



# Technical Assistance Consultant's Report

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## REG: Promoting Gender-Inclusive Growth in Central and West Asia Developing Member Countries

### Country Gender Assessment: Uzbekistan

Prepared by Elisabeth Duban

For Asian Development Bank

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Asian Development Bank

# Country Gender Assessment: UZBEKISTAN



October 2012

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Cover photograph: B. Cooper

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<sup>1</sup> Asian Development Bank (ADB) , *RETA 7563: Promoting Gender-Inclusive Growth in Central and West Asia Developing Member Countries* (Manila, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> These are: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

## CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

As of 1 October 2012

|               |   |                 |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| Currency Unit | – | Uzbekistan Soum |
| 1.00          | = | \$0.00052       |
| \$1.00        | = | 1,938.60 soum   |

## ABBREVIATIONS

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| ADB      | – | Asian Development Bank  |
| ADF      | – | Asian Development Fund  |
| CAREC    | – | Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation                                    |
| CEDAW    | – | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women    |
| CGA      | – | Country Gender Assessment   |
| CIS      | – | Commonwealth of Independent States  |
| DMC      | – | developing member country   |
| EGM      | – | Effective Gender Mainstreaming  |
| GAD      | – | gender and development  |
| GAP      | – | gender action plan  |
| GDI      | – | Gender-related Development Index  |
| GDP      | – | gross domestic product  |
| GEI      | – | Gender Equity Index   |
| GEN      | – | Gender Equity Theme   |
| GNP      | – | gross national product  |
| ICT      | – | information and communication technology                                      |
| ILO      | – | International Labour Organization   |
| M&E      | – | monitoring and evaluation   |
| MDG      | – | Millennium Development Goals  |
| MICS     | – | Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey   |
| MP       | – | Member of Parliament  |
| MSMEs    | – | micro, small and medium enterprises   |
| NANNOUz  | – | National Association of Nongovernmental Nonprofit Organizations of Uzbekistan |
| NGO      | – | nongovernmental organization  |
| NGE      | – | No Gender Elements  |
| OECD     | – | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development                        |
| OSCE     | – | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe                          |
| RETA     | – | regional technical assistance   |
| SGB      | – | Some Gender Benefits  |
| SGE      | – | Some Gender Elements  |
| SIGI     | – | Social Institutions and Gender Index  |
| SMEs     | – | small and medium-sized enterprises  |
| SSVE     | – | secondary specialized vocational education                                    |
| STI      | – | sexually transmitted infection  |
| TVET     | – | technical vocational education and training                                   |
| UN Women | – | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women        |
| UNDP     | – | United Nations Development Programme  |

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| UNICEF | – | United Nations Children’s Fund                     |
| UNFPA  | – | United Nations Population Fund                     |
| USAID  | – | United States Agency for International Development |
| WHO    | – | World Health Organization                          |
| WSS    | – | water supply and sanitation                        |
| WUAs   | – | water users associations                           |

## GLOSSARY

*In this assessment, several terms in Uzbek language are used to describe the administrative divisions of Uzbekistan and systems of national and local governance.*

|               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|
| Viloyat       | – | Region (12 plus the city of Tashkent, which has the status of a region, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic)  |
| Tuman         | – | District   |
| Hokimiyat     | – | Executive office at the regional, district or municipal level  |
| Hokim         | – | Presidential representative who is the head of the hokimiyat (roughly equivalent to the position of governor or mayor)   |
| Oliy Majlis   | – | The Supreme Assembly, the Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan   |
| Kengash       | – | Council of people’s deputies; an elected assembly at the local level   |
| Jokargy Kenes | – | The Parliament of the Republic of Karakalpakstan   |
| Mahalla       | – | A community-based organization, or council, that is comprised of citizens from a neighborhood, village or settlement. The mahalla are formal structures run by committees, with an elected chairperson, which fulfill local self-government functions. |

## NOTE

In this report, “\$” refers to US dollars, and “€” refers to Euros, unless otherwise stated.

## Contents

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| Preface  | vii         |
| Executive Summary  | ix          |
| <b>I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT</b>   | <b>1</b>    |
| A. Country situation and policy environment                                    | 1           |
| 1. Gender issues in the transition period                                      | 1           |
| 2. The global economic crisis and its impact on women and men                  | 2           |
| 3. The economic outlook and implications for women's empowerment               | 3           |
| 4. Indicators on gender and development for Uzbekistan                         | 3           |
| B. National policies and institutions on women's rights and gender equality    | 5           |
| 1. Law and policy on improving the status of women                             | 5           |
| 2. National machinery for the advancement of women                             | 7           |
| 3. Conceptual approaches to gender equality                                    | 8           |
| <b>II. CROSSCUTTING GENDER ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ADB OPERATIONS</b>      | <b>10</b>   |
| A. Sex-disaggregated statistics and data                                       | 10          |
| B. Gender roles and norms  | 11          |
| C. Women's participation in political and public life                          | 14          |
| 1. Women in elected office   | 14          |
| 2. Women in governance   | 16          |
| 3. Structural barriers to women entering government                            | 17          |
| 4. Engagement in civil society   | 17          |
| D. Gender disparities in employment and the labor market                       | 19          |
| 1. Employment and unemployment patterns  | 20          |
| 2. Informal employment   | 22          |
| 3. Gender patterns in the labor market   | 22          |
| 4. Consequences of gender disparities in the labor market                      | 25          |
| 5. Gender and labor migration  | 26          |
| E. Women in rural areas and their role in agricultural production              | 31          |
| F. Human development issues for women and men                                  | 33          |
| 1. Gender issues in education  | 33          |
| 2. Gender issues in health   | 38          |
| 3. Gender-based violence   | 39          |
| <b>III. MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN ADB OPERATIONS</b>                             | <b>42</b>   |
| A. ADB strategy and progress toward gender mainstreaming targets in Uzbekistan | 42          |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| B. General considerations for gender mainstreaming                                      | 43         |
| <b>IV. GENDER ISSUES RELEVANT TO ADB OPERATIONS</b>                                     | <b>45</b>  |
| A. Water supply and sanitation  | 45         |
| 1. Relevant government policies and commitments   | 46         |
| 2. Gender issues related to water supply and sanitation                                 | 47         |
| 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB water supply and sanitation projects          | 51         |
| 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives                             | 52         |
| B. Natural resources  | 55         |
| 1. Relevant government policies and commitments   | 55         |
| 2. Gender issues related to natural resources   | 55         |
| 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB natural resources projects                    | 58         |
| 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives                             | 59         |
| C. Energy   | 63         |
| 1. Relevant government policies and commitments   | 63         |
| 2. Gender issues related to energy supply   | 64         |
| 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB energy projects                               | 70         |
| 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives                             | 70         |
| D. Transport  | 75         |
| 1. Relevant government policies and commitments   | 75         |
| 2. Gender issues related to transport   | 76         |
| 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB transport projects                            | 84         |
| 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives                             | 84         |
| E. Micro, small and medium enterprises and private sector development                   | 88         |
| 1. Relevant government policies and commitments   | 88         |
| 2. Gender issues related to small and medium enterprises and private sector development | 89         |
| 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB private sector development projects           | 102        |
| 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives                             | 102        |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>   | <b>107</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>   |            |
| 1. Additional Notes on Gender and Development Indicators for Uzbekistan                 | 112        |
| 2. Common Terminology and Definitions for Private Enterprises                           | 114        |
| 3. Definitions of Gender and Development Terms  | 115        |

