

## GENDER ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)<sup>1</sup>

### A. Background and Development Context

1. Uzbekistan exhibits near gender parity in some spheres (education and literacy rates) but shows distinctive inequalities in terms of overall women’s empowerment.<sup>2</sup> In 2009, the *Human Development Report* ranked Uzbekistan 99th out of 155 countries on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).<sup>3</sup> Uzbekistan was ranked 57th on the Gender Equity Index.<sup>4</sup> These figures point to the fact that gender equality in Uzbekistan requires more progress, even though the country has shown improvements.

2. Uzbekistan’s gender profile is influenced by many factors, but three dominate: (i) the legacy of the Soviet policy on gender equality, (ii) social and economic difficulties of the transition period, and (iii) traditional Uzbek values and culture. The Soviet approach to gender equality provided men and women with formal equality in terms of access to education, health care, employment, and to a great extent, political office. However, during the Soviet period, women were never fully emancipated from their traditional responsibilities for unpaid work, mainly child care and other household duties. Gender segregation was the norm because they had to combine these responsibilities with formal employment. Women were, and largely still are, concentrated in lower-pay and lower-status sectors and jobs. Uzbek culture has continued to support this division of labor.

### B. Policies and Institutional Mechanisms to Promote Gender Equality in Uzbekistan

3. Since independence in 1991, the Government of Uzbekistan has demonstrated strong commitment to gender equality in the national legislation, including the Constitution, and in its active support for action and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2010, the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan approved a National Action Plan (NAP) on implementation of the CEDAW, which outlines the responsibilities of all relevant ministries and agencies. Gender issues are included in the country’s national development plans for improving living standards, and gender targets are being pursued as part of the country’s commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, a law on gender equality has not yet been passed.

4. To improve women’s economic status, the government approved regional programs for women’s employment for 2005–2007 and 2009–2010. Under these programs, women-

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<sup>1</sup> This summary is based on Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2012. *Country Gender Assessment Draft*. Unpublished. Manila. Available on request.

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Global Gender Gap Report* (World Economic Forum. 2011. Geneva), Uzbekistan’s progress on closing its gender gap remained static during 2006–2009. Although the country has shown improvements in closing gender gaps in education and health, gaps persist in economic participation and opportunity (a combined measure of female labour force participation, wage equality, and the numbers of senior women officials, professionals, and technical workers) and political empowerment (which measures the number of women in parliament and ministerial positions).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2009. *Human Development Report. Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*. New York. The GDI is a “gender-sensitive extension of the Human Development Index” and addresses gender gaps in life expectancy, education, and incomes. The GDI has been discontinued in Human Development Reports and replaced by a Gender Inequality Index (GII). However, GII data on Uzbekistan are not available.

<sup>4</sup> Social Watch. 2009. *Gender Equity Index*. <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/11561>. The Gender Equity Index is calculated as an average of scores on gender progress in three dimensions: empowerment, economic activity, and education. Data for 2008 are the latest available on this index.

managed enterprises, as well as small businesses that primarily employ women, were eligible for special access to credit.<sup>5</sup>

5. Legislative initiatives such as the Law on Elections, 2003 require political parties to include at least 30% of female candidates on party lists. After the passage of this law, the percentage of women among total representatives elected to parliament increased from 9% to 18%, and women's representation in the Senate increased to 15% in 2007.<sup>6</sup> Despite these positive developments, however, women are still underrepresented in top political positions in the executive branch and in local legislative offices.

### C. ADB Operations from a Gender Perspective

6. Gender perspectives were integrated in the country strategy and program of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Uzbekistan, 2006–2010. This led to several positive trends:

- (i) **Increased opportunities for women's involvement in projects.** The country strategy and program placed considerable emphasis on infrastructure development projects. Such projects have reinforced women's participation and access to improved services.
- (ii) **Inclusion of gender action plans in project design.** Considerable progress was made in designing project-specific gender action plans (GAPs) at the project design stage.
- (iii) **Regular monitoring of gender action plan implementation in portfolio review reports.** A streamlined monitoring system for GAPs, involving project management units, the government, and ADB, was established to improve implementation of GAPs.
- (iv) **Project completion reports reflected on tangible gender results.** Project completion reports for the Kashkadarya and Navoi Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project and Small and Microfinance Development Project rated gender features successful and significant in increasing women's participation in water supply and sanitation (WSS) sector governance and in providing women with needed financial services.
- (v) **Strategic placement of gender officer.** A national officer for gender in the Uzbekistan Resident Mission has improved integration of gender aspects in ADB operations.

7. The following challenges remain:

- (i) **Uneven progress in addressing gender equality.** Despite some improvement, more progress is needed to address gender issues in the infrastructure sectors.
- (ii) **Measurable gender results.** More progress needs to be made in assessing and evaluating gender results delivered through GAPs.
- (iii) **Resources.** Adequate resources are not always allocated for the implementation of GAPs. Clear budget allocation needs to be provided and discussed with executing agencies for the GAPs of all projects.

### D. Country Gender Strategy in Country Partnership Strategy Priority Sectors

8. Key gender issues in sectors prioritized by the new country partnership strategy (CPS), 2012–2016 are described below. Strategies on how to increase women's participation and strengthen their empowerment in these sectors have been identified.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. The programs created a total of 441,357 new jobs for women in 2010, of which 214,361 were in the small and medium-sized enterprises sector.

<sup>6</sup> These data are for December 2007 (latest available).

