-employed. He also mentioned the data on the number of citizens who received 42,500 tenge (approx.95 USD) each as part of aid in March 2020, when 4.5 million citizens considered themselves socially vulnerable (supported by official documents). In his opinion, this suggests that the problem of the growth of unemployment and poverty is now becoming acute in Kazakhstan.<sup>20</sup>

State macroeconomic policies are impacting the people on the ground in terms of jobs and social security services. Women, especially rural women with disabilities or migrant women, are the most at risk of vulnerability and poverty. Low job quality, lack of job security, and worsening working conditions create social tension in society and push the female workers to look for durable workable solutions.

<sup>20</sup> <https://ekonomist.kz/zhussupova/sokrascheniye-realnyh-dohodov-naseleniya/>

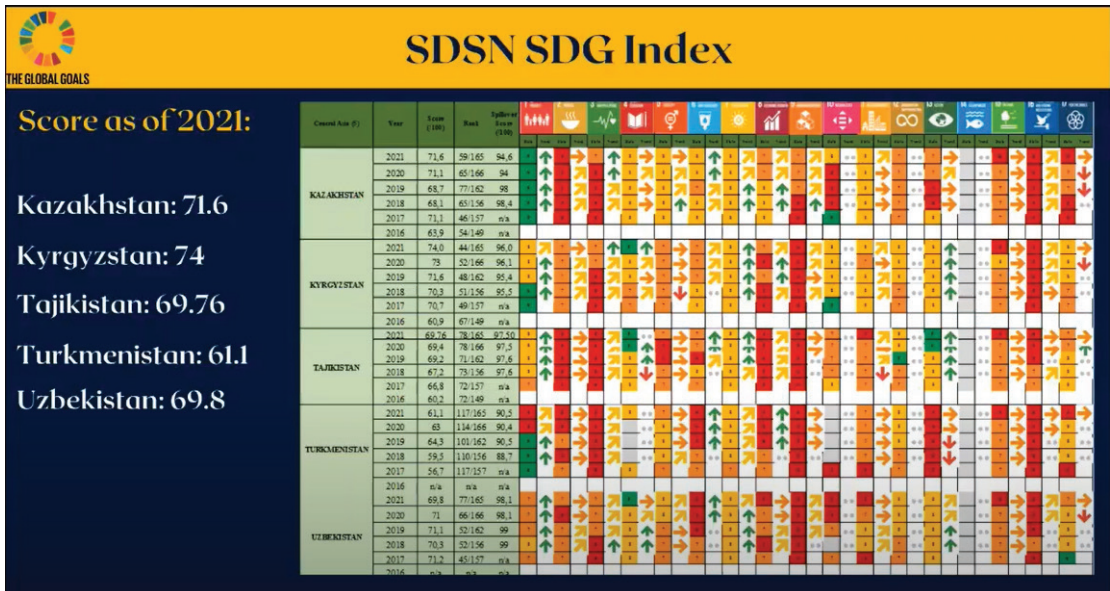
## Current status on SDGs in Kazakhstan

With regard to the implementation of the SDGs in Kazakhstan: the work on SDG nationalization is in progress. As the graph shows, the national targets and national indicators were elaborated by relevant state structures to better address the SDG issues.



National SDG Goals	Targets	Indicators
17	169	297

National mechanisms on SDG					
	KAZAKHISTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	TAJIKISTAN	TURKMENISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
NATIONAL SDGS (YEAR OF ADOPTION)	2015	2015	2016	2016	2018
NUMBER OF GOALS AND TARGETS	17 (169)	16 (139)	16 (162)	17 (136)	16 (127)
NATIONAL LEGISLATION	Strategy 2050 Order of the Prime Minister on the Coordination Council for Sustainable Development Goals	National Development Strategy (2018–2040), "Unity, Trust, Creation" (2018–2022) Program of the Government of the KR	National Strategy of Development 2030	National Programme for Social and Economic Development until 2030, Programme of the President for Social and Economic Development for the period 2019–2025	Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers "On measures to implement the National goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030"
NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS FOCAL POINT	The Ministry of National Economy	SDG Coordination Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister	Ministry of economic development and trade	Ministry of Finance and Economy	Ministry of economic development and poverty reduction
VNR	1st - 2019 2nd - expected in 2022	1st - 2020 2nd - ?	1st - 2017 2nd - ?	1st - 2019 2nd - 2023	1st - 2020 2nd - ?



**The Universal Periodic Review**

Top 5 Sustainable Development Goals

Смотреть (6)

**Trends on supported recommendations**

COUNTRY	U PR 2 (2014)	U PR 3 (2019)	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3	Top 4	Top 5
Recommend of / Accepted							
KAZAKHSTAN	198 / 147 (74%)	245 / 214 (87%)	SDG 16 (20%)	SDG 6 (20%)	SDG 10 (14%)	SDG 8 (10%)	SDG 4 (7%)
KYRGYZSTAN	196 / 149 (76%)	232 / 193 (83%)	SDG 16 (49%)	SDG 8 (18%)	SDG 10 (10%)	SDG 4 (7%)	SDG 8 (5%)
TAJIKISTAN	209 / 120 (58%)	[No submission of review]	SDG 16 (38%)	SDG 6 (16%)	SDG 8 (11%)	SDG 4 (9%)	SDG 10 (7%)
TURKMENISTAN	182 / 166 (91%)	191 / 172 (89%)	SDG 16 (48%)	SDG 6 (18%)	SDG 10 (9%)	SDG 8 (6%)	SDG 4 (5%)
UZBEKISTAN	202 / 143 (71%)	212 / 198 (93%)	SDG 16 (41%)	SDG 6 (20%)	SDG 8 (13%)	SDG 10 (9%)	SDG 4 (7%)

Under the Universal Periodic Review Kazakhstan took into consideration the top 5 SDGs for further promotion and thorough implementation. They are:

- SDG 4
- **SDG 5**
- **SDG 8**
- SDG 10
- SDG 16

Along with the progress made by Kazakhstani government with regard to SDG implementation there are a number of systemic barriers which prevent the country from achieving them smoothly and shortly.

**SDG Progress by SDSN (2016-2020)**

Year	States	Kazakhstan
2020	Score (/100)	71,1
	Rank (/166)	65
2019	Score (/100)	68,7
	Rank (/162)	77
2018	Score (/100)	68,1
	Rank (/156)	65
2017	Score (/100)	71,1
	Rank (/157)	46
2016	Score (/100)	63,8
	Rank (/149)	54

## A. Systemic Barriers

Systemic barriers in the country have long persisted and have harshly impacted the lives of ordinary Kazakhstani people prohibiting them further to fully enjoy rights as the country's constitution guarantees.

International IDEA									
Country	Representative Government	Fundamental Rights	Checks on Government	Impartial Administration	Participatory Engagement				
KAZAKHSTAN	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low				
KYRGYZSTAN	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low				
TARBAKATAN	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low				
TURKMENISTAN	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low				
UZBEKISTAN	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low				

### COVID-19 restrictions and curtailing of democratic rights

According to the international IDEA<sup>21</sup> Kazakhstan was identified as an ‘authoritarian regime’ (2020-2021). There are five main dimensions which were in focus to evaluate the type of regime such as:

- Representative Government
- Fundamental Rights
- Checks on Government
- Impartial Administration
- Participatory Engagement

As of 6 September 2021, authorities maintained COVID-19-related restrictions. Mass events were banned and the activities of most non-essential enterprises were prohibited. Public transport in affected major cities was suspended on weekends. Businesses that were permitted to operate, including shopping centres and retailers, must implement sanitary measures. Since the 2 July 2021, vaccination has been mandatory for working people and, as of 6 September 2021, unvaccinated workers were not allowed to conduct their job in Kazakhstan. The President signed a law on 10 July 2021 expanding presidential powers during states of emergencies, including controlling legislative functions on issues from budget and taxes to health policy. Authorities have detained civic activists for allegedly spreading false information about the pandemic, causing speculation that the virus is being used as a tool to suppress opposition voices. Laws restricting peaceful assembly, political parties and elections were passed in May 2020, again raising questions about the motives

21 The Global State of Democracy initiative Kazakhstan (idea.int)

behind such restrictions. The Government started using surveillance technology to track 8,000 quarantined individuals to ensure their compliance with restrictions, raising privacy concerns.

Economic situation in the country after the COVID-19 pandemic remains complicated. Experts highlight that the depressed economy will hit the most vulnerable. The pandemic has severely impacted the retail, hospitality, wholesale, and transport sectors, which account for around 30 percent of employment in cities; however, the country's rural population will experience the strongest shock. According to World Bank estimates, Kazakhstan's poverty rate increased to 12-14 percent in 2020 from a baseline of 6 percent in 2016. "The most significant increase in the number of the poor is expected to come from rural areas, which threatens to increase inequality in Kazakhstan," said Jean-Francois Marteau, World Bank Country Manager for Kazakhstan.<sup>22</sup>

## 1. Unjust Trade and Investment Agreement

Raw mineral extraction is by far the biggest sector of Kazakhstan's economy, making it overly dependent on world market prices for mineral resources. High dependency of the national economy on extractive industries makes the country vulnerable in terms of keeping financial sustainability. Kazakhstan has attracted significant foreign investment since independence. According to official statistics, as of January 1, 2020, the total stock of foreign direct investment (by the directional principle) in Kazakhstan totaled USD 161.2 billion, primarily in the oil and gas sector. International financial institutions consider Kazakhstan to be an attractive destination for their operations, and international firms have established regional headquarters in Kazakhstan. Foreign Direct Investment in Kazakhstan increased by 4981.37 USD Million in the fourth quarter of 2021 (Source: National Bank of Kazakhstan). The COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented low oil prices changed the country's economic development plans. In March 2020, the government approved a USD 13.7 billion stimulus package, mostly oriented at income smoothing, supporting local businesses and implementing an import-substitution policy.<sup>23</sup>

Over the last couple of years, the government has undertaken a number of structural changes aimed at improving how the government attracts foreign investment. In April 2019, the Prime Minister announced the creation of the Coordination Council for Attracting Foreign Investment, which the Prime Minister will chair and he will also act as the Investment Ombudsman. In December 2018, the Investment Committee was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is now in charge of

<sup>22</sup> Kazakhstan's Economy to Recover Modestly in 2021, But COVID-19-induced Poverty on the Rise, Says World Bank

<sup>23</sup> Kazakhstan - United States Department of State



attracting and facilitating activities of foreign investors. The Investment Committee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes responsibility for investment climate policy issues and works with potential and current investors, while the Ministry of National Economy interacts on investment climate matters with international organizations like the OECD, WTO, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Each regional municipality designates a representative to work with investors, and Kazakhstani foreign diplomatic missions are charged with attracting foreign investments. Specially designated front offices in Kazakhstan's overseas embassies promote Kazakhstan as a destination for foreign investment. In addition, the Astana International Financial Center (AIFC, see details in Section 3) operates as a regional investment hub, with tax, legal, and other benefits. In 2019, the government founded Kazakhstan's Direct Investment Fund, which is located at the AIFC and expected to attract private investments for diversifying Kazakhstan's economy. The state company KazakhInvest is also located in the AIFC and offers investors a single-window for government services.

The government maintains a dialogue with foreign investors through the Foreign Investors' Council chaired by the President, as well as through the Council for Improving the Investment Climate chaired by the Prime Minister. Kazakhstan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2015. In June 2017, Kazakhstan joined the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises and became an associated member of the OECD Investment Committee.