## List of Tables, Figures and Boxes

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Tables</b>  |             |
| Table 1. Women in Legislative and Representative Bodies  | 15          |
| Table 2. Women's Representation in Political Parties and in the Legislative Chamber,<br>by Party | 16          |
| Table 3. Female and Male Students by Selected Specialization, 2010–2011 Academic<br>Year         | 36          |
| <b>Figures</b>   |             |
| Figure 1. Proportion of Male Employees by Labor Market Sector, 2010                              | 23          |
| Figure 2. Proportion of Female Employees by Labor Market Sector, 2010                            | 23          |
| Figure 3. Trends in Distribution of Employees by Selected Labor Market Sector                    | 24          |
| Figure 4. Male and Female Enrolment in Post-Secondary and Higher Education                       | 34          |
| Figure 5. Male and Female Individual Entrepreneurs by Sector                                     | 93          |
| <b>Boxes</b>   |             |
| Box 1. National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee<br>Recommendations (2010)  | 5           |
| Box 2. Women's Budgeted Time for Household Tasks   | 12          |
| Box 3. Home-Based Work and Initiatives to Promote Women's Employment                             | 20          |
| Box 4. Initiative on Female Academic Achievement   | 37          |
| Box 5. Women Entrepreneurs in Farming  | 93          |
| Box 6. Role of Credit Unions in Women's Entrepreneurship   | 100         |



## Preface

The Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment builds on a previous assessment, conducted in 2005,<sup>3</sup> and the experience gained by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the Republic of Uzbekistan (hereinafter Uzbekistan) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The 2005 Country Gender Assessment provided an overview of gender issues across a number of broad topics as well as general recommendations for gender mainstreaming in ADB projects. This assessment takes a different approach. It does not review progress toward gender equality overall but instead highlights key constraints to gender equality in ADB core operations, primarily within projects on water supply and sanitation, energy, transport and projects to improve access to finance and financial services.

Many of the barriers to gender equality encountered in the ADB sectors are underpinned by deeper structural disparities in terms of how men and women are positioned in the economy, their access to assets and resources, their ability to influence decision-making, their relative levels of education and their access to social protections in Uzbekistan.

### *Report structure*

Chapter 1 of this assessment provides an overview of the current country situation and policy environment in Uzbekistan. The following chapter describes the gender landscape in Uzbekistan and how the current situation influences ADB's operations. The themes presented in this section cut across sectoral boundaries, and readers are urged to familiarize themselves with these themes because they will serve as a useful background for the sectoral analysis. These crosscutting gender issues should be given consideration in any subsequent gender analysis conducted during project design or in monitoring and evaluation processes and, therefore, overviews of key findings and suggestions for possible interventions are provided. Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of progress toward mainstreaming gender in the ADB portfolio in Uzbekistan and provides several overarching suggestions to consider in gender mainstreaming. Chapter 4 is devoted to analysis of barriers to gender equality in the sectors where ADB will be the most active in the coming years. This section includes entry points for gender mainstreaming in ADB operations which can be used as reference material in conjunction with more in-depth sectoral analysis during project design.

The current assessment contributes to the new Country Partnership Strategy for 2012-2016 and will subsequently serve as a resource for ADB staff and consultants planning and managing projects under the strategy. While this Country Gender Assessment has been prepared primarily for use by ADB, it is hoped that the assessment will prove a useful resource to the government, civil society organizations, and to individuals working in the field of gender and development in Uzbekistan.

### *Methodology*

This assessment was conducted through in-country consultations and review of secondary sources. In October 2011, consultations were conducted in Tashkent city and in the Bukhara region with representatives of local government, project managers,

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<sup>3</sup> ADB, *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment*, (Manila, 2005), <http://www.adb.org/documents/uzbekistan-country-gender-assessment>.

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), research centers, donor and international organizations and gender specialists employed within key executing agencies. Field visits to ADB land improvement and water supply and sanitation project sites afforded the opportunity to speak with local community stakeholders, both women and men. The purpose of the consultations and meetings was to confirm preliminary findings and identify priorities relevant to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in future projects. Preparatory consultations and sector assessments conducted under the Country Partnership Strategy process also provided background material for this assessment.

The report makes use of information from surveys (of households and potential beneficiaries) conducted under ADB projects on water supply and sanitation, electricity metering, road investment and power supply. The surveys, carried out between 2009-2011, aimed to improve understanding of the socio-economic position of the households likely to be impacted by ADB projects, identify the views of the resident populations about the current situation relevant to the project area and to determine potential participatory mechanisms to enable greater involvement of local communities, including female stakeholders. While the surveys should not be taken as representative of the situation in the country as a whole, the findings nevertheless offer insights into some of the key gender issues to consider in ADB project design. An additional project report on gender in the ADB small micro enterprise development project also provided a synthesis of information from discussions with stakeholders—women in business and female bank clients.

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan also provided material on the mission and activities of the organization for this assessment.

## Executive Summary

In 2011, Uzbekistan celebrated 20 years of independence from the Soviet Union. The last decades have been characterized by critical shifts as the country transitions from a State-controlled economy to a market-based system. While reduced employment opportunities in agriculture have led to increased labor migration—both to cities in Uzbekistan and abroad—the country has prioritized job creation in new sectors, and especially in small business. Due in large part to the government's anti-crisis measures, the country did not experience economic recession to the same degree as other nations.