## 1. Water Supply and Sanitation

9. Access to clean water is insufficient in many small towns and rural areas of Uzbekistan. For the majority of households (61%), an adult female is responsible for collecting water, which often needs to be done two to three times a day, and includes travelling several kilometers.<sup>7</sup> Even when households have access to piped water, it is often not potable and its supply may not be guaranteed. Improved access to water supplies would reduce women's household workloads and provide them with access to income-generating activities. At an institutional level, women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions in the water sector and women's participation in water governance should be supported.

10. The following strategy is proposed for improving gender mainstreaming in ADB investments in the sector:

- (i) Decrease the time women spend securing water for household use and caring for the sick (because of waterborne diseases)—this frees women's time for productive responsibilities.
- (ii) Increase women's role in decision making in agencies relevant to the WSS sector.<sup>8</sup>
- (iii) Support training for women, particularly in rural areas, to establish cooperatives or unions to improve water supply management and efficiency.

## 2. Transport (Road and Rail)

11. Women and men use transport differently and have distinct needs. Women in Uzbekistan are less likely to own and drive private cars and mostly travel by public transportation. Given women's lower incomes and limited household resources, the availability of affordable public transportation and access roads will bring them important benefits. Road safety is a particular concern for women and girls, which can negatively impact on girls' school attendance, especially in the winter months. Lack of lighting, shelters at bus and train stops, pedestrian crossings, and road signs exacerbate the risk of travel for women and children. Lack of sanitary and hygiene facilities, as well as rest stops along roads, also restrict women's use of public transport facilities.

12. The following strategy is proposed for improving gender mainstreaming in ADB investments in the sector:

- (i) Conduct social and gender analysis of transportation projects to assess how women and men benefit from improved road networks.
- (ii) Increase women's employment and career development in the Road Fund, *Uzavtoyul*.<sup>9</sup>
- (iii) Address the income-generating needs of women along transport corridors;
- (iv) Plan and coordinate roadside sanitary and other facilities, specifically for women and children travelers, as part of road infrastructure projects.
- (v) Address the traffic and transport safety needs of women and children.

## 3. Energy

13. Energy use shows distinct gender patterns. Men usually manage the family budget and make key decisions concerning household expenditures, including purchase of electrical

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2006. *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*. Tashkent.

[http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/MICS3\\_Uzbekistan\\_FinalReport\\_2006\\_en.pdf?bcsi\\_scan\\_87C32BF4337FFED6=1](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/MICS3_Uzbekistan_FinalReport_2006_en.pdf?bcsi_scan_87C32BF4337FFED6=1)

<sup>8</sup> This could include the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, water user associations, and regional *hokimiyats* (local government authorities).

<sup>9</sup> State company for road maintenance.

appliances, even though women place greater value than men on household appliances, which free their time from routine household work. Since women are primarily responsible for household chores and are the primary users of electricity at home, they are more affected by frequent power interruptions and rising costs of energy. Some 81% of rural households experience daily power interruptions that last from 1 hour to more than 5 hours.<sup>10</sup> Awareness of energy efficiency measures is low among both women and men, particularly in rural areas. The energy industry employs few women and the scarcity of women is also reflected in the public sector agencies that develop policy and regulate the sector.

14. The following strategy is proposed for improving gender mainstreaming in ADB's investments in the sector:

- (i) Develop public communication strategies, in which women are trained and paid as change agents to promote energy efficiency (e.g., usage of energy saving appliances).
- (ii) Develop consumer feedback mechanisms through which women can voice their concerns on the regularity and quality of power supply, which can then be addressed.
- (iii) Increase women's employment and career opportunities in the energy sector.

#### **4. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Private Sector Development**

15. The share of women employed in the formal economy is less than 44% of total employment, while the share of women working in the informal sector is increasing, especially as micro and small entrepreneurs. Uzbek legislation ensures equal rights for men and women to receive loans and credits. However, women continue to face constraints because of (i) their inability to provide collateral for loans, (ii) their inadequate financial literacy, and (iii) bureaucratic impediments related to banking procedures. The number of microfinance accounts opened for women is still only 30% of total accounts. Women's access to microfinance increased since 2002 through credit unions, initiated mostly by women's nongovernment organizations. However, in July 2011, credit unions ceased their operations, reducing women's access to credit.

16. The following strategy is proposed for improving gender mainstreaming in ADB investments in the sector:

- (i) Increase the availability of sex-disaggregated data on women entrepreneurs, which can inform initiatives supporting women-led enterprises in future projects.
- (ii) Provide support to women-led enterprises to access credit institutions, business associations, cooperatives, and entities that provide business development services and capacity development programs for women entrepreneurs.

#### **E. Sex-Disaggregated Statistics**

17. The lack of sex-disaggregated data for Uzbekistan remains a problem for conducting comprehensive gender analysis and identifying gender gaps at the country and sector levels. Apart from improving data collection and conducting regular gender-specific surveys (such as on time use), further capacity has to be built of users of sex-disaggregated data for stronger analysis of the collected data. ADB-assisted regional technical assistance is supporting the strengthening of the country's capacity to collect, analyze, and use sex-disaggregated data.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> ADB. 2011. *Household Survey in Three Regions of Uzbekistan*. Social and gender analysis prepared by project preparatory technical assistance consultants for the Advanced Electricity Metering project approved in 2011.

<sup>11</sup> ADB. 2010. *Technical Assistance for Promoting Gender-Inclusive Growth in Central and West Asia Developing Member Countries*. Manila.