Nevertheless, Kazakhstan has not had a very attractive investment climate conducive for the operation of foreign companies because of the poor human rights records. Despite institutional and legal reforms, concerns remain about corruption, bureaucracy, arbitrary law enforcement, and limited access to a skilled workforce in certain regions. The government's tendency to legislate preferences for domestic companies, to favor an import-substitution policy, to challenge contractual rights and the use of foreign labor, and to intervene in companies' operations continues to concern foreign investors. Foreign firms cite the need for better rule of law, deeper investment in human capital, improved transport and logistics infrastructure, a more open and flexible trade policy, a more favorable work-permit regime and a more customer-friendly tax administration. On 28 January 2021, the global anticorruption movement Transparency International published the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2020. Remarkably, Kazakhstan significantly improved its anti-corruption rating. By the end of 2020, Kazakhstan gained 38 score and was ranked 94, and was placed at the same level as such countries as Brazil, Ethiopia, Peru, Serbia, Sri-Lanka, Suriname and Tanzania. The rank was given based on 9 sources: experts of 4 ratings

agencies evaluated anti-corruption measures taken by Kazakh government highly; the rest of the agencies did not change the ranking.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Corporate Capture

Mainly, the oil-related revenue in Kazakhstan goes to the National Fund, a sovereign wealth fund that is financed by direct taxes paid by petroleum industry companies, other fees paid by the oil industry, revenues from privatization of mining and manufacturing assets and from the disposal of agricultural land. In contrast, the customs duty on crude oil and gas condensate exports is an indirect tax that goes to the government's budget. Companies that pay taxes on mineral and crude oil exports are exempt from that export duty. The government adopted a 2016 resolution that pegged the export customs duty to global oil prices – as the global oil price drops and approaches USD 25 per barrel, the duty rate approaches zero. The Code defines “strategic deposits and areas” and restricts the government's preemptive right to acquire exploration and production contracts to these areas, which helps to reduce significantly the approvals required for non-strategic objects. The government approves and publishes the list of strategic deposits on its website. The **list**<sup>25</sup> has not changed since its approval on June 28, 2018.<sup>26</sup> The Code entitles the government to terminate a contract unilaterally “if actions of a subsoil user with a strategic deposit result in changes to Kazakhstan's economic interests in a manner that threatens national security.” The Article does not define “economic interests.” The Code, if properly implemented, appears to be a step forward in improving the investment climate, including the streamlining of procedures to obtain exploration licenses and to convert exploration licenses into production licenses. The Code, however, appears to retain burdensome government oversight over mining companies' operations.

State and big corporate actors are basically collaborating in the country which results in further human rights violations in the workplace and even environmental degradation. More corporate social responsibility practices should be utilized by the companies in order to restore trust and build well balanced relationships with ordinary citizens. Corruption in the government also allows further corporate takeover in many public spheres.

The mining sector plays an important role in the Kazakh economy, at 13-14% of the country's GDP and more than 20% of its exports. The country state balance takes into account mineral reserves for 102 types of mineral raw materials, including 40 types of solid minerals. But the labour rights of workers are frequently violated – they work

<sup>24</sup> Kazakhstan - United States Department of State (investment climate statement 2020)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.government.kz/ru/postanovleniya/postanovleniya-pravitelstva-rk-za-iyun-2018-goda/1015356-ob-utverzhenii-perechnya-strategicheskikh-uchastkov-nedr.html>

<sup>26</sup> Kazakhstan - United States Department of State

in dangerous conditions without adequate special protection measures, receive low pay for hard work, work long hours, etc. For many years, Kazakhstan imposed a blanket ban on strikes by workers employed in “hazardous production facilities,” which includes the entirety of the oil and gas sector, as well as on “railway transport and civil aviation workers, medical workers, and service providers (including workers in public transport, water supply, electricity, heat, and communications).” Following sustained pressure from the ILO, in May 2020 Kazakhstan’s Labor Code was amended to allow service providers and oil and gas workers to hold strikes, provided they ensure minimum or uninterrupted services.<sup>27</sup>

Given the obstacles to staging legal strikes, workers in practice resort to spontaneous, short-term industrial actions, sidestepping burdensome collective bargaining procedures, to make their grievances known. Doing so exposes them to risk of dismissal, as well as possible administrative or criminal prosecution. According to media reports, in February 2021 over a dozen workers were dismissed from an oil company in western Kazakhstan after they participated in a strike demanding higher wages.<sup>28</sup> In April 2021, oil workers who staged a strike in Zhanaozen were informed by their employer that the strike was “illegal” and told they must come back to work.<sup>29</sup>

Under international human rights law, any penalties for participating in an illegal strike should be proportionate to the offense or fault committed. The ILO has made clear that sanctions for participating in strikes are acceptable only when national law itself is consistent with international standards on freedom of association, which is not the case in Kazakhstan.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Land and Resource Grabbing

There is a historical land dispute between Kazakhstan and neighboring country Russia, especially in the northern part of the country. The Russian government is claiming some Kazakhstani lands based on historical records.

On the other hand, the Kazakhstan government facilitates lands in long term leases for production and construction purposes. In this regard, Kazakhstani citizens also

<sup>27</sup> Kazakhstan Labor Code, art. 176, 2-1.

<sup>28</sup> Zhursin, Zhanagul and Dilara Isa, “Workers are increasingly going on strike. What does it mean?” [Работники всё чаще выходят на забастовки. О чём это говорит?], Radio Azattyk, February 2021, <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31097676.html>

<sup>29</sup> Toiken, Saniyash, “The company proposed to striking workers in Zhanaozen to go back to work” [Бастующим в Жанаозене работникам компания предложила возобновить работы], April 2021, <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31216965.html>

<sup>30</sup> The CEACR has stated that “sanctions for strike action, including dismissals, should be possible only where strike prohibitions are in conformity with the principles of freedom of association.” CEACR: Direct Request concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No 87) Kazakhstan (ratification: 2000), adopted 2003, published 92nd ILC session (2004), [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID:2224882](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID:2224882)

express their concerns over long term land renting by Chinese companies further taking over of their land and resources.

### *Land Policies That Allow Land Grabbing*

Kazakhstani citizens raise their voices when there is a disruption of 'public' zones (parks, forests, green areas) for construction of malls and resort buildings. Many ecological activists face administrative or criminal charges for the distribution of allegedly 'false information'. By creating a land commission, the Kazakh authorities managed to bring down the protest rallies in 2016, when, under pressure from citizens, the government was forced to abandon the sale and lease of land to foreigners. The goal of the national patriots was achieved, but the key issue for the citizens remained unresolved – the mechanism and procedures for the return of land to the people of Kazakhstan, sold by the authorities as a result of massive corruption deals and now belonging to oligarchs – "land barons", has not been created by law. On May 13, 2021, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev adopted the law "On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Development of Land Relations", which provides for "a complete ban on the transfer and sale of agricultural land to foreigners and foreign legal entities." On June 30, 2021, a law was signed, which was amended by the Land Reform Commission. The moratorium on private ownership of agricultural land for citizens of the country and non-state legal entities was extended for another 5 years until December 31, 2026.

An amendment was adopted to the current version of Article 97 of the Land Code regarding the prohibition on changing the designated purpose from peasant farms (KH) to gardening and dacha construction, directed against dishonest officials of akimats of districts who removed agricultural land from agricultural use, changing the purpose. District and city land commissions under akimats were abolished, which turned into sources of corruption. The size of agricultural land put up for competition to provide them for farming has been limited, a radius has been set around rural settlements to reserve land for public pastures, a type of personal subsidiary farm has been established in the identification document to prevent scams.

The information of the state land cadastre will be opened. Now, in the base of the automated information system of the state land cadastre, in the column owner / land user, it will be indicated: the full name of the owner of the land plot or the business identification number of the legal entity, which will make it possible to identify the beneficiaries who have seized huge land plots. From the competence of akimats of districts and cities, control functions over the use and protection of land are withdrawn in favor of the Committee for Land Management of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The question remains open – will this lead to a massive return of land? The mechanism itself is not specified, under which the seizure of unused land from the oligarchs and relatives of officials will begin. How exactly will the Committee on Land Management of the Ministry of Agriculture and its regional land inspection departments be responsible to the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan?

An independent monitoring from akimats is being introduced, which will show the level of agricultural land development. The authors of the amendments assume that *the process of land return will begin*. With the adoption of the law “On digitalization”, an electronic procedure for the provision of land plots, electronic tenders, electronic document circulation are introduced, a unified state real estate cadastre base is being introduced, all land cadastral affairs, information, procedures will be digitized to exclude contact between a person and an official.<sup>31</sup>

Water resources are critical for agriculture and power generation in Kazakhstan; irrigation accounts for 90 percent of national water consumption while hydropower produces 13 percent of the country’s electricity. Glacial melt is an important contributor to river flow during summer months, particularly in the south. Higher temperatures will increase glacial melt in the medium term, changing river flows and increasing flood risk. Glacial loss will diminish the flow of mountain rivers by mid-century, threatening a water supply important for irrigation and food security. Heavy precipitation leading to increased flooding threatens to wash industrial, agricultural and mining pollutants into water sources, diminishing water quality. Domestic water resources, mainly surface water, are susceptible to warming and drying, trends particularly significant for the rivers flowing into the Lake Balkhash basin, one of the largest and most densely populated areas of Kazakhstan. As about half of Kazakhstan’s river volume originates outside the country, reduced water availability combined with increasing demand could heighten *regional political tensions*.

## 4. Climate Change

The impact of climate change on women particularly on rural women is very high. Women’s vulnerability to climate change stems out of a number of factors - economic, social, and traditional settings established. More than 50 per cent of households are poor and run by women. Women contribute more than half of the agricultural workforce. Women are heavily engaged in subsistence farming, particularly horticulture, poultry and raising small livestock for home consumption. Women are not able to control environmental goods and services; they have a low level of participation in decision-making, and are not involved in the distribution

<sup>31</sup> The Significance Of The Land Issue Has Not Yet Been Realized By The Authorities Of Kazakhstan - CABAR.asia

of environmental management benefits. Consequently, women are less able to confront climate change.

With oil production having reached a record level in 2019, Kazakhstan is deepening its dependence on fossil fuels and failing to take steps towards achieving a Paris Agreement-compatible emissions pathway. Kazakhstan missed its Paris Agreement target. The government is instead prioritising modernisation of existing coal plants, as well replacing some coal capacity with natural gas. This is short-sighted, considering that gas is not a solution for the deep decarbonisation needed to keep warming to 1.5°C.

In 2020, Kazakhstan's emissions declined approximately by 3-5% below 2019 levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, fossil fuel production in Kazakhstan is expected to decline because of the pandemic, but is projected to return to 2019 levels around 2025. Based on the 2019 share of renewable electricity in Kazakhstan's electricity mix, the country will not achieve its renewable energy target of 3% by 2020, also indicating difficulties for reaching its targets of 10% by 2030 and 50% by 2050.

Climate trends are likely to exacerbate health issues related to heat waves, natural disasters, clean water availability and infectious disease transmission. Fifty-three percent of the population lives in urban areas, where heat waves are more severe due to the urban heat island effect. Increased heavy precipitation events combined with land degradation related to drying are likely to increase injury and mortality related to floods, mudflows and landslides, particularly in the south. Flooding combined with increased temperatures may decrease water quality in the country, where gastrointestinal disease is already the fifth most common cause of death. Increased temperatures are providing conditions for the expansion of infectious disease vectors (ticks, mites, rodents), raising concerns about increased disease occurrence.

Kazakhstan has vast and diverse forest, steppe, mountain and desert ecosystems, including over 48,000 lakes and five major mountain ranges that contain unique biodiversity. Glacial melt is already beginning to alter the hydrology in and around mountains, a trend with subsequent impacts for river and riparian species. Drying trends are decreasing plant cover density in some altitudinal belts and risk diminishing the country's wetlands. The frequency and extent of forest and steppe fires are expected to increase, risking further land degradation. These changes have implications for livelihoods, as drying and land degradation affect water and pasture availability. Climate stressors to ecosystems come on top of a myriad of non-climate stressors such as habitat fragmentation, land degradation and pollution.<sup>32</sup>

# 5. Patriarchy and Fundamentalism

Patriarchal traditional views on the roles of women and men are still dominant in society and worsened with the lack of state support that results in an increase in domestic violence. In addition, early marriages in the southern part of the country, sexual harassment of women at workplace, uneven pay for the same job, and the obstacles for career development for women are examples of deep-rooted patriarchal culture.