Although reform processes have certainly included initiatives to improve women's economic opportunities in Uzbekistan, by in large, efforts to promote gender equality remain separate from the nation's development programs. Furthermore, gender equality initiatives are generally not characterized as such, but are instead framed as programs to improve women's access to key resources, such as decision-making posts, or address issues, which appear more relevant for women, such as maternal health and family violence.

Annual assessments of the extent to which men and women are equal in Uzbekistan indicate that although Uzbekistan scores consistently high in terms of equality in access to education and in health outcomes for women, these scores are tempered by the limited progress made in women's political empowerment and access to economic opportunities.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan articulates principles of non-discrimination and equal rights for men and women, but the government has not adopted an official policy on gender mainstreaming. However, the Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2008–2010 included an important articulation of the potential impacts of social welfare programs on women and men and described the primary obstacles to achieving gender equality. Since the Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted its last Country Gender Assessment (2005), the government has also approved successive national action plans to respond to issues raised by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, which is chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister but is considered a nongovernment organization, remains the primary agency that coordinates women's affairs at the national, regional and local level.

At the practical level, the term “gender” is not in wide use in Uzbekistan, particularly not by policymakers. The term is largely considered synonymous with “women,” and gender-oriented work is almost exclusively concerned with resolving social issues. Gender equality is largely perceived as a process of being just and fair to women, but it is not generally recognized as a prerequisite for the country's economic growth and stability.

The ADB portfolio in Uzbekistan is a positive example of how activities relevant to gender can, in fact, be integrated into a range of projects that concern ADB's core operations, specifically projects on water supply and sanitation, energy, transport and private sector development, including projects to improve access to finance and financial services. Going forward under the new Country Partnership Strategy for 2012–2016, ADB intends to go beyond isolated improvements to women's lives but that also promote a model of more equitable gender roles and further gender equality. The critical areas of ADB focus should include the following:

### *Sex-disaggregated statistics and data*

Although official compilations of sex-disaggregated statistics have been published three times since the previous Country Gender Assessment (the *Women and Men in Uzbekistan* statistical bulletin in 2007, 2010 and 2012), no sustainable mechanism for the regular collection of gender statistics has been established and there is limited legislative and political support for the development of such a mechanism. There are indications that new methods of data collection are being introduced, for example, time use and demographic and health surveys, but such data is often not publically available to researchers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or development partners undertaking project planning and design. Even when sex-disaggregated statistics are available, they are not necessarily reproduced in mainstream publications or used by the State Committee on Statistics. Sex-disaggregated data are mainly collected in social sectors, and not in sectors perceived to be gender neutral. In the context of planning and project development, ADB should promote the use of sex-disaggregated information. ADB should also support the collection and dissemination of gender-specific data generated during project implementation and expand the use of gender-sensitive indicators to measure progress towards any gender-related goals that are included in ADB projects.

### *Gender roles and norms*

The 2010 National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee Recommendations draws attention to the need “to eliminate stereotypes about the traditional role of each sex within the family and society and to revise stereotypes about the role of women and the equal division of domestic and family obligations between men and women.”<sup>4</sup> Although they are not part of any law or policy, notions of the traditional role of women connected to motherhood, children and family are prevalent and are often at odds with women’s public roles, in political office or in business. Such patriarchal values have become more pronounced in the years since independence from the Soviet Union. Although traditional and stereotyped depictions of men and women are still common in Uzbekistan, this situation should not suggest that such cultural norms cannot be changed. Consideration should be given to how best to address stereotypes in gender equality activities. Projects should include measures to promote a more equitable model of gender relations and expand conceptions about women’s role in society.

### *Women’s participation in political and public life*

Addressing women’s underrepresentation in political office and governance is a concern that is regularly voiced by top officials. Since the introduction of a quota requiring that 30% of candidates on party lists for the Parliament be women, the number of women in the Oliy Majlis has increased with each election. Still, women account for only 17% of all members of legislative, representative and executive bodies in Uzbekistan, which indicates that women have not yet obtained the “critical minority” considered necessary to have an effective voice in decision-making or agenda setting. While notable women hold very high offices—for example the Speaker of the Legislative Chamber and the Ombudsman for Human Rights—women are underrepresented in other branches of government. For example, of the 14 ministries, only one is headed by female minister and women hold a

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<sup>4</sup> The National Action Plan for the Implementation of Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and conclusions from the Fourth Periodic Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 09 September 2010.

mere 4.2% of total ministerial positions.<sup>5</sup> Women are also underrepresented in bodies of local authority; there are no female regional-level leaders (hokim).

Limited attention has been given to addressing deeper structural issues that prevent women from taking office, including stereotypes, lack of financial resources and limited opportunities to gain leadership experience that could be applied to a political career.

### *Gender issues in the labor sphere*

The number of economically active women remains considerably lower than that of economically active men, and while employment rates are increasing overall, the rate of increase for men has been almost double that for women. Women's economic opportunities are still greater in the informal sector, and women are more likely to earn income through small family-based businesses, such as farming or handicrafts. The government has undertaken a number of programs to provide women with opportunities for formal employment, many of which focus on developing home-based work. Home-based work is viewed as especially suitable for women since it allows them to earn an income and provides protection under labor law, while at the same time it is compatible with household and childcare obligations. The labor market exhibits distinct gender patterns, with women overly represented in public sector jobs (healthcare and education), which carry the lowest salaries, and men predominating in technical and more profitable fields (construction, transport and communications, and industry). Comparing the distribution of men and women in several sectors of the labor market across time, gender gaps appear to be increasing in sectors where men predominate but decreasing in fields traditionally held by women. This dynamic suggests that men are more able to enter non-traditional jobs than women, who are not making a similar transition. Women are also underrepresented in upper managerial positions in the working world. Such patterns of occupational segregation—both horizontal and vertical—contribute directly to the gender wage gap and also present impediments to inclusive growth.

Unemployment and limited job opportunities continue to be the primary “push” factors for labor migration, and men represent the larger share of migrants. Still, labor migration is becoming increasingly feminized, and women's lack of competitiveness in the local labor market is leading them to seek work elsewhere. As families struggle to survive on the single income of the male head of household, women are making important contributions to the family budget.

