GENDER ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)

A. Existing Gender Gaps

1. **Context.** While Tajikistan registered sustained growth rates (although from a low base) through the past decade, significant gender inequalities remain. The country’s human development index rose from 0.535 in 2000 to 0.624 in 2014, which translated to a rank of 129 out of 187 countries and put it in the category of 33 medium human development countries.

   However, its gender related indicators dropped.

2. Tajikistan ranked 69th (out of 187 countries) on the United Nations Development Programme’s gender inequality index with a value of 0.357 in 2014. This index estimates women’s ease and quality of access to health, education, and labor markets. However, the index worsened from 0.347 in 2011 (rank of 61 out of 144) to 0.383 in 2013 (rank of 75 out of 152).

   Three factors for its deterioration were (i) a slight increase in maternal mortality ratio for the corresponding years (from 64 in 2008–2009 to 65 in 2010 after which it reduced to 44 in 2013), (ii) a marked rise in adolescent birth rates that estimates births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 (from 28.4 in 2010 to 42.8 in 2014), and (iii) a drop in the percentage of women older than 25 years with at least some secondary education (from 93.2% in 2010 to 89.9% in 2014).

   Similarly, the country ranked 102nd (out of 142 countries) on the World Economic Forum’s 2014 global gender gap index, which assesses gender disparities in economic, political, and health areas. It scored higher in the economic participation sub-index.

3. **Representation.** Parliamentary gender quotas were discontinued after independence; representation of women in the National Parliament or Majlisi Oli was reduced in the successive 2005, 2010, and 2014 elections and never reached the targeted 30% mark.

   In January 2015, women occupied 17 of the 92 filled seats. A woman is deputy chair of the Majlisi Oli and two of nine parliamentary committees are headed by women. The ADB country gender assessment estimates that the number of women in the national and local authorities increased by 44.7% during 2003–2012. In 2014, women accounted for 23.4% (4,393 women) of all employees in public administration. However, only 528 occupy leadership positions in national and subordinate structures (footnote 8).

4. **Employment.** Extensive male labor migration from Tajikistan affects gender relations, the gender division of labor, and gender roles. Women left behind are increasingly assuming responsibility for managing household assets (e.g., land, gardens, cattle, and infrastructure) in addition to domestic responsibilities (e.g., caring for children, the sick and the elderly, and

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5. The Majlisi Oli or Supreme Assembly is a bicameral parliament with (i) Majlisi Milli or upper chamber with 34 seats, where members are indirectly elected and appointed; and (ii) Majlisi Namoyandagon or lower chamber or the House of Representatives with 63 seats, where members are directly elected for 5-year terms.
fetching water and fuel). These tasks reduce women’s opportunity to learn income-earning skills or participate in community decision-making.

5. **Wages.** Formal employment opportunities for women declined markedly since independence. Women are primarily employed in low-paid sectors such as agriculture (accounting for 52.5% of paid workers), education (57.3%), and health care (61.9%). In agriculture, women earn one-third less than men; in other low-paid sectors women’s wages are half those of men. The country gender assessment (footnote 8) highlights that women’s predominance in low-skilled work and occupations that are not well remunerated, as well as in informal and less than full-time work, all result in gender disparities in earnings (footnote 8).

6. **Literacy and education.** The literacy rate is 99.9% for men and women aged 15–24. While primary school enrollment is high for both sexes, gender parity index drops to 52% at the tertiary level. Dropout rates of girls in rural areas is high at 55.5%, reflecting high poverty, the declining prestige of education and its deteriorating quality since independence, a revival of traditional perceptions of female roles in family and society, and the lengthy journeys required to reach schools from remote villages. Throughout the Soviet period, preschool education was well developed. Kindergartens were subsidized and accessible in rural and urban areas, enabling women with small children to work. After independence, many kindergartens were closed or privatized. Coverage is low at 8%, and the quality of facilities is poor. The cost of private kindergartens is prohibitive for most women.

7. **Maternal healthcare and family planning.** Maternal mortality rates dropped from 68 per 100,000 live births (1990) to 44 (2015) after a slight increase during 2010–2013. While this is lower than the Kyrgyz Republic (75 per 100,000 live births in 2013) and Turkmenistan (61), it is higher than Uzbekistan (36). The level of skilled birth attendance declined from 90.3% (1990) to 87.4% (2012). Access to family planning services is improving: 80 establishments currently provide family planning services, and contraceptives are included in health programs. However, adolescent birth rates (births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19) rose during 2011–2013.

8. **Domestic violence.** In 2013, the government adopted the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. Nonetheless, the incidence of domestic violence remains high, reflecting reluctance by the authorities to intervene in what is considered a private family matter. As most women leave school early to marry, they are economically dependent on their husbands. Social stigmas discourage women from asserting their right to divorce. To strengthen the role of women, the government adopted a national strategy for 2011–2020 that includes creation of a network of crisis centers and shelters for victims of violence.

9. **Property ownership.** While the Land Code grants women equal access to land, many women (particularly those in remote areas) are unaware of their legal rights. Social norms prevent them from proactively seeking information about their rights or taking action. In the event of death, the civil code provides for the division of property among the surviving spouse, children, and parents of the deceased. Divorced women have the right to claim half of all marital assets.