In accordance with the Global Gender Gap Report 2020<sup>33</sup> (World Economic Forum) Kazakhstan was ranked 72, decreasing its position at 12 points in comparison with the previous year.



	2006 score	2020 score
Global Gender Gap Index	32 0.688	72 0.710
Economic participation and opportunity	16 0.713	37 0.742
Educational attainment	53 0.990	63 0.995
Health and survival	36 0.979	74 0.975
Political empowerment	69 0.089	106 0.130

0.710 / 72

KAZ

SELECTED CONTEXTUAL DATA

	female	male	value		female	male	value
<b>General indicators</b>							
GDP USD billion	-	-	172.9	STEM attainment %	14.76	27.22	0.43
GDP per capita, constant '11, int'l \$ 1000	-	-	24.58	Agri., Forestry, Fisheries & Maritime, attainment %	2.17	4.56	0.48
Total population, million people	9.44	8.88	18.30	Arts & Humanities, attainment %	5.19	2.98	1.74
Population growth rate, %	1.22	1.32	1.27	Business, Admin. & Law, attainment %	18.83	21.84	0.96
Population sex ratio (female/male), female/male ratio	48.49	91.91	0.94	Education, attainment %	54.86	12.87	2.70
				Engineering, Manuf. & Construction, attainment %	11.19	32.94	0.34
				Health & Welfare, attainment %	16.89	6.04	2.76
<b>Work participation and leadership</b>				Information & Comm. Technologies, attainment %	1.25	2.94	0.42
Labour force, million people	4.33	4.83	0.48	Information & Comm. Technologies, attainment %	2.32	1.44	1.81
Unemployed adults, % of labour force (15-64)	5.45	4.43	1.23	Natural Sci., Mathematics & Statistics, attainment %	3.77	11.08	0.24
Women employed part-time, % of employed people	10.80	6.44	1.68	Services, attainment %	2.67	1.47	1.82
Gender pay gap (OECD only), %	-	-	0.04	Social Sci., Journalism & Information, attainment %	13.64	16.04	0.85
Proportion of unpaid work per day, female/male ratio	18.96	6.25	3.03	Vocational training, attainment %	n/a	n/a	n/a
Advancement of women to leadership roles, 1-7 (best)	-	-	4.86	PhD graduates, attainment %	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gender parity in tech roles, 1-7 (best)	-	-	3.59				
Board of listed companies, % board members	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>Health</b>			
Firms with female majority ownership, % firms	16.04	89.60	0.90	Maternal mortality, deaths per 100,000 live births	-	-	10
Firms with female top managers, % firms	18.90	81.10	0.23	Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	-	-	16.6
				Law permits abortion to preserve a woman's health, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.00
				Births attended by skilled personnel, % live births	-	-	99.40
				Antenatal care, at least four visits, % women 15-49	-	-	95.30
<b>Access to finance</b>							
Right to hold a bank account & get credit, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.25				
Insurance rights for daughters, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.00				
Women's access to land use, control & ownership, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.25				
Women's access to non-land assets use, control & ownership, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.25				
<b>Civil and political freedom</b>							
Year women received right to vote	-	-	1924				
Number of female heads of state to date	n/a	n/a	0				
Election list quotas for women, national, years	n/a	n/a	0				
Party membership quotas, voluntary, % who	n/a	n/a	n/a				
Seats held in upper houses, % total seats	10.84	89.36	0.12				
Right to equal justice, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.25				
Right to travel outside the country, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.00				
<b>Family and care</b>							
Mean age of women at birth of first child	n/a	n/a	28.3				
Average number of children per woman	n/a	n/a	2.76				
Women's unmet demand for family planning, % women 15-49	-	-	11.80				
Right to divorce, 0-1 (worst)	-	-	0.00				
Child marriage, % women 15-19	-	-	6.50				
Length of maternity/paternity leave (days), weeks	n/a	n/a	n/a				
Wages paid during maternity/paternity leave, % annual gross wage	n/a	n/a	n/a				

COUNTRY SCORE CARD

	rank	score	avg	female	male	firm	size	1-100	distance to parity
<b>Economic participation and opportunity</b>	37	0.742	0.582						
Labour force participation rate, %	47	0.889	0.661	73.7	82.9	0.89			
Wage equality for similar work, 1-7 (best)	30	0.719	0.613	-	-	5.04			
Estimated earned income, int'l \$ 1,000	84	0.602	0.499	18.2	30.3	0.60			
Legislators, senior officials and managers, %	45	0.989	0.356	37.1	62.9	0.59			
Professional and technical workers, %	1	1.000	0.756	60.4	39.6	1.53			
<b>Educational attainment</b>	63	0.995	0.954						
Literacy rate, %	54	0.999	0.889	99.7	99.8	1.00			
Enrolment in primary education, %	112	0.989	0.757	89.0	90.0	0.99			
Enrolment in secondary education, %	1	1.000	0.954	93.3	92.6	1.01			
Enrolment in tertiary education, %	1	1.000	0.931	60.0	48.2	1.25			
<b>Health and survival</b>	74	0.975	0.958						
Sex ratio at birth, %	137	0.937	0.925	-	-	0.94			
Health life expectancy, years	1	1.260	1.034	66.7	59.9	1.11			
<b>Political empowerment</b>	106	0.130	0.239						
Women in parliament, %	53	0.929	0.298	27.1	72.9	0.37			
Women in ministerial positions, %	106	0.000	0.265	0.6	94.4	0.06			
Years with female/male head of state (last 50)	73	0.000	0.190	0.0	50.0	0.00			

The index is designed to measure gender differences in access to resources and opportunities in individual countries, rather than the actual level of available resources and opportunities in these countries. Thus, the index measures only gender differences in the countries of the world, regardless of their level of development.

33 Global Gender Gap Report WEF\_GGGR\_2020.pdf (weforum.org)

The level of gender gap that exists between women and men in various countries is measured by 14 different variables in four key areas: economic participation and career opportunities, education, health and survival, political rights and opportunities.

During COVID-19 pandemic women were left behind in all state support programs, leading to an increase in unpaid work, reduced access to financial resources, a widening economic gap, and increased incidences of domestic violence.

According to the recent statistics the average Kazakhstani man is at work 7 hours more per week than the average Kazakhstani woman. But at the same time, Kazakhstani women are engaged in unpaid work 21 hours a week more than a Kazakhstani man. In Kazakhstan, women spend on average 12% more daily time on housework than men. It takes them 4 hours and 20 minutes, while for men it takes 1 hour and 25 minutes. The difference is almost three hours a day. The difference reaches 21 hours per week.<sup>34</sup>

To ensure the representation of women and youth at the decision-making levels for the first time in Kazakhstan gender quotas were introduced for party lists. According to the law, the country introduces quotas of at least 30% for persons under 29 years of age and women from the total number of persons included in the list of persons for registration of candidates for deputies of the Mazhilis and Maslikhat from one political party. As a result of the 2021 Parliamentary elections the representation of women in Mazhilis RK constituted 26% and 19% in Senate RK. As it is seen from the diagram the novelty did not bring the significant change in representation of women at legislative bodies of Kazakhstan.

Although in February 2022, Lyazzat Kaltayeva, the prominent civil society leader dealing with the promotion of the rights-based approach in disability and gender equality issues in Kazakhstan and other Central Asia countries was appointed as the Senator of the Parliament by the Presidential Decree. She participated in development of social policies, research and coordinated the disabled people's organizations in Central Asia. As the Chair of Shyrak, she participated in the promotion and realization of CPRD and CEDAW. In 2015, she was awarded with the Prize of Fighters for the Rights of PwDs by UNESCAP. So one representative of women with disabilities appeared in the national Parliament, which demonstrated certain progress in the promotion of women's rights and social justice.

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34 The Steppe <https://the-steppe.com/mneniya/pochemu-kazahstanskije-zhenshchiny-rabotayut-bolshe-a-poluchayut-menshe>



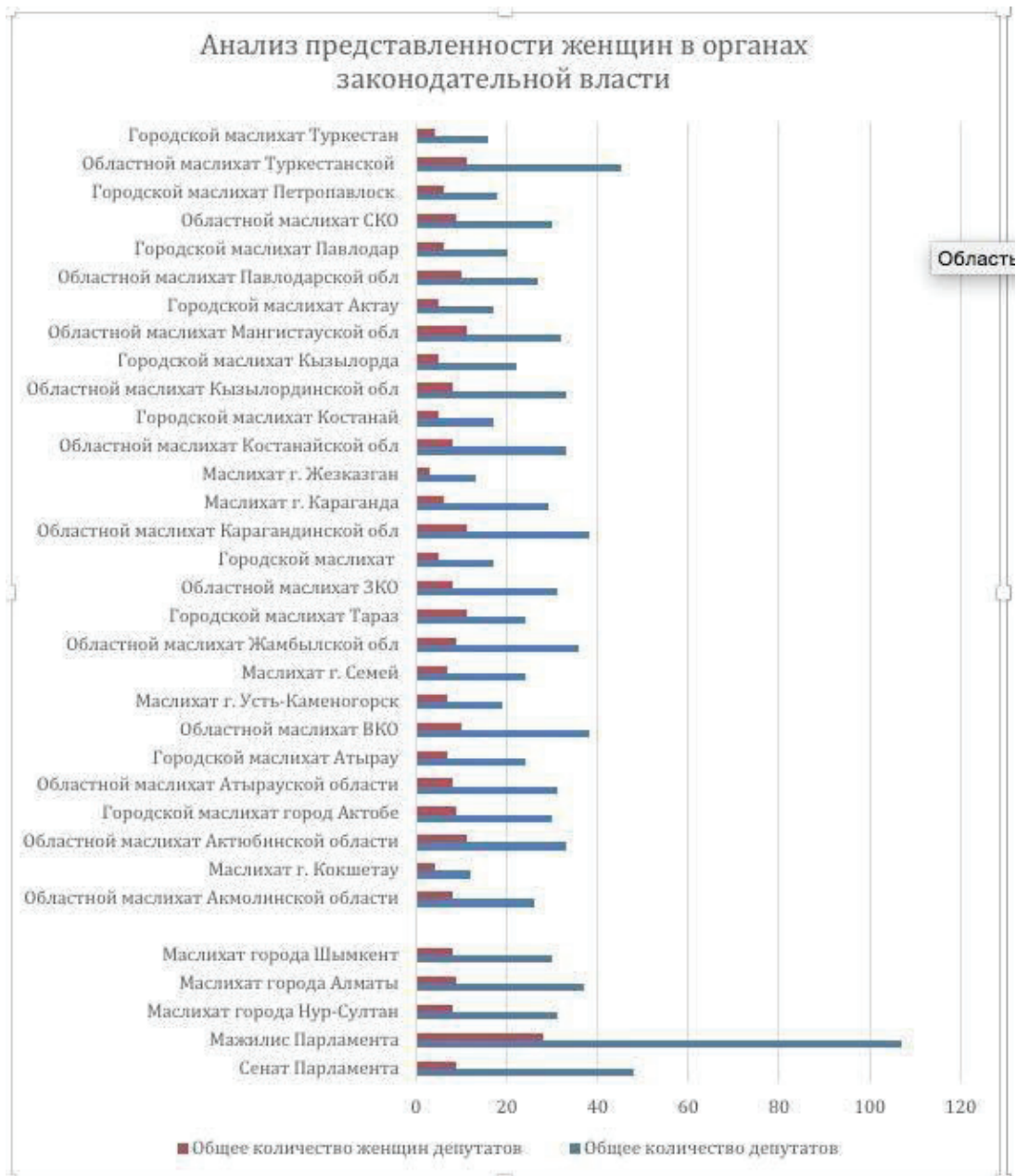


Diagram 1. Analysis of Representation of Women at Legislative Bodies of Kazakhstan.  
Source: Alliance of Female Forces.