### *Gender issues in the educational system*

Equal access to education is guaranteed in Uzbekistan, and gender parity is seen in the enrolment rates of boys and girls at the primary and secondary levels. At the level of specialized secondary and higher professional education, however, patterns similar to those observed in the labor market appear. Women's enrolment rates in post-secondary and higher education are lower than men's, and concern has been expressed over the increasing number of young women not continuing their studies after compulsory schooling. Concerning choice in academic subjects in post-secondary and higher education, young men are much more likely to pursue technical training and to concentrate in such fields as transport and communications, construction and agriculture. Young

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<sup>5</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*, [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012), 180, 181.

women are the majority in traditionally “female” areas of study such as education and healthcare. Such educational choices are undoubtedly influenced by persistent gender stereotypes, and are then reproduced in the labor market, as noted above. Technical fields of study generally correlate to jobs in higher-paying industries, while the humanities lead to lower-paid jobs, often in the public sector.

### *Gender and water supply and sanitation*

At independence, Uzbekistan inherited a well-developed network of water supply and sanitation (WWS) infrastructure, but the system is now outdated, in need of repair and is not operating efficiently. There is considerable variation between urban and rural areas in access to safe drinking water. A significant portion of the population relies on hand pumps, public standpipes and wells and experiences only intermittent water supply and contamination to the water. Access to sanitation shows a similar pattern with portions of the population using pit latrines in the household and in public buildings, such as schools and clinics. Inadequacies in the WSS system affect entire populations but have a particular impact on women due to their domestic roles, in cooking, cleaning and in their responsibility for the hygiene of children and other family members. Because improvements to the WSS system may lead directly to positive changes in women’s lives, it is critical that women’s concerns and priorities be given consideration in WSS projects. Because few women occupy leadership roles in local government, their priorities and interests receive little consideration in formal decisionmaking around water issues or even municipal planning and budgeting. ADB should continue to promote women’s participation in the design and implementation of its WSS projects and, at the same time, support capacity-building for key stakeholders on integrating issues of concern to women into community development projects.

### *Gender and natural resources*

In Uzbekistan, issues of irrigation and drainage are key to agricultural production, and limited water resources impact food security. Water users associations (WUA) are the primary community-level structure for resolving disputes that arise between management of irrigation systems and water users. Although women represent a large portion of users of water for agricultural production, they make up only a small minority of WUA members and an even smaller number of WUA leaders. Women are also underrepresented in government bodies—the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources for example—that deal with natural resource management. While managing the impact of climate change has been an important policy development in Uzbekistan, limited study has been undertaken to identifying differential gender impacts of climate change on men and women or the different practices and strategies they use.

### *Gender and energy*

Inefficient and inadequate energy supply is characteristic for much of the country, attributable to infrastructure deficiencies and also limited efforts to conserve energy and to seek renewable sources of energy. Energy inefficiencies have serious consequences for economic growth overall because current power supplies are insufficient in some regions to meet the needs of increased industrialization, for social service provision to the population and in terms of daily household supply. Gender-based roles and responsibilities concerning the domestic sphere mean that women perform most household chores (cooking, cleaning, laundry) and, as is the case with inefficient clean water supply, they are particularly burdened by power interruptions and the inability to use laborsaving

appliances. At the same time, men are generally responsible for managing the household budget, and so are more likely to make decisions about the purchase of appliances and to pay energy bills. Investments in the energy sphere have tended to focus on physical and infrastructure improvements rather than assistance to households to transition to modern and more efficient forms of energy.

Women's engagement in micro enterprise and home-based work are seen as important means to expand women's economic opportunities, but many of women's informal sector activities are energy-intensive and therefore affected by energy availability and price.

### *Gender and transport*

The government views improving the transport sector as important to broader national strategic objectives of economic growth and increasing competitiveness. At the level of strategic planning, transport projects are seen to contribute to poverty reduction by facilitating the mobility of persons and goods and therefore improving access to markets, to educational and employment opportunities and to health services. At the project implementation level, however, attention to ensuring that various populations, including women and men as distinct groups, have access to transport options corresponding to their needs is often given inadequate attention. Government policy and programs in the road and transport sector do not reference gender but focus on infrastructure improvements, measured in terms of quantifiable outputs. Very little information is available about differences in male and female road users, transport patterns or priorities. Still, road improvements could bring very real benefit to women, in terms of increasing their mobility and, therefore, access to markets, education, healthcare, services and employment opportunities.

As in other core ADB sectors, women are underrepresented in the transport sector in terms of decision-making posts and employment overall. ADB should work to ensure women's participation in the design and implementation of ADB transport projects and to support capacity building for improving women's access to nontraditional fields of work.

### *Gender and private sector development*

Support for entrepreneurship, and particularly the development of small businesses, has been a priority area for Uzbekistan since private enterprise is increasingly becoming a major economic driver. New legislation and national programs to create an environment supportive of private enterprise and develop a market economy have meant that in many ways opportunities to start a business have improved. However, several obstacles that are hindering small and medium enterprise (SME) development remain. Female entrepreneurs experience a greater impact of these hindrances due to differences in the size and capacity of their businesses, their spheres of operation, and due to prevalent gender norms.

Most of the enterprises started by and operated by women take the form of informal cottage industry or home-based production. Most female entrepreneurs are involved in small-scale production of consumer goods, trade or health, education and other personal services. In rural regions, in particular, women's businesses are mainly small and microenterprises. The nature of "women's business" means that mainstream SME support projects may not adequately meet the specific needs of female entrepreneurs. Instead, business support services should be tailored to the current needs of women entrepreneurs and efforts are also needed to diversify the sectors in which women have businesses and

to assist them to enter nontraditional and high-level industries. Female entrepreneurs also face a number of specific and gender-based constraints to doing business, which include: unequal access to financial services (due in large part to lack of formal property ownership and lack of collateral); bureaucratic obstacles to running a business which are multiplied for women who balance business activities with domestic responsibilities; lack of information, knowledge, skills and technical resources needed to run a successful business; and cultural perceptions and stereotypes. Targeted microlending programs for women have demonstrated that business women are interested in using financial services, but their access to loans through commercial banks remains quite limited. The planning of projects on private sector development should identify and respond to the distinct needs of women entrepreneurs, with a long-term view to integrating “women’s businesses” into the general SME sector.



## I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### A. Country situation and policy environment

Uzbekistan has a rich and ancient culture which throughout history has seen the influence of many other traditions. Due to the importance of key cities of present day Uzbekistan along the Silk Route, the country continues to evoke notions of a land that spans East and West. In many ways, this duality is reflected in contemporary gender relations, in which women in Uzbekistan have achieved success in a number of professional fields yet traditional notions of women as primarily responsible for domestic and supporting roles remain deeply entrenched.