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11 Coalition of public organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan. *From the de-jure equality to the de-facto equality.*
B. Laws, Policies, and Institutional Mechanisms to Promote Gender Equality

10. Equality between men and women is provided under Tajikistan’s constitution and enforced in legislation. No laws or regulatory provisions discriminate against women. In 2010, government adopted a National Strategy for Women’s Empowerment for 2011–2020. Equal rights and opportunities for men and women are also codified in the 2005 Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities in the Exercise of Rights. The State Program on Training, Selection, and Placement of Managerial Personnel of the Republic of Tajikistan Out of the Talented Women and Girls for 2007–2016 seeks to train and promote women leaders. Gender-related priorities are reflected in sector policies on education, health, social protection, and agricultural development. Notwithstanding these initiatives, implementation and enforcement is weak, given limited funding. The Committee on Women and Family Affairs, which coordinates implementation of gender policies, often seeks external funding from international organizations.

11. Women’s civil society organizations are actively raising women’s awareness of their rights. For example, in 2013 the Coalition of Women’s NGOs (91 organizations) conducted a broad-based advocacy campaign to lobby for the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. These organizations provide important, although limited advocacy, including lobbying for laws, training, and women’s leadership capacity building. For example, in 2013 the Coalition of Women’s NGOs (91 organizations) conducted a broad-based advocacy campaign to lobby for the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. These organizations provide important, although limited advocacy, including lobbying for laws, training, and women’s leadership capacity building.

C. ADB Experience and Assistance Program

12. ADB prepared country gender assessments in 2000 and 2006 in addition to the 2016 report (footnote 8) that informed the country planning and sector programming exercises. Ten projects were approved during 2010–2015 whose designs incorporated gender considerations covering road transport, policy-based lending, finance, and environment. A gender consultant is present in the Tajikistan Resident Mission to help implement gender-related components and track gender-related results.

13. Transport. Tajikistan is a mountainous country with remote villages where access is difficult and roads are in poor condition. Such conditions limit the mobility of women and make it difficult for them to access markets, education and health facilities, and government offices. Road improvements will help address these barriers and increase women’s opportunities to sell agricultural produce and outputs from home-based enterprises. Examples of gender design features in ADB’s road projects include (i) access roads connecting villages to the main highway; (ii) improved road safety infrastructure such as street lighting, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and improved signage; (iii) sanitary facilities, bus stops, and gender-sensitive facilities along the road and at border crossing points; (iv) provision of sites for women to sell products and services; and (v) skills training, business development, and financial literacy initiatives to position women to maximize the opportunities arising from improved transportation.

14. Energy. Tajikistan’s energy generation, transmission, and distribution systems need urgent upgrades. Frequent energy shortages and severe winter deficits adversely affect the country. Rural communities rely heavily on biomass fuels such as firewood and animal dung

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(and also kerosene) for cooking, lighting, and heating. Women and girls spend hours finding and carrying fuel, which reduces their capacity to engage in productive employment, education, and community life. Smoke pollution in confined spaces has damaging effects on women’s health. ADB interventions in the energy sector have focused on updating and replacing equipment and providing new technologies and business systems to improve efficiency. These interventions are designed to benefit the energy system as a whole; as such, it is difficult to integrate gender design features into individual projects. Nonetheless, ADB can support gender mainstreaming through complementary programs (e.g., by conducting awareness-raising campaigns for women on energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, and energy-efficient technologies).

15. Women’s entrepreneurship. Women’s entrepreneurship is critical for the economic advancement of Tajik women, given limited formal employment opportunities. While women’s entrepreneurship is generally small scale involving home-based production and sale, it may expand over time. While flexibility is an advantage of entrepreneurship (i.e., women can continue to fulfill their domestic responsibilities), the lack of social insurance, sick and maternity holidays, pension, and paid holidays are clear downsides. Women entrepreneurs face many challenges: (i) limited access to information and markets; (ii) lack of financial literacy and management, financial resources, and training; and (iii) cultural norms that discourage women from starting and managing businesses. ADB plans to overcome these barriers through training, creating business incubators and business service centers to provide women with information and support, researching market needs, and demand and access to affordable credit over longer terms.

16. Education. Most Tajik girls prefer to study in secondary professional institutions where they receive training in traditional women’s occupations such as dressmaking, weaving, nursing, and teaching, which are low-paid. Possible countermeasures include (i) new approaches to vocational training (e.g., the development of an up-to-date curriculum and learning materials linked to demands of the labor market); (ii) encouraging girls’ participation in technical subjects through quotas and scholarships; (iii) awareness-raising campaigns to attract girls into nontraditional occupations and demonstrate their advantages; (iv) offering gender-sensitive facilities (e.g., girls’ dormitories); and (v) providing employment opportunities for female teachers in nontraditional disciplines.

17. Climate change adaptation. Tajikistan is at significant risk from disasters triggered by natural hazards. Food security is highly susceptible to drought and transportation links are vulnerable to flooding. Climate change threatens the food security especially for those who depend on small-scale subsistence farming. Women suffer disproportionately from this insecurity because they are often responsible for securing income from agriculture plots and providing for their families; however, they have limited access to information and support. ADB’s interventions in the agriculture and natural resource sector are complemented by training and awareness-raising campaigns for women on climate change impacts and decision-making processes on climate resilience and livelihoods (e.g., introducing and using alternative crops). Access to safe drinking water is an issue and limited connectivity to the piped network results in spread of waterborne diseases. The burden of caring for victims falls on women, or on daughters who may be withdrawn from school to assist. Hence, addressing women’s concerns when designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining water supply and irrigation infrastructure are critical.