	Deputies (male)	Deputies (female)
Senate (Upper Chamber)	48	9
Mazhilis (Lower Chamber)	107	28

### *Women and Healthcare*

Female medical workers compose the majority of frontline workers battling against the COVID-19. Their day-to-day challenges include high levels of exposure to the virus, long working hours, psychological stress, fatigue, occupational burnout, stereotypes, among others. The WHO Country Office in Kazakhstan has launched a one-year project funded by the Netherlands to study and provide recommendations to improve gender equality in the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project focused on studying female frontlines workers and the inclusion of women at all levels of decision-making in the Kazakh healthcare system. The WHO jointly with the UN Women and the UNFPA shared the survey results and recommendations with the Kazakh government and key stakeholders to help promote total gender parity in the country's healthcare system.

*“The COVID-19 pandemic exposes existing gender inequalities as well as inequalities that people with disabilities face. According to the assessment, almost three out of four respondents reported that they do not have the opportunity to contact the district inspector, social and psychological, medical services and other institutions. People with hearing disabilities require sign language interpreter services, which limits their access to appropriate assistance. To help these people, the National Commission on Women, Family and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the support of UNFPA has developed video materials with information on how to protect yourself from coronavirus infection, what steps to take before leaving home and returning home, and also in the event of violence” Julia Valese said, UNFPA Representative in Kazakhstan.*

COVID-19 has exacerbated barriers for girls to equal access to information and education, according to the UN; whereas victims lack sufficient protection, and judicial and police officers and service providers are not trained to identify, prevent and respond to violence against women.

## **6. Militarism and Conflict**

Human rights situation and democratic spaces in the country continue to be challenged. Following the parliamentary elections in January 2021, peaceful demonstrators were detained, and there were concerted measures to prevent observers in the domestic election.

During the campaign period, mass arrests were carried out and on election day, the authorities illegally detained at least 350 peaceful protesters in 10 different cities. The Kazakh authorities routinely prevent peaceful protests critical of government policies from taking place. In fact, the law on peaceful assembly and the amendments

to the laws on political parties and elections adopted in May 2020 fail to respect the fundamental rights of the citizens of Kazakhstan.

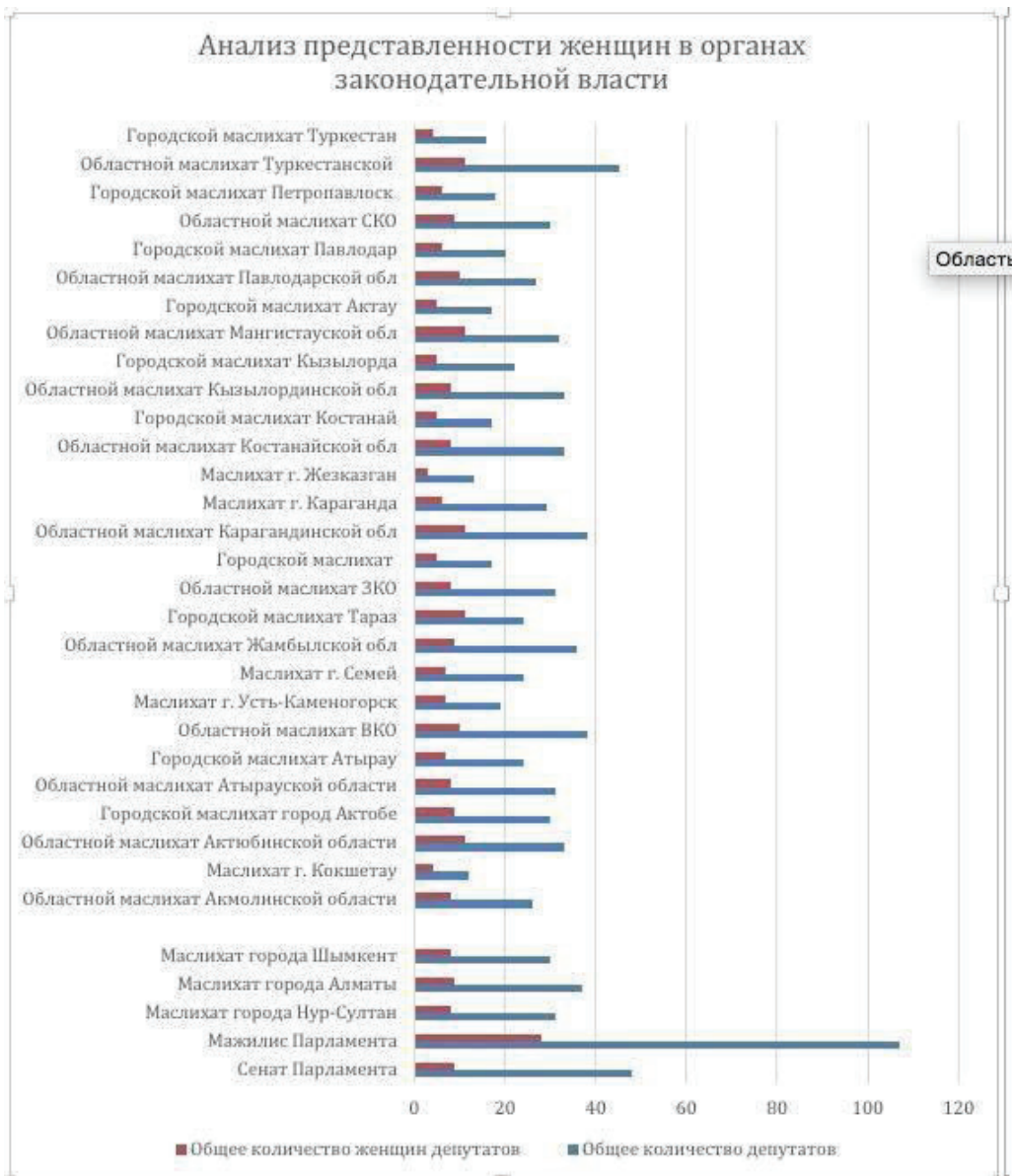
Following the elections, a number of demonstrations in several cities were conducted to protest the results. Activists were detained for several hours by the police. Some were also badly injured and needed urgent medical attention while detained.

While there are a lot of controversies on how state forces treat civil society movements, the military and police continue to get a high proportion of the government budget every year.

## **7. Patriarchal Authoritarian Governance**

In Kazakhstan, there is a lack of policy to address gender inequality in decision-making. There is a challenge in how women are being represented in decision making levels. To address this, gender quotas were introduced in the party list system to ensure the representation of women and youth at the decision-making levels. According to the law, the country will introduce quotas of at least 30% for persons under 29 years of age and women from the total number of persons included in the list of persons for registration of candidates for deputies of the Mazhilis and Maslikhat. As a result of the 2021 Parliamentary Elections, the representation of women in Mazhilis RK constituted 26% and 19% in the Senate RK. As it is seen from the diagram the novelty did not bring the significant change in representation of women at legislative bodies of Kazakhstan as yet.

*Diagram 1. Analysis of Representation of Women at Legislative Bodies of Kazakhstan.  
Source: Alliance of Female Forces.*



The combination of economic and social tensions caused by the pandemic, as well as restrictions on movement, have affected everyone and especially the most vulnerable people, including women and girls, people with disabilities, the elderly, those who suffer from various diseases. In Kazakhstan, there is a 50% increase in the number of calls received by the government office on assistance for victims of domestic violence in the first half of April 2020, compared to February 2020. Fifty percent (50%) of girls are subjected to violent methods of upbringing in the family, including 21% subjected to physical punishment, and 45% experience psychological

aggression and violence. At the same time, support services for women at risk of violence face cuts and closures, and shelters are often unable to accommodate new people due to fear of infection and movement restrictions. This situation remained unchanged.

*“Domestic violence is a persistent problem in Kazakhstan and it is already happening even before the pandemic. However, during the pandemic, the situation with domestic violence worsened, because of the prolonged lockdowns so victims and their abusers were forced to stay together « the Chairman of the Board of the Union of Crisis Centers Zulfiya Baysakova said during an online briefing at the multimedia press center Sputnik Kazakhstan.*

*“The crisis centers of Kazakhstan, based on the orders of the chief sanitary doctor of Kazakhstan, could not accept victims of domestic violence without undergoing PCR tests. This requirement worsened the situation, and a lot of women, not having permits to move around the city or between regions, were left alone with their abusers. Therefore, we continue to appeal to the government to address this» Zulfiya Baysakova added.*

According to the internal statistics of the Union of Crisis Centers, in 2020, their hotlines received 2,500 calls on domestic violence cases, while in 2019, there were about a thousand calls. This year, about 7,000-8,000 people received consultations from social workers, and more than 9,000 people received shelter. In total, there are 11 state crisis centers in Kazakhstan with shelter departments for victims of domestic violence. Among NGOs, only 7 crisis centers have shelters, the rest (38 crisis centers) - provide only consultations and social support. At the same time, in rural areas throughout the country, one can count 5-6 crisis centers, Zulfiya Baysakova stated. In Kazakhstan, women’s organizations and activists call on the government and development partners to ensure effective dialogue with civil society to put women’s needs at the heart of efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and then recover. As a result, some suggestions were incorporated into practical recommendations jointly prepared by UN Women and UNFPA in Kazakhstan on changes in legislation and regulatory standards related to preventing and responding to domestic violence in a COVID-19 emergency.

In Kazakhstan, a law on the prevention of domestic violence has been in effect for 10 years, but the level of violence in our country has not decreased during this time, but, on the contrary, it continues to grow, and this circumstance, according to Aigul Nurkina, the deputy of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, head of the working group on the draft law, makes us to adopt a new law. The initiative to develop a draft law in the field of family and domestic violence was supported in the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan on February 27, 2020. On March 2, the original version of the draft law was posted in

the public domain on the Mazhilis website so that any citizen of our country could get acquainted with it and send his proposals to the deputies on the [draft law](#). A working group was created, it included more than 50 people. And these are not only deputies of the Parliament of both chambers, but also representatives of the National Commission for Women and Family and Demographic Policy under the President, central government bodies, non-governmental organizations, legal scholars and notaries. Currently, the draft law has been sent for revision with further consideration in early 2021.

## B. Priorities Issues

### Right to Work: Women with Disabilities

In Kazakhstan, women with disabilities face discrimination in terms of realization of their right to work. Nowadays in the country, there is the lack of comprehensive legislation against discrimination, which includes direct and indirect discrimination on all grounds of discrimination, including gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity.

In Kazakhstan, there still exists a list of jobs, which women are banned from being employed in. This list is discriminatory in its nature as it violates the right of women to equal employment, equal choice of occupation. Article 26 of the Labor Code prohibits the employment of women in jobs involving heavy physical labor or harmful and hazardous working conditions on the basis of the list of banned occupations for women, which was approved by order No. 944 of the Minister of Health and Social Development of 8 December 2015. It further notes that different occupations are prohibited for women to “ensure maternity protection and also safeguard women’s health”.<sup>35</sup> In 2018, the list was narrowed from 287 banned occupations to 219 professions following the adoption of the Decree of the Minister of Labour and Social Security of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 13 August 2018. Nevertheless, jobs in more than 20 spheres are still forbidden for women which constitutes direct discrimination and limits women’s economic opportunities. These include jobs in the areas of transportation, railway transport (above or below ground), river transport; driving tractors, earth movers and trucks, jobs related to thermal actions and vibrations, aerial and underground jobs, jobs inside a confined space, and jobs on derrick boats and floating units, firefighters, and more than 20 types of engine drivers. These are extremely important occupations in a country like Kazakhstan, where agriculture, cargo shipping, oil and gas industries are well developed.<sup>35</sup> The existence of such list contradicts: provisions of Points d

<sup>35</sup> 4\_kazakhstan\_feminist\_initiative\_feminita\_stmt.pdf (upr-info.org)

and f of Article 2; Subpoints b, c, and f of Point 1 of Article 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; Article 6, Points b of Article 7, and Point b of Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, women were further left behind in all state support programs, leading to an increase in unpaid work, reduced access to financial resources, a widening economic gap, and more incidences of domestic violence.