#### 1. Gender issues in the transition period

In 2011, Uzbekistan celebrated 20 years as an independent nation. The transition process has not been smooth for any countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Uzbekistan too has experienced both positive and negative developments in terms of gender equality. The status of women and men in Uzbekistan is very much shaped by the fact that the country has undergone significant and rapid change in recent years.

Uzbekistan is still in the process of transformation from a state-controlled economy, largely built around agricultural production, to a market-based system. The reduction of employment opportunities associated with agriculture, combined with population growth, has resulted in an increase in labor migration, at first primarily external but increasingly within the country as well. Urbanization has brought about its own challenges, such as the capacity of cities to absorb growing populations in terms of both basic infrastructure and job opportunities. The state has responded to these issues through many and varied initiatives, but the primary focus has been on improving economic opportunities through high-level investment and reform. The “Uzbek model” of development prioritizes economic over political reform and makes the state the main agent of reform.<sup>6</sup>

Several characteristics of the transformation have direct bearing on gender equality, and are illuminated in greater detail throughout this assessment. In some areas, such as access to education and healthcare, Uzbekistan has maintained high levels of gender parity throughout the transition period. In other spheres, women have been disadvantaged and face difficulties accessing crucial resources. For instance, State schemes to privatize management of agricultural production and land benefitted former collective farm managers—who were primarily men<sup>7</sup>—which resulted in fewer opportunities for women to acquire land lease rights even though they represent a large proportion of the agricultural workforce. Changes in the labor market have resulted in significant job losses in specific sectors, many of which traditionally employed women such as agricultural production on state farms and textile manufacture. In parallel, men have begun to find employment in

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, “*The Concept of Further Deepening the Democratic Reforms and Establishing the Civil Society in the Country*,” 25 April 2011, [http://mfa.uz/eng/press\\_and\\_media\\_service/dates/the\\_concept/conference250411en1.mgr](http://mfa.uz/eng/press_and_media_service/dates/the_concept/conference250411en1.mgr).

<sup>7</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “Return to Patriarchy in Uzbekistan” *Gender and Land: Compendium of Country Studies*, (Rome: FAO, 2005), <http://www.fao.org/docrep/008/a0297e/a0297e00.htm>.

previously nontraditional sectors, such as retail trade and catering, which presents additional competition for women workers.<sup>8</sup>

Much of the infrastructure that carries basic services remains from the Soviet period but is now in need of rehabilitation and up-grading. Disparities in basic services between rural and urban populations are growing more pronounced and insufficiencies in clean water and electricity at the household level have a particular impact on women who are traditionally take on the greater part of domestic work.

Underlying much of the negative changes that women have experienced during the transition period is the resurgence of traditional and patriarchal values that emphasize a role for women as housewives, responsible for raising children and concerned primarily with the private sphere. Such notions are often incompatible with an image of women as entrepreneurs, politicians or assuming a role in public decisionmaking. It has been acknowledged in Uzbekistan that further efforts must be made to “overcome the mass consciousness of patriarchal stereotypes about male and female roles in society.”<sup>9</sup> Yet, transitioning to a more egalitarian view of gender roles has proven difficult in practice. Much state policy aimed at increasing opportunities for women, including women’s economic empowerment, at one and the same time reiterates women’s principal role in family life.

## **2. The global economic crisis and its impact on women and men**

The global economic crisis had a significant effect on both developed and developing nations. For Uzbekistan, however, the impact of the global crisis appears to have not been severe.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the country weathered the economic crisis and subsequent recession and has even experienced economic growth and job creation. While the relatively minimal impact of the economic downturn is in part reflective of the country’s isolation from the global economy, it can also be attributed to the government’s economic stimulus programs.

The extent to which the global financial crisis has impacted progress toward gender equality in Uzbekistan is an altogether different question. In respect to recent food and energy crises, the government reported that due to priorities placed on the control of inflation and ensuring an uninterrupted food supply, these crises “had no impact on gender equality” in the country.<sup>11</sup> Concerning the region as a whole, however, experts suggest that men and women have been affected differently by economic downturns which exacerbate existing gender inequalities. A review of the impacts of the global financial crisis on women in the Central Asian region notes several negative trends, including the following:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), CIS Regional Office, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers: Central Asia and Russia*, (Almaty, 2009), 8.

<sup>9</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], and Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Twenty-Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly (2000)* [in Russian] (2008), 3.

<sup>10</sup> For example see: Terry McKinley, “The Puzzling Success of Uzbekistan’s Heterodox Development,” in *Development Viewpoint* 44 (London: Center for Development and Policy Research, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Nurgul Djanaeva, *Impacts of the Global Economic and Financial Crisis on Women in Central Asia* (Toronto, Mexico City, Cape Town: Association for Women’s Rights in Development, 2010).

- Rising unemployment and migration (including job losses for women who tend to be the first to be laid off in times of crisis and declining remittances that women and children were once receiving from family members);
- Reduced consumption at the household level (especially among female-headed households);
- Gender discrimination in wages; and
- Decline in trade especially affecting female entrepreneurs.

Significantly, the gender impacts of the economic crisis have not been included in regional economic forums, nor have they been highlighted by the donor and international development community. Further, the weak state of national machinery for women's empowerment in Central Asia, lack of national programs on gender equality and insufficient sex-disaggregated data present a real risk of women becoming increasingly vulnerable and marginalized.<sup>13</sup>

### **3. The economic outlook and implications for women's empowerment**

Uzbekistan has prioritized investment in several key sectors of the economy in order "to facilitate overall development of the country:" agriculture, energy, transport and industry. The Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2008–2010 focused medium-term investments for 2011–2012 on the development and modernization of major industries, including electricity, gas, metallurgy, construction and specific areas of manufacturing. Significant economic growth has been supported by increased production in the following sectors: industry (up 7% in the end of 2011); agriculture (a 6.8% increase); construction (a 8.1% increase); retail trade (a 16.2% increase) and paid services (a 14.2% increase)—contributing to the overall increase in the GDP of 8.2% in the first nine months of 2011.<sup>14</sup>

Such macro economic indicators predict an improvement in living standards and opportunities for the population as a whole, and two sectors—retail trade and paid services—are also those with a high proportion of female employees. However, the fact that such sectors are experiencing growth is not necessarily related to any particular consideration for women's economic empowerment. Rather it is more likely a reflection of the general trend in which developed economies are becoming less and less reliant on industry and shifting to a knowledge and service based economy. Women will undoubtedly benefit from overall economic growth, but critical gender disparities in the labor market also mean that they are not in the same position as men to benefit from job creation in several of the priority sectors or to take advantage of new and expanding markets as businesses owners.

### **4. Indicators on gender and development for Uzbekistan**

Indicators of human development and particularly of the gender dimensions of development suggest that progress toward realization of gender equality in Uzbekistan has been slow, and that, more significantly, while some fields exhibit positive indicators in terms of equality, others remain unsatisfactory. An overview of the findings of the key international organizations that measure gender and development internationally follows.

<sup>13</sup> For example see: Louise Sperl, "The Crisis and its Consequences for Women," *Development & Transition*, 13, (2009), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/London School of Economics and Political Science, 8-20.

<sup>14</sup> National Information Agency of Uzbekistan, "On the results of socio-economic development of Uzbekistan during nine months of 2011," 07 November 2011, <http://uza.uz/ru/business/16933/>.

Further details about methodologies and values can be found in Appendix 1 to this assessment.

Measuring progress across time, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Economic Forum both find that the state of gender equality has remained rather stable since 2006. UNDP measured national achievements across three dimensions—long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living—adjusted to account for gender disparities between men and women using the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).<sup>15</sup> UNDP has assigned Uzbekistan GDI values between 0.692 (2005) and 0.708 (2009).<sup>16</sup> The latest score correlates with a GDI rank of 99 out of 155 countries for which such values were assigned in 2009. Similarly, under the Global Gender Gap Index, developed by the World Economic Forum, Uzbekistan has showed almost no progress in closing the gender gap and received a score of 0.691<sup>17</sup> in the years from 2006-2009.<sup>18</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities independently from a country's level of development and takes into consideration four basic categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment.

In 2012, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) included Uzbekistan in its Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). The SIGI differs from other indices because it focuses on discriminatory social institutions (such as early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices and violence against women) and does not measure gender gaps in outcomes, such as in employment or in education. Uzbekistan was ranked 56 of 86 non-OECD countries and received an overall SIGI value of 0.304 in 2012.<sup>19</sup>

Scores by sub-index show where the gender gap is the most acute in Uzbekistan. Both the Global Gender Gap and the Gender Equity Index (GEI), a methodology developed by Social Watch, indicate that there is close to gender equality in the spheres of education (measuring enrolment, educational attainment and literacy) and health (measuring the sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy). However, inequalities in women's economic participation and activity (a measure of labor force participation, wage equality and the number of senior officials, managers and professional and technical workers) and political empowerment (a measure of women in parliament, ministerial positions and as head of state), cause the gender gap to widen overall.

Although the gender equality indicators described above do not measure particular improvements towards women's empowerment in Uzbekistan, qualitative periodic reviews of the implementation of international human rights conventions, indicate several areas of progress. Recent review processes by the UN Committee on the Elimination of

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<sup>15</sup> Note that in 2010, UNDP replaced both the GDI and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) with the Gender Inequality Index (GII), a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market. The GII has not been calculated for Uzbekistan due to unavailability of relevant data since this measure was introduced.

<sup>16</sup> Under the GDI, 1.00 represents maximum achievement with perfect equality.

<sup>17</sup> Countries are scored on a scale in which 1.00 is the highest (full equality) and zero the lowest.

<sup>18</sup> Note Uzbekistan was not scored or ranked in 2010 or 2011 due to lack of data. See: Ricardo Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, *Global Gender Gap Report 2009* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2009), 186.

<sup>19</sup> Countries are scored on a scale in which zero represents a situation of equality and 1.00 indicates that women experience discrimination. OECD, *Social Institutions & Gender Index 2012, Country Profiles: Uzbekistan*, <http://www.genderindex.org/country/uzbekistan>.

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee)<sup>20</sup> and under the Universal Periodic Review<sup>21</sup> noted that: (1) progress has been made to increase women's representation in political office; (2) gender parity exists in primary, basic secondary and vocational education; and (3) important actions have been taken to address the problem of human trafficking.<sup>22</sup>

## **B. National policies and institutions on women's rights and gender equality**

### **1. Law and policy on improving the status of women**

Since the completion of the previous Country Gender Assessment, Uzbekistan has developed several policy documents relevant to women's rights at the national level. The government has enacted two National Action Plans specifically for the implementation of CEDAW Committee recommendations, the first in 2006 (in response to review of Uzbekistan's second and third periodic reports) and the second in 2010 (to implement the CEDAW Committee's conclusions from the fourth periodic review). The 2010 National Action Plan<sup>23</sup> was signed by Prime Minister and represents a high level of political commitment.

#### **Box 1. National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee Recommendations (2010)**

The 2010 National Action Plan consists of 68 actions to be implemented by various ministries, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the Office of the Ombudsman, local government bodies, media outlets and NGOs. This National Action Plan highlights such critical issues as gender-based stereotypes, violence against women, human trafficking and the lack of women in leadership positions. However, a great deal of the activities outlined in the action plan consist of educational events, such as seminars and conferences, research and analysis or unspecified "measures." Follow-up enquiries under this assessment have not been able to establish whether a budget has been allocated for implementation of the National Action Plan. A timeline for its implementation is included, but there is no separate plan for monitoring and evaluation of its completion.

In its most recent review, the CEDAW Committee noted the "lack of a comprehensive national plan of action for the advancement of women."<sup>24</sup> While the 2010 National Action Plan evidences the political will to address many concerns raised by the CEDAW Committee, it is quite narrow in scope and does not articulate a policy for the promotion of gender equality.

Since the late 1990s, the government has also adopted several national plans and decrees directed toward issues of special relevance to women, most of which concern women's reproductive health. Attention has also been given to women and girls in several

<sup>20</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan, CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/4 (45<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> UN General Assembly, *Compilation Prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in Accordance with Paragraph 15(B) of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1: Uzbekistan*, A/HRC/WG.6/3/UZB/2 (3<sup>rd</sup> Session, Geneva, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> In 2008, the Law on Combating Human Trafficking was adopted. While the law is gender neutral, women are particularly vulnerable to some types of human trafficking, and the law sets forth important guarantees of victim protection and assistance.