Prevailing legal and cultural restrictions towards women's autonomy in developing economies tend to prevent women with disabilities from accessing digital devices that could help overcome some of these restrictions. Lower female enrolment rates in higher education, especially in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), deters women from fully realizing the full range of opportunities and chances offered by digitalization. The gender pay gap still exists in this economy and accordingly, women are missing out on digital age opportunities. In addition, the current gender gaps in higher education and digital literacy that are particularly strong, deprive women of these opportunities, and they may hinder them to occupy those high-profile jobs in management, STEM occupations or entrepreneurship that are expected to flourish best in the digital age.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely deteriorated the situation of Kazakhstani women in terms of their economic status. Before the pandemic the majority of women ran their small or medium businesses or were employed there. Activity of women in small and medium-sized businesses has increased significantly over the past 5 years. Of the number of registered active entrepreneurs in the amount of 536,300, as of 1 January 2019, the share of women entrepreneurs was 43.2%. Moreover, in regions such as the Kostanay and Karaganda regions, the proportion of small and medium-sized businesses led by women has reached 48%. When registering a business, most women prefer to be self-employed. In 2019, 79.4% of Kazakhstani sole proprietors were women (vs 47.7 % in 2014). As such, in 12 regions and in the cities of Nur-Sultan and Almaty, the number of women entrepreneurs exceeds that of men.<sup>36</sup> The COVID-19 almost destroyed their businesses: many of them did not have digital skills to transfer their businesses online so they could not pay loans or even survive. They become more dependent on their partners and family members. Women with disabilities because of their special vulnerability experience gender-based violence including human trafficking and labour exploitation especially at home,

Gender norms result in women spending disproportionately more time than men in housework activities. The difference in the behavior of men and women depending

<sup>36</sup> National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21\* Kazakhstan A/HRC/WG.6/34/KAZ/1 (upr-info.org)

on employment is interesting. So, for example, a working man spends about 30 minutes on homework on weekdays, and a working woman spends 2 hours and 16 minutes. An unemployed man spends 1 hour 17 minutes on housework on weekdays, and an unemployed woman spends 4 hours 07 minutes. On weekends, a working woman's housework takes up 20% of the daily time, and a working man only 7.4%. Some excerpts from interviews with women:

*"I come home from work and start cooking dinner. While my husband is taking a shower, I'm playing with my daughter. Then we have dinner, he washes dishes. During this time, I manage to throw dirty things into the laundry. My husband turns on the computer and sticks to social networks or games, and I play with my daughter, hang up the washed things, wash dishes, prepare clothes for tomorrow, and put lunches in lunchboxes. In the morning I get up early to cook breakfast, prepare my daughter for kindergarten, then we go to work. And it repeats every day.*

*On weekends we do the cleaning together. My husband wipes the dust, washes the windows, bathroom tiles, window sills, and I - floors. Then we walked together. Once or twice a week, the husband cooks dinner.*

*He's good for me, he helps sometimes. Not like some other husbands. I know husbands who don't even wash dishes, consider it women's work. And mine, when my daughter was little, even changed diapers. But ironing is, of course, on me. How much do I spend on homework? Don't know. In the evening, all the time I'm not sleeping, I'm doing something..."*

Cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, caring for children, elderly relatives, planning the day and week — to go to a circle, to a doctor, to a hairdresser, to visit, what to wear, what to buy - this is in most cases exclusively a female patrimony.

To look into the raised problems Shyrak focused on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Goal 8 Decent job and economic growth) in relation to women with disabilities under the project. Shyrak monitored this issue through feminist development justice

Shyrak considers that it is important to recognise all forms of work, including unpaid care work. Bridge the gender pay gap for all workers; equal pay for equal work' which includes the concept of equal pay for equal or similar work, but also addresses the systemic undervaluing of work in female-dominated sectors, such as health care and education, including women with disabilities as workers, and commit to ratifying and implementing all international labor standards. Hold governments and businesses accountable to labor rights violations. End all forms of labor rights violations and ensure accountability including providing criminal liability for businesses/corporations and government officials complicit in the unlawful activity of corporations.



## 2. ASSESSMENT ON SDGS COMMITMENTS AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

### C. Architecture of SDGs Monitoring in the Country

The national architecture of SDGs implementation consists of the following components:

Coordination Council under the Deputy Prime Minister RK

Inter-ministerial Working Groups: Monitoring and Statistics

Peace People Planet Prosperity Partnership

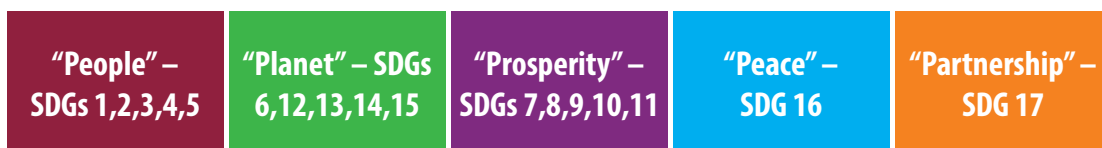
Coordination Body: Ministry of National Economy RK

Secretariat: Institute for Economic Research

To ensure consistency in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Coordination Board on Sustainable Development Goals, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, was established. The Ministry of National Economy is the coordinating body of the Board. The JSC Economic Research Institute, which provides expert and analytical support, serves as the Secretariat. The Board develops proposals for the creation of a unified policy for achieving the SDGs, coordinates the activities of inter-agency working groups, and prepares the Voluntary National Review. To ensure the effective organization of the Board's activities, five working groups have been established in five key areas of the 2030 Agenda, including:

- The "People" working group is responsible for analysing the issues of poverty eradication, gender equality, ensuring good health and education;
- The "Planet" working group deals with the issues of the sustainable use of terrestrial and water ecosystems and climate change;
- The "Prosperity" working group deals with the issues of inclusive growth and economic transformation;
- The "Peace" working group considers the targets related to building safe and peaceful societies, strong institutions and justice;
- The "Partnership" working group is responsible for issues related to the implementation of the SDGs, including global partnership issues, resource mobilization, capacity building and trade. The working groups include

representatives of government agencies, private sector and civil society, international organizations and independent experts.



Each interagency working group includes representatives from government agencies, civil society, international organizations, the private sector, as well as independent experts. The Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan ensures the timely collection and disaggregation of data, and prepared the statistical data annex and brochure for this Review. The Review is prepared by JSC Economic Research Institute of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Review preparation consists of several stages:

#### Preliminary work

During the initial stages, the representatives of five working groups familiarize themselves with the recommended UN methodology and approval was sought from relevant government agencies and working group members for the intended structure of the Review. Following this, relevant information and analytical data was collected from government bodies, interagency working groups, NGOs, international organizations and other relevant sources.

#### Approval process

To obtain comments and suggestions on the draft Review, extensive discussions in working groups were organized, involving NGOs, independent experts and international organizations. An announcement regarding the Review was posted on a special website, SDGS.KZ, where interested parties could also obtain advance information on planned events. During Review preparation, the five working groups held around 30 meetings. The suggestions, comments and recommendations regarding structure and content captured from these meetings were then integrated into the draft Review. Thus, experts had the opportunity to work on an updated draft document before each round of discussions.

By the time of submission of the Review’s key messages, a large-scale seminar was held with wide public involvement in order to finalize the substantive part of the Review. The sole focus of the seminar was to receive critical remarks and constructive feedback from the 50 NGO representatives in attendance. Unfortunately these NGOs do not represent the whole variety of civil society organizations dealing with SDG

topics; the most critical NGO representatives with democratic and critical views are not invited to such kinds of events to contribute to the national report. GONGOs or Government NGOs are invited to such events; and everyone knows that.<sup>37</sup>

There are currently more than 22,000 NGOs in Kazakhstan and every two years, the Civil Society Forum, a large-scale event, takes place. In 2018, the VIII Civil Society Forum was dedicated to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Kazakhstan. Within the framework of the Forum, dialogue platforms were organized for five key areas of the SDGs: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership.

#### Final stage

Having received approval from the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Review then submitted to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to be posted on the official UN website and presented at the High-level Political Forum.

In 2022, Kazakhstan will present a Voluntary National Review at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Five priority goals have been identified for this purpose. These are «Quality education», «Gender equality», «Conservation of marine ecosystems», «Conservation of Terrestrial ecosystems» and «Partnership for Sustainable Development».

In many respects, the 2030 Agenda coincides with the country's priorities as identified in the Strategy Kazakhstan-2050, the 2025 Strategic Development Plan, the Plan of the Nation, "100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms", the Five Social Initiatives of the Head of State and the «Ruhani Jangyru» programme. These programmes and initiatives are aimed at strengthening human capital, creating a sustainable economy and improving the quality of life of all segments of the population.

Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kazakhstan has made voluntary commitments to reduce greenhouse gases. In 2016, Kazakhstan ratified the Paris Agreement, under which a voluntary commitment was made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2030. The goal will contribute to sustainable economic development, as well as to the achievement of the long-term global goal of limiting the increase in global temperatures to well below 2°Celsius. The Government has approved a national greenhouse gas emission trading system that stimulates a reduction in CO2 emissions and investments in low-carbon development.

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<sup>37</sup> GONGO – government-organized non-governmental organization is a non-governmental organization that was set up or sponsored by a government in order to further its political interests and mimic the civic groups and civil society at home, or promote its international or geopolitical interests abroad.

The Sustainable Development Report 2021 contains country indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals and the latest available data, using both official data sources (UN, World Bank, etc.) and non-official sources (research institutes and non-governmental organizations). The report also presents quantitative thresholds for the SDGs achievement derived from scientific data for the SDGs. According to the survey data, Kazakhstan ranked 59 with 71.6 points, improving its position by 6 points (in 2020 - 65th). According to the Report in Kazakhstan for goal 5 “Gender Equality” there is stagnation; for goal 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth” Kazakhstan’s position has worsened.<sup>38</sup>

## **D. Roles of CSOs in the SDGs Processes**

The government have used the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to silence critics and adopt new repressive regulations. Human Rights Watch named Kazakhstan one of the countries where the situation with freedom of speech has deteriorated amid the pandemic.

The new restrictions to freedom of expression and freedom of association were introduced by the end of the year. The new resolution of the Central Elections Commission RK (CEC) dated 04 December 2020 was issued prior to the elections. A newly adopted CEC resolution required that non-profit organizations intending to observe elections have in their statute a declared objective of “implementation and protection of the political rights and freedoms of citizens”.

As it was mentioned earlier there is a shrinking civic space and democratic backslide can be observed in 2020-2021. The draft law on public control allegedly aimed at prevention of corruption at local and national levels contains provisions restricting NGO activities, and may adversely affect the CSO operational environment. The NGO independent experts elaborated the set of recommendations on improving the draft law which was not taken into consideration by the authorities.

Civil society in Kazakhstan has been facing many challenges and uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the experience and expertise of local CSOs in providing services in areas affected by the state of emergency, in most cases they have been excluded from the national coordination mechanism on crisis responses. Driven by self-initiative, CSOs have greatly contributed in filling the gaps and responding to the needs of citizens, especially to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. CSOs in Kazakhstan have been adjusting their operations and priorities to respond adequately to the emergency situation. CSOs in Kazakhstan

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<sup>38</sup> Sustainable Development Report 2021 - Sustainable Development Report (sdgindex.org)

have been mainly involved in humanitarian actions and providing various social services to the most vulnerable categories of the population.

The humanitarian aid in the form of hygiene products and personal protective equipment was organized for Tajik migrants stuck in the Zhybek Zholy border checkpoint between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. More than 600 labor migrants were stranded in Kazakhstan for weeks because of restrictions implemented to combat the coronavirus outbreak. CSO Sana Sezim, in cooperation with the IOM, provided humanitarian assistance to the migrants. CSOs in Kazakhstan were also taking the lead in advocating for transparency. In an open letter to the President, human rights defenders noted that government agencies often classify information about the spending of two billion tenge allocated to combat the pandemic as «for official use» and suggested legislative amendments to existing regulations. In its response, the MIOR recognized the need to change the procedures and announced the formation of the working group with the participation of civil society representatives.