<sup>23</sup> *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Conclusions from the Fourth Periodic Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], Decree No. 10-7 of 09 September 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan, paragraph 15.

annual State programs, such as the Year of Rural Development and Improvement (2009) and the Year of Social Protection (2007). A review of such official policy documents found that none referred specifically to “gender equality.”

The government has not defined an approach to gender mainstreaming in policy setting, but the national Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2008–2010 articulated that gender should be considered in welfare improvement strategies and reiterated Uzbekistan’s commitments:

Taking into account the existence of a [*sic*] gender asymmetry which makes women more vulnerable, the Government has paid close and consistent attention to resolving their problems. This is clearly stated both in national legislation, including the Constitution, and also demonstrated by the active participation of the Government in international initiatives including the signing of the Beijing Political Platform and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996.<sup>25</sup>

The Welfare Improvement Strategy describes the primary obstacles to achieving gender equality, calls for gender balance in community-level strengthening initiatives and for the collection of sex-disaggregated data. Yet the strategy does not include indicators relevant to monitoring and evaluating progress towards gender equality.

The principle of equal rights between women and men is supported by national law, as enshrined in the Constitution<sup>26</sup> and other legislative acts. For example, both the Criminal Code and Labor Code protect against discrimination on the basis of sex. The Labor Code also guarantees equality in employment, working conditions, remuneration and promotion and, in several cases, affords special protections to female workers.<sup>27</sup>

While the framework for gender equality exists, Uzbekistan lacks “a special mechanism that deals with implementation, monitoring and reporting of anti-discrimination provisions.”<sup>28</sup> There is no legal definition of sex-based discrimination under national law. Notably, a Law on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men has been drafted, has undergone both national and international expert analysis and was sent to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis for review in 2006. If adopted, this law would provide further support for protecting equal rights “in public service and in the social, economic and cultural spheres.”<sup>29</sup> NGOs note that in the absence of a specific law on equal rights, attempts have been made by international organizations and civil society groups to amend major legal codes to include clearer provisions prohibiting discrimination.<sup>30</sup> Still, a finding of the previous Country Gender Assessment for Uzbekistan holds true today: despite the existence of a sound legal framework, the regulatory instruments, such as decrees, resolutions and instructions, that determine how laws are implemented “display a lack of gender sensitivity.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Welfare Improvement Strategy for Uzbekistan for 2008-2010, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 27 August 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Article 18, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

<sup>27</sup> Discussed in more detail below in the context of women’s economic status.

<sup>28</sup> United National Population Fund (UNFPA), *Advancing Equal Rights for Women and Girls: The Status of CEDAW Legislative Compliance in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, (New York, 2009), 49.

<sup>29</sup> UNFPA, *Advancing Equal Rights for Women and Girls*, 48.

<sup>30</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women’s Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, Tashkent, 2009), 14.

<sup>31</sup> ADB, *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment*, (Manila, 2005), 88.

## 2. National machinery for the advancement of women

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan (Women's Committee), created soon after independence, remains the primary agency that coordinates women's affairs at the national, regional and local level. Its mission concerns the development and implementation of state policies on women's rights, improving the social economic status of women and ensuring women's participation in reform processes and modernization of the country. The Women's Committee has the status of a nongovernmental organization but in fact, it has important links with governmental structures and plays a quasi-governmental role in policy implementation. The chairperson of the republic level Women's Committee is also a deputy prime minister, an appointed position reserved for a woman. The Women's Committee has branches in each region, district and city of the country. Women's Committees in the 14 regions and in 219 districts (or cities) are led by women occupying the deputy hokim position (head of local government).<sup>32</sup> From 2004, each mahalla, a local community-based organization, has an advisory position on religion and spiritual and moral education that is reserved for a woman and is partly funded by the Women's Committee. There are currently 8,348 such female advisors.<sup>33</sup> The vertical nature of the Women's Committee, extending from the highest republican level to the community level, is one of the strengths of the organization.

The CEDAW Committee has drawn attention to some limitations of the Women's Committee as the national machinery for women's advancement. The Women's Committee is financed from the state budget, by specific development projects and through funds from sponsors or from international organizations, each accounting for a third of the budget, but the CEDAW Committee considers this total budget to be insufficient for the Women's Committee to carry out its mandate effectively.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the Women's Committee does not have the necessary institutional status to influence government policy-making and has no authority over government bodies. Women's NGOs have also expressed concern that the Women's Committee is not sufficiently independent from the executive office.<sup>35</sup> In 2010, in response to CEDAW Committee comments, plans were drawn up to revise the Women's Committee charter in order to expand its authority.<sup>36</sup> There has not yet been a formal announcement of any changes to the organization.

Other state institutions that play a role in protecting women's rights or in monitoring implementation of commitments under CEDAW include the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Human Rights (the Human Rights Ombudsman) and parliamentary committees on labor and social protection and on democratic institutes and civil society.

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<sup>32</sup> National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights, *Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, [in Russian] (Tashkent, 2010), 108.

<sup>33</sup> Information provided by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

<sup>34</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan, paragraph 15.

<sup>35</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs, *Women's Rights in Uzbekistan* (briefing note to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2009), 2.

<sup>36</sup> See: National Action Plan for the Implementation of Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, discussed below.

### 3. Conceptual approaches to gender equality

The term “gender” is not widely understood in Uzbekistan, either by the general public or by policymakers.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the government has undertaken initiatives to better inform citizens and specific professional groups about gender equality and women’s rights. NGOs contend that even members of the Women’s Committee are reluctant to use internationally accepted terms that refer to gender disparities.<sup>38</sup> For the most part, “gender” is still largely considered synonymous with “women” and gender-oriented work is almost exclusively concerned with resolving social issues. Thus, “gender inequalities are addressed primarily through social policies aimed at vulnerable groups” (particularly women and girls), while policies on such issues as economic development, financial markets, private sector development and government spending take a wholly gender neutral approach.<sup>39</sup>

National law and policy enshrine the principle of equal rights between men and women, and the phrase “gender and development” appears in policy documents, but most state initiatives with gender components aim to improve the status of women. While such an approach recognizes women’s vulnerabilities, it is also a limited view that does not take into account the process of balancing the rights and opportunities of women and men, nor does it address the institutional factors that are responsible for women’s disadvantaged position. Further, a view that women are inherently vulnerable may result in short-term benefit, but ultimately it is neither empowering nor consistent with a view that women and men both benefit from gender equality.