Starting October 2020 the Ministry of Information and Social Development RK initiated the draft law on public oversight aimed at prevention of corruption at local and national levels. The Ministry plans to organize public discussions to discuss issues of the draft law with the participation of experts and representatives of the public. The CSO experts express their concerns over the draft law since it contains provisions restricting NGO activities, and may adversely affect the CSO operational environment.

According to the European Union Statement, the Kazakh authorities abuse vague and overly broad extremism laws to persecute the opposition and human rights defenders; whereas following this law, since 22 October 2020, the day on which the authorities announced the date of the elections, the number of politically motivated criminal cases has doubled, rising to 99, specifically on the basis of 'extremism' charges; whereas 69 of those concerned are in danger of imminent arrest, such as the activist Gulzipa Dzhauberova, and 11 activists were put under house arrest on trumped-up 'extremism' charges.<sup>39</sup>

The Kazakhstani Institute of Economic Research is working to create a Council on the SDGs consisting of the representatives of business and NGOs.

There is no unified civic movement in Kazakhstan that promotes the SDGs at national and local levels as in many other countries. The priorities of the great bulk of NGOs are different; there are more and more NGOs which received state support in various forms for the social projects (service providers) far from advocating SDGs. Most CSOs act in a consultative status without articulating the most pressing SDG issues.

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2021-0144\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2021-0144_EN.html)

Only few NGOs advocate real challenges and provide recommendations basically at international level. Unfortunately they are highly dependent on foreign funding to produce shadow reports, participate at international forums to highlight the real situation with SDGs, and monitor the situation in the region and countrywide. Meaning that they are not sustainable. The main barriers that prevent CSO leaders from being engaged into activities on monitoring and reporting SDGs are as the following:

- The lack of specific expertise of CSOs to monitor and report on human rights violations and doing research on the status quo in various areas of SDGs;
- CSOs self-censorship: to desire to be on a “safe side” being engaged only in tackling the issues supported by the state avoiding any possibilities of confronting it.
- The lack of funding to support the work on SDG engagement of CSOs; etc.

## **E. Financing and Resource Mobilization**

In 2020, Kazakhstan completed the work on the Assessment of development financing, which is required to assess the coverage of financing and the sufficiency of funds allocated to the SDGs in the country. Based on this, it is recommended to develop strategies for financing the SDGs, coordinate strategic and budgetary planning when financing the SDGs, strengthen the mechanism for monitoring and accountability of the SDGs, and update the Coordination Council for the SDGs through the creation of a High-Level Action Committee.

On November 7, 2020, the Joint United Nations (UN) Program on the Harmonization of Policy Measures and Financing with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the way to the development of an Integrated National Financing Framework (INSF) was officially launched in Kazakhstan. The program is funded by the United Nations Joint SDG Fund and implemented by three UN agencies, namely UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCAP. This project is a continuation of the ongoing support of the Government of Kazakhstan from the UN in the implementation of the global Agenda for Sustainable Development for the period up to 2030.<sup>40</sup>

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40 Агентства ООН запустили Совместную программу ООН по согласованию политики и финансирования с ЦУП (unicef.org)

## 3. PLANNING FDJ MONITORING

### F. Profile of communities or constituencies you work with

Issue in Focus: the lack of inclusive state policies to protect women with disabilities from unemployment and unequal treatment on labor rights.

45 employed women with various types of disabilities (mobility, visual, hearing, general disease) residing in the city of Almaty and Almaty Oblast took part in the field research. Women with disabilities working in the city and the village were invited for field research for specific purposes -- to reveal any differences between working conditions and attitudes in the city and the village settings. The participants of research work in various industries, hold different jobs, own their businesses, have their own families or single-run families. The diversity of women's representation gave us a comprehensive picture of what is the situation of employment of women with disabilities in labor marker

### G. Impact Objectives

45 women with disabilities in the city of Almaty and Almaty Oblast are empowered to speak up and know how to stop double discrimination at work and in their businesses by the end of 2021 in order to push for more inclusive state policies to protect them from unemployment and unequal treatment on labour rights.

### H. Goals

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

### I. Target

Target 5.1 End discrimination against women and girls

Target 5.C: Adopt and strengthen policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality

Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Target 8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

## J. SDG/National/Development Justice Indicators

- the number of WWDs realizing their labor rights. Unemployment rate by WWDs.
- the number of WWDs engaged in running small and medium enterprises.
- average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities
- the law/state policies ensuring equal pay and safe working conditions for women with disabilities.
- the state programs that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises of WWDs?
- the availability of bank programs aimed at financing SMEs run by women with disabilities (access to financial services and financial resources)
- the range of business education available for WWDs.
- the number of employers willing to hire WWDs as employees.
- frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by WWDs
- system to track and make public allocations for gender equality and economic women's empowerment

## K. Research Topic

Gender equality and decent work for WWDs in the city of Almaty and Almaty Oblast

## L. Key Research Questions

What is the impact of the lack of inclusive state policies to protect women with disabilities from unemployment and unequal treatment on labor rights?

## M. Methodologies

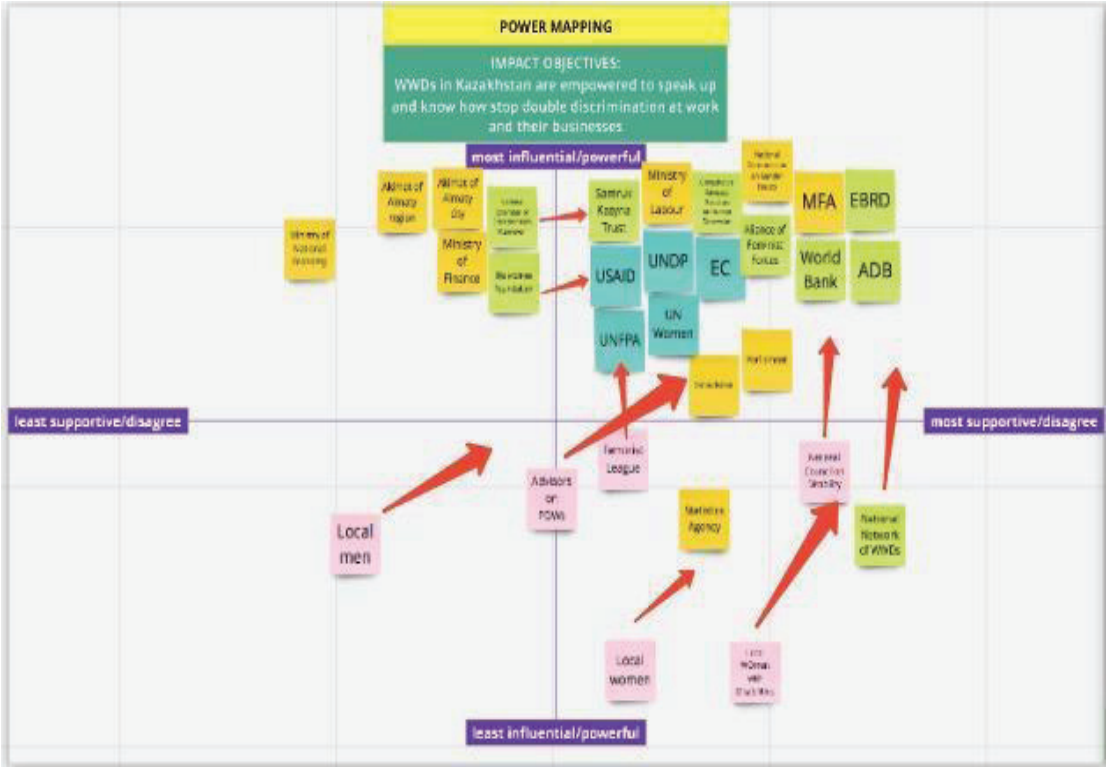
- Desk review
- Focus group discussion
- In-depth interview



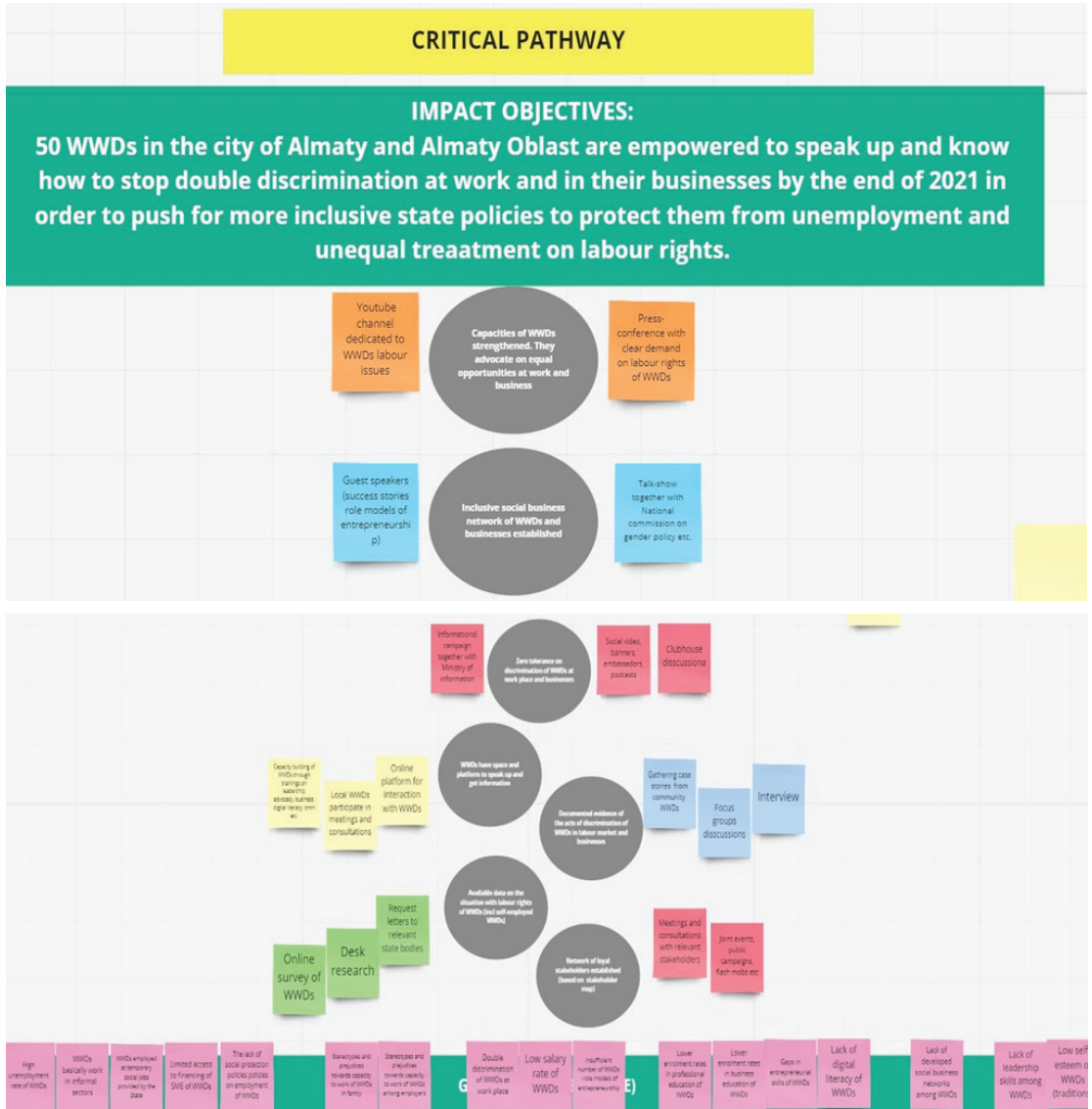
- Consultation workshop at community level for women
- Consultation workshop at district level (contribution for completion of the manual)
- Policy brief and a seminar to disseminate the policy brief at local level

### N. Power Mapping

There are a lot of stakeholders that are highly supportive and influential in the area of gender equality and economic empowerment of WWDs. It is quite important to build with them trustworthy relationships in order to succeed in attaining the goals of the project. They are basically the representatives of international organizations and development agencies, national holding companies, movement of women, Ombudsman RK, etc. There are some actors such as some men, local women, local WWDs, etc less influential, but they can contribute to situation analysis and raising public discussion on the issue. In addition, there are some actors who are least supportive but most influential. Our goal is to move them from one zone to another, to make them more loyal to our issues. There are a number of methods that could be utilized for this purpose. Among them are information campaigns, storytelling, open dialogues, etc.



## 0. Critical Pathway



More research should be done to study the situation with economic rights of women with disabilities and patriarchal setting of society in their lives. The violation of their rights has 'latent' character since the majority of women with disabilities are scared to speak up and raise their voices. It happens slowly. More women with disabilities should be mobilized to get rid of negative patriarchal impact. They could unite their efforts with other women because they have common agenda and joint targets. Unemployment and employment in the informal sectors of economies are

common for all women; just a slight difference that women with disabilities are more vulnerable. Training courses and consultations provided by Shyrak and other NGOs help them to be equipped with specific knowledge and skills on how to stop discrimination at work and become more independent and self-reliant. Awareness raising campaigns targeted at companies reach their goals and good cases of employment raise from year to year. More women and men with disabilities engage in political life advocating for changes in financial and economic areas as well. The project contributes to the formation of society with equal rights and restoration of development justice for women and women with disabilities.

## **P. Theory of Change**

Capacity Building Component:

- Documented evidence of the acts of discrimination of women with disabilities in labour rights
- Available data on the situation with labor rights of women with disabilities

Knowledge, Tools, Resources.

- Capacity of women with disabilities strengthened. They advocate on equal opportunities at work and business
- The video clip produced serves as a tool for raising awareness among women with disabilities and the rest members of society about the facts of discrimination women with disabilities at workplace, and how to counteract these incidents.

Advocacy Opportunities

- Network of loyal stakeholders established (based on stakeholder map)
- Zero tolerance on discrimination of WWDs at workplace and businesses

Movement Architecture

- Inclusive social business network of women with disabilities and businesses established
- Women with disabilities have space and platform to speak up and get information

## 4. THEMATIC ANALYSIS – WOMEN’S PRIORITIES

### a. Findings of your research based on the specific goals, targets and indicators you identified

#### *Employment*

The 45 employed women with disabilities Almaty and Almaty Oblast participated in focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. They work in different companies dealing with trade, commerce, medicine, tourism, charity, entertainment industry etc. They shared their opinions on the situation of employment of women with disabilities and unpaid care work they do regularly.

The respondents stressed the fact that it is quite difficult for women with disabilities to find a job in the open labor market (formal/informal). On one hand it happens because of prevailing negative stereotypes towards women with disabilities in employers' heads – they prefer to choose other candidates who will not require creating special conditions and look different than others. On the other hand, the majority of women with disabilities do not possess necessary qualifications to be competitive in comparison with others. It takes place because they received home education (they did not attend inclusive classes), which is of poor quality. As some respondents noted there is the lack of will to change their lives among the great bulk of women with disabilities – they get state disability allowances, they do not leave their homes frequently, they are very dependent on their close surroundings (relatives/friends), and have passive attitudes. Even the social working places created by the state at social NGOs for them do not consider it as a job, they consider it as another state disability

allowance that should be paid to them.

Today, more than 705,000 people with disabilities live in Kazakhstan, of which 430,000 are of working age, 181,000 are of retirement age and 94,000 are children. Only a quarter of people with disabilities of working age are



involved in work (Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan). Unfortunately, there is no national statistics on employed women with disabilities or women with disabilities running their own businesses in Kazakhstan.

Even if employed (most probably in informal economy) they are paid 2-4 times less than employees without any disabilities having the same qualifications. They have to work as “normal” employees 8 hours a day; without any special working conditions in order not to be fired. As a result, it badly influences their health, and they have to quit the job soon. Public transportation is another challenge for employed women with disabilities.

***“We have to hide from our employers that we have any kind of disability since otherwise they will kick us out...For our families we need this job desperately... to survive... At home we have to do all the household chores...because it was usually that way in our families for centuries..Nobody argued and we can’t...” - Almaty women respondents stressed.***

#### *Access to infrastructures and facilities*

It is a big problem with transportation even in the city. There were some cases when bus drivers did not provide help to the passengers with disabilities, and it was very risky and dangerous to get out of the buses. Many women with disabilities prefer staying at home rather than risking their lives.

Those respondents who run their own businesses (accounting services) have more freedom to choose when and how many hours they work every day, and manage their working conditions. Moreover, they provide services to the population virtually at the same prices as owners without disabilities. The most important factor as they said is the quality of work they provide to their clients in a timely manner.

#### *Unpaid care work*

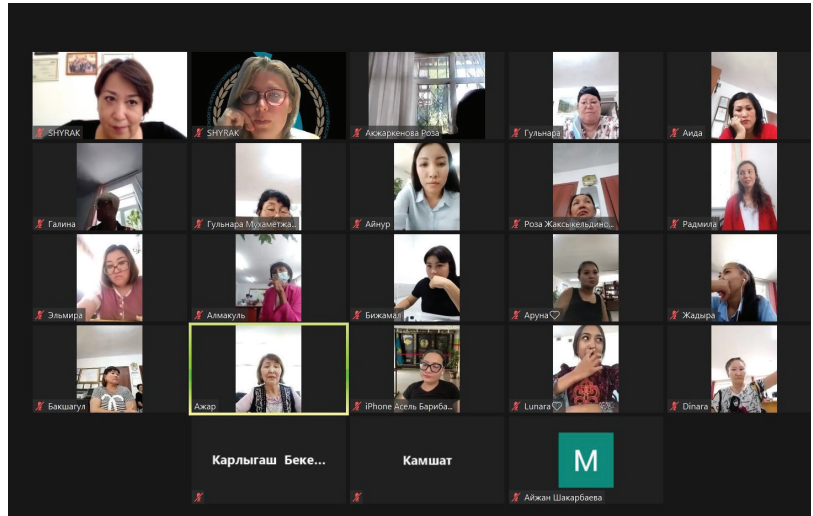
Similar to “ordinary” women they have to provide care and do housework for their families upon coming back home. They spend more hours on household chores because of disability. For instance, women with disabilities can spend up to 2 hours cooking for their family, whereas “normal” women spend an hour or forty minutes.

Caring for their little kids is another challenge for them – employers are not happy to have an employee with disabilities having a little kid. They have to hide their disability as well as the fact of having a little kid in order to retain the working place.

***“We have to survive ...we have to struggle to earn a living and raise our kids... That is a reality.” – G. said, one of the respondents.***

## b. Analysis based on the findings

Women with disabilities quite often do not seek jobs in the labor market. Because of low self-esteem and the



lack of competitive education they do not even consider the open labor market as an option. For women with disabilities, it is easier to find a job at social NGOs. The government subsidies such “social working places” and they do not face discrimination there. But the salaries are not competitive and there are less opportunities to be integrated into society. In addition, such working places exist until the state program operates, and they are temporary (less than 12 months). So as many respondents noted it is not a solution for them in terms of sustainable decent jobs.

Working on social working places provided by the government through NGOs for women with disabilities and caring for their families is quite a complicated issue.

As one of the respondent noted:

***“...It requires from me more efforts and expenses to reconcile family and work balance... For ordinary women the certain household chore require half an hour while for me it will take two hours to do that...even if I came earlier from work... To understand that one should have a desire...but who will do if not me?”***

Public awareness campaigns on equal capabilities of women with disabilities targeted at heads of companies are seen as a necessity. The negative stereotypes should be removed to open economic opportunities for women with disabilities.

Nowadays running own businesses is a good solution for women with disabilities in terms of making enough money for a living. They can accommodate their accessibility as they need, manage their time for raising their kids, caring for families, etc. In this regard banks should provide loans to women with disabilities on equal footing as to other citizens of the country. Business should become more affordable for women with disabilities.

Some quotes from our respondents:

***“I run accounting business...I work remotely...or from the office...I choose by myself My clients are happy with the quality of the services provided by our***

*accountants (they even do not know that our employees are wheelchair users...It is good or bad I don't know but they do not need to know that...they just need to pay for the accounting services of good quality, they do that."*

*"Some employers consider that they have done us /women with disabilities/ a favor by hiring us for certain positions... He can come to my working place and may touch my shoulders or breathe near my ear whispering ...I do not know how to react. I need this job..."*

*"Working remotely is quite good for our families ...we can do several tasks...not wasting the time for traveling to my working place...My kids are happy when their mom at home"*

*"I have to pay from my pocket to my friend or a social worker to cook dinner, clean house, meet my kid from the school since I am not in a position to do that myself... It is quite expensive but I have to move and be a role model for my kid..."*

*"For rural women with disabilities it is more difficult to find a job and go to work because of the broken roads...and the lack of elevators in the buildings...The only option is to work remotely."*

*"The majority of women with disabilities have to work in informal sectors of the economy... They are not provided with social security measures. We even have no right to complain... because we are not officially registered at work. The employers pay at their own disposal... the salary is low..."*

### **c. Women's initiatives and actions**

There were some changes in practices of the community:

- Some women with disabilities initiate by themselves **online discussions on the pressing issues in employment or housework/division of labor at home.**
- Some women with disabilities **organized self-help groups** to get friendly support and seek advice on how to sort out the raised concerns and troubles.
- Some women with disabilities decided to be **more active in public and political life** to voice their issues (especially in employment area) by themselves. Gulmira joined the party, and is promoting her agenda through it; Tatiana became the head of NGO, and raises employment issues at different levels, etc.

Shyrak serves as a linking point to support their activities. Shyrak utilizes such occasions to update on recent news and raise awareness on existing support programs.

## 5. COMMON GROUND ANALYSIS FOR THE THEME OF HLPF 2021

The theme for HLPF 2021 was *Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.*

Kazakhstan has undertaken a number of steps to ensure the smooth and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 were dramatic for people and put out of track the SDG implementation in many countries including Kazakhstan. Some priorities were revealed and identified such as resilience of health systems, equitable access to vaccine; social protection; challenges with learning/education; impacts on gender and economic development.

The President of Kazakhstan stated that the government had spent approx. 13 billion US dollars on the fight against coronavirus infection, which is 8% of Kazakhstan's GDP.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the gaps and ineffectiveness of the healthcare system. Hospitals were not adequately equipped with the modern medical equipment and the medical staff found themselves vulnerable to the coronavirus because of the lack of medical suits and other protection measures. The consequences of lockdown measures and the lack of information on medical aid available, and fees for testing made essential services inaccessible for some vulnerable groups of population.

On 03 November 2020, the Committee on Financial Monitoring informed that they arrested the ex-minister of Public Health RK Elzhan Birtanov on the ground of suspicion in the grand embezzlement of state monies. Various unnamed media sources informed that he was accused of the embezzlement of 526 million KZT (1,2 million USD) allocated from the state budget for digitalization purposes<sup>41</sup>. Now he is home detained.

Kazakhstan has developed its own vaccine from the COVID-19 called QazCovid-in. It is also supposed to utilize the Russian vaccine called Sputnik V. The Karaganda pharmaceutical complex has launched the production of the Sputnik V vaccine as part of the implementation of agreements between the presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia. It is planned to produce 2 million doses of vaccine in total<sup>42</sup>. In December 2020 the first volunteers tested the QazCovid-in vaccine, the analogue of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine and the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine. They were paid KZT 200,000 (475 USD) for testing. Volunteers will receive reimbursement in the amount of KZT

41 <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31025239.html>

42 [https://forbes.kz/process/medicine/v\\_kazahstane\\_nachalos\\_proizvodstvo\\_rossijskoy\\_vaktsinyi\\_ot\\_koronavirusa/?utm\\_source=forbes&utm\\_medium=trend](https://forbes.kz/process/medicine/v_kazahstane_nachalos_proizvodstvo_rossijskoy_vaktsinyi_ot_koronavirusa/?utm_source=forbes&utm_medium=trend)



500,000 (1188 USD) in the event if the QazCovid-in vaccine adversely affect them and they will become disabled or die as a result of the vaccination<sup>43</sup>.

The mass vaccination was launched in February 2021. First of all the medical workers, pedagogues, students, law enforcement officers, the representatives of state social and medical institutions as well as representatives of risk groups were vaccinated on a voluntary basis. The vaccine produced by Pfizer/BioNTech was delivered to Kazakhstan only in the second half of 2021. In the meantime, the Kazakh QazCovid-in and Russian Sputnik V vaccines were utilized.

A study conducted prior to COVID-19 pandemic showed that 17% of ever-partnered women reported experiencing violence from their intimate partner. Almost a quarter (24%) of women who had experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence suffered from all three forms of partner violence at some point in their lives. In March, during the quarantine measures Nongovernmental organizations, as well as government officials, have noted a rise in domestic violence cases throughout the country. According to the Ministry of Interior, domestic violence has increased by more than 40% since the start of the first lockdown in Kazakhstan, compared to the same period last year. 33 people have died as a result of domestic abuse since the country first introduced COVID-19 lockdown measures.

In Kazakhstan, the COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in substantial learning losses and is pushing many more students into functional illiteracy. Education gaps between girls and boys are not as wide as between those in rural and urban areas, and between the rich and the poor. The differential access and effectiveness of remote teaching is widening learning gaps across students. The problem of pupils' access to digital technologies may affect children with special needs, inmates of orphanages, who had difficulties with access to secondary education even before the pandemic. There is a lack of properly designed study materials and computer software for people with sensory impairments – such as sight issues, hearing impairment and physical disability – and a shortage of adapted versions of commonly used applications like Zoom.

Unemployment increased by 46% during the pandemic in Kazakhstan.

Medical workers, just like other citizens, were not provided with personal protective equipment. Doctors stayed in medical institutions around the clock and worked overtime. All this caused a large number of infected doctors; The largest case of mass infection of doctors was recorded in the city hospital of Almaty. Sixty percent of doctors were infected there (according to official data that was presented at the end of June)

43 <https://tengrinews.kz/news/500-tyisyach-tenge-vyiplatyat-sluchae-smerti-dobrovoltsa-426285/>

The group of 650 migrant workers, including women, children and students stuck in the Kazakh-Uzbek border. They faced harsh conditions, lack of water and food, basic sanitary facilities, and shelters. The migrants had to stay outdoors while waiting at the border.

The process of receiving financial aid provided to persons who lost their income from the Kazakh government turned into a big challenge. The complexity in the application led to failure in receiving aid.

During the pandemic, amendments have been introduced to laws concerning the freedom of information. Vulnerable groups, people with special needs, persons with no access to the internet did not have access to information.<sup>44</sup>

The Government of Kazakhstan has set up an SDG affairs Office under the Ministry of National Economy RK. There is preparation of monitoring specialists on SDGs and UPR, and NGOs are developing monitoring tools for them.

The next Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for 2022 could be prepared and reviewed jointly by the government and the representatives of NGOs, CSOs, DPOs, and private sector.

One can see several improvements as a result of recommendations made by the other governments during the 'defense' of VNR:

- Kazakhstan has included women and men with disabilities into the 3% quota for the Parliament seats;
- In Kazakhstan the death penalty was abolished completely;
- More business opportunities came up for women and men with disabilities;
- More women with disabilities 'were allowed' to become mothers: they received medical support during pregnancy and baby birth.

Creation of the Working Group on SDG under the Parliament RK, the representatives of CSOs should be the part of it.

National NGOs like Shyrak are trying to reach out to various international organizations and platforms in order to become members or use their platforms to report on the realization of international commitments by the country (shadow reports). The main focus: gender equality, inclusion and disability issues.

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<sup>44</sup> Impact of COVID-19. Kazakhstan 2020.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Nowadays there is low engagement of civil society organizations into the agenda of SDGs at the national and international levels. There is weak collaboration of state bodies, UN and civil society organizations on the implementation of SDGs. The lack of updated and quality national data on SDGs available in open sources (the national websites on SDGs are under construction). The Government of Kazakhstan has not acknowledged the crucial role of CSOs in SDG implementation, and may hinder their activities under various pretexts. Independent CSOs suffer from limited access to 'independent' funding to carry out monitoring activities. The emergency restrictions on civic freedoms could set the scene for a longer-term clampdown on civic voice. Censorship and self-censorship may deteriorate the human rights situation. Limited/Lack of access to the Internet may silence independent civic voices.

Below is the set of recommendations to the government, businesses, and international organizations that came from consultations/interviews/focus group discussions with NGO leaders, independent experts and women with disabilities:

### Recommendations to networks of CSOs and Businesses

- Accelerate efforts on monitoring the localization and implementation of SDGs, particularly the SDG16+: gathering the data, developing reports, and advocacy.
- Make efforts to be included into the Coordination Council on SDG under the Government RK.
- Increased citizen participation in government responses to COVID-19.
- Run meetings with the relevant Ministries responsible for SDG implementation.
- Create the interactive (real time updating) dashboard on progress made regarding the realization of SDG/targets/indicators (national data + stakeholder's data): comparable with international indicators.
- Do CSO/stakeholder analysis on the implementation of the VNR and UPR recommendations and put forward suggestions with regard to the improvement of their implementation.
- Run meetings with the MFA RK, Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission, National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family Policy under the President RK regarding our readiness to contribute to national reports on VNR and UPR, and assist with the implementation of previous VNR and UPR recommendations.
- Advocating for creating the Working Group on SDG under the Parliament RK, the representatives of CSOs should be the part of it.

- Propose and advance the suggestion to prepare VNR on a 2-year basis
- Discuss implementation issues with the Parliamentarians: developing a long-term action plan with them.
- Promote the alignment of national legislation with the requirements of the key binding instruments.
- Advocate for the ratification of the main human rights treaties and implement resolutions made to Kazakhstan (based on VNR and UPR recommendations).
- Build trustworthy relationships with the business community to collect data and cases regarding human rights violations in their areas of work (meetings/presentations).
- Involve CSO independent expertise on monitoring trial decisions in respect to cases of bribery and corruption.

## Recommendations to Government

- Speed up the progressive realization of the universal goals.
- The VNR should include a chapter entitled «Views from All Sectors within Society,» which briefly presents the inputs provided by civil society and volunteer networks, youth, academia, and the private sector: overall views on sustainable development, challenges, and recommendations.
- Use SDGs as a framework for sustainable recovery and transformation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to address the post-crisis recovery responses.
- Civil Society should share responsibilities on achieving the SDGs.
- Document and share existing SDG initiatives and solutions that have helped the most vulnerable communities endure the pandemic.
- Engage key stakeholders effectively: to ensure that different voices are heard.
- Integrate key activities on COVID-19 preparedness and response into existing activities.
- Continue civic advocacy and monitoring efforts that promote transparent decision-making on crisis-response activities.
- Ensure that all measures taken to address the crisis respect and uphold human rights, the rule of law, protect the civic space and prevent democratic backsliding.
- Work together across the sectors to support and complement as much as possible the efforts of multiple stakeholders.

- Coordinate joint program activities and share lessons showing democracy's advantages in crises.
- Make efforts to engage with communities most left behind and put in place solutions that empower all members of society to participate in the 2030 Agenda implementation.
- During COVID-19 pandemic any restrictive measures must be legitimate and proportionate, limited in time, non-discriminatory, transparent, and should not hamper the effective exercise and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- To ensure gender equality at decision making level including for women with disabilities facing double discrimination.
- To introduce antidiscrimination law protecting women from all forms of discrimination. Unpaid care work should be recognized and should be paid.
- To ensure equal access to vaccines for all the vulnerable groups of population.
- To combat all forms of violence against women, including by ensuring effective and accessible reporting channels and protection measures that are sensitive to victims' needs and confidentiality; urges an end to impunity and action to ensure appropriate criminal sanctions against perpetrators, including in cases of domestic violence;
- To ensure inclusive work environments including the right to unionise and collective bargaining and a living wage, protection against all forms of gender-based violence including human trafficking and exploitation, discrimination in the world of work, and the right for their chosen work to be treated and viewed with dignity
- To criminalize domestic violence as a stand-alone offense, and to ensure criminal sanctions against perpetrators; to deem shelters and services for survivors of domestic violence 'essential services' and to facilitate access to them for all women and girls (including with disabilities), especially during the coronavirus crisis.
- To ensure a free and safe environment for bloggers, researchers, and independent journalists exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- Place the SDGs at the center of the COVID-19 response/recovery to introduce measures for economic and social inclusion that leave no one behind, including the future generations.
- Refine current laws and policies to be more effective; eradicate Gender Based Violence (GBV) at home and in the workplace, provide related laws.

- Initiate economic stimulus actions to widening social protection to ensure the livelihoods and wellbeing of most marginalized populations including women, children, youths, and people with disabilities.
- Ensure the coverage of children with various types of disabilities with inclusive education in all regions of the country.
- Develop specific economic support programs for women with disabilities taking into account the economic impact of COVID-19 on them.
- The implementation of the minimum wage and living wage for the women workers should be ensured.
- Women with disabilities should be engaged in the social security Fund and social security scheme. National and local discourse on engaging women workers needs to be prioritized.
- The National statistics should focus on the status and engagement of the informal women workers with disabilities.
- The local and federal governments should be held accountable for the data on informal sectors.
- There should be specific national policies and programs to recognize, redistribute and reduce the unpaid care work of women.
- The government should provide subsidies on the materials and equipment that reduce the unpaid care work.
- The media should create and disseminate contents, art and literature on men's engagement in the household chores and change the patriarchal gender norms.
- There should be further study on informal women workers with disabilities and the impact on unpaid care work.
- The state should provide adequate financial, human and infrastructural resources to ensure access of women with disabilities to decent jobs.
- The private sector needs to follow the pillars of decent work developed by the ILO and not contribute to a race to the bottom. This is not fulfilled by corporate social responsibility endeavors.
- Awareness should be created among workers and employers on Law and policies related to Labor rights and social security schemes.
- There should be Establishment of Effective grievance mechanism focusing on women workers with disabilities of formal/informal sectors and its implementation at all levels.

- Government should conduct regular monitoring to ensure the women workers safety and security.
- Awareness on workplace violence and complaint registration or Helpline numbers should be provided to the workers' women with disabilities in appropriate formats.
  - Introduction of comprehensive legislation against discrimination, which includes direct and indirect discrimination and all grounds of discrimination, including gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity.
  - To introduce amendments to the law on peaceful assemblies to simplify the procedure for the holding of a public gathering.
  - To bring in line with the international standards the 2011 law on religious activity and religious associations.
  - To ensure equal representation of women at decision making levels.
  - The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities should be ratified shortly.
  - The primacy of international human rights legislation over internal regulations should be established.
  - The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families should be ratified by Kazakhstan

## **Recommendations to intergovernmental processes and multilateral organizations –**

- Expand technical and knowledge support for CSOs dealing with SDG5 and SDG8 issues.
- Launch programs aimed at combating violence against women, including by ensuring effective and accessible reporting channels and protection measures that are sensitive to victims' needs and confidentiality.
- Create platforms to bring together various stakeholders dealing with SDGs.
- Women's organizations and activists call on the government, international organizations and development partners to ensure effective dialogue with civil society to put women's needs at the heart of efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and then recover.
- Provide long-term, unrestricted and core support for civil society where civil society is facing increasing restrictions from states. Funders should provide specific support to groups conducting advocacy in countries with rapidly closing civic space.

The set of questions asked during the online focus-group discussions and interviews:

1. Do you work? If so, where?
2. Are you satisfied with the level of remuneration? Is there enough to satisfy basic needs?
3. Is your salary or fee the same as that of women without disabilities or men?
4. Is the workplace suitable? What are the working conditions?
5. Are there cases of harassment in the workplace? Is there a mechanism to counter this?
6. Are there any social guarantees? Are you a member of medical insurance?
7. What is the state of health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can you do work as usual?
8. Do you do household chores every day? Are you looking after the children? How much time do you spend on this?
9. Does the spouse/partner help with household chores?
10. Recommendations and suggestions