Because “gender issues” are thought to refer exclusively to women, they are usually relegated to women to resolve. Men are often “excluded from the discussion and process” or are reluctant and refrain from participating in resolving what they perceive as “women’s issues.”<sup>40</sup> The lack of understanding that gender equality concerns the male population as well as women has “a negative impact on the quality of implementation of governmental projects.”<sup>41</sup> Because many ADB projects, especially those concerning infrastructure development, are conducted in “male” spheres in Uzbekistan—sectors that are characterized by very low levels of female representation and worksites with virtually all-male staff—it is important to consider the capacity of stakeholders to address gender issues. Therefore, it may be useful to engage men directly on gender issues that have more resonance in their lives, such as workplace safety (a justification used to limit women’s employment in many physically demanding jobs), labor migration and the male role as family providers.

Because gender equality is largely perceived as a process of being just and fair to women, it is not recognized as a condition for economic growth and stability. Put another way, the economic costs of inequality have not been articulated in the Uzbekistan context.

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<sup>37</sup> Susan Somach and Deborah Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics* (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2010), 59.

<sup>38</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women’s Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report*, 12.

<sup>39</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies to Reach the Millennium Development Goals in Central Asia* (stocktaking study, 2008), 34.

<sup>40</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women’s Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Dinara Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan During the Institutional Reform Period* (Tashkent: Tashkent Gender Studies Center, 2009), 11.



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| <p><i>Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions</i></p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uzbekistan has a legal and policy framework for the advancement of women but has not developed policies on mainstreaming gender into national and local development processes.</li> <li>• The Women's Committee is a resource for coordination on projects to improve women's status, and it is well placed to reach women and civil society organizations at the regional and local levels.</li> <li>• The phrase "gender equality" is largely understood to refer to social issues of particular concern to women; integration of gender issues remains limited in "hard" sectors such as infrastructure development, transport, and energy.</li> <li>• State programs generally address immediate concerns (for example, maternal mortality, job creation or support for small businesses) but not underlying gender inequalities.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Link ADB gender activities with the priority areas outlined in the National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee Recommendations. Such linkages should facilitate government cooperation and ensure support for country-specific gender equality targets.</li> <li>✓ Ensure that ADB gender action plans do not inadvertently reinforce the notion that "gender equality" only concerns the social sphere or improving the lives of women. Gender action plans should differentiate between socially beneficial activities that are gender neutral and activities on women's empowerment. Additionally, develop approaches that demonstrate to men the relevance of gender equality.</li> <li>✓ Support capacity building for key stakeholders involved in project design and implementation. Capacity building will help to operationalize national and ADB commitments regarding the promotion of gender equality.</li> </ul> |

## II. CROSSCUTTING GENDER ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ADB OPERATIONS

In development work, gender equality is viewed as a core objective, but also as a theme that cuts across other areas of programming and should be addressed through multiple actions. This chapter provides an overview of several broad gender issues that can also be thought of as crosscutting in terms of ADB planning. Disparities in these fields contribute directly to gender issues observed at the sector level. For this reason, it is useful to review the gender landscape in Uzbekistan and to consider the influence the themes described in the following sections could have on the effectiveness of ADB projects.

### A. Sex-disaggregated statistics and data

Sex-disaggregated data can serve as the foundation for gender analysis and assessments by providing an overview of the current situation and identifying any differences in relative status between women and men. Furthermore, gender statistics reveal information “vital to the development of policies and programs promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment...and can contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development overall.”<sup>42</sup>

The limited availability of sex-disaggregated data and statistics is a persistent issue in Uzbekistan, as for the region as a whole, which has been highlighted at the level of international review and in the previous ADB Country Gender Assessment.

In brief, there is inadequate legislative and political support and no sustainable mechanism for the regular collection of gender statistics in Uzbekistan. With support of the donor and the international community, the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and the Women’s Committee have published the *Women and Men in Uzbekistan* statistical bulletin three times since 2005: in 2007 (covering the period from 2000–2005), in 2010 (for 2004–2007) and in 2012 (providing data for 2007–2010).<sup>43</sup> The National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee Recommendations includes a measure on the regular publication of such materials every two years.

The Women and Men compilations are useful to some extent because they represent the collective efforts of several organizations. However, they are complicated and time-consuming to produce and therefore the compilations do not necessarily reflect the most up-to-date situation in the country. While there are indications that new methods of data collection are being introduced in Uzbekistan, for example, through time use studies and demographic and health surveys, such data is often not publicly available to researchers, NGOs or development partners undertaking project planning and design. Even when sex-disaggregated statistics are available, they are not necessarily reproduced in mainstream publications or used by the State Committee on Statistics.

The lack of timely sex-disaggregated data presents problems in conducting the present gender assessment. While the most recent information available was used, datasets may represent different years or regions and cannot necessarily be compared or used to illustrate trends.

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<sup>42</sup> Dono Abdurazakova and Jessica Gardner, *Gender Statistics in the Southern Caucasus and Central and West Asia: A Situational Analysis* (Manila: ADB, 2012, forthcoming).

<sup>43</sup> ADB provided support for these publications in 2003, 2005 and 2012.

In the coming years, the results of several evaluation and stocktaking exercises may produce updated and original information concerning the situation of women, and this information could serve as a resource for future ADB projects in Uzbekistan. In 2011, fieldwork was conducted for the fourth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS4), a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) initiative to monitor the situation of women and children that includes a component on water and sanitation as well as other indicators that have relevance to assessing the status of women and girls. Survey results should be forthcoming.<sup>44</sup> Uzbekistan will report under the second cycle of the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review process in 2013, and women's rights will be included among other human rights issues.

## **B. Gender roles and norms**

Gender norms, or notions of the "traditional" roles of men and women, exist in every society, and are often unconsciously accepted as inevitable. In Uzbekistan, patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes have been recognized as impediments to achieving equality. Rigid gender roles are seen to impede progress toward the fulfilment of Millennium Development Goals: "as with many CIS countries, the women of Uzbekistan saw their role in society decline during the past decade as traditional stereotypes made a comeback. The customary view is that men are superior to women in society, and as such must be the main household caregiver and economic provider."<sup>45</sup> The 2010 National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee Recommendations outlines specific measures for the mass media to conduct informational campaigns aimed at the general public "to eliminate stereotypes about the traditional role of each sex within the family and society and to revise stereotypes about the role of women and the equal division of domestic and family obligations between men and women." Unlike other activities that have a specific term for their completion, such measures are to be carried out "continually."

A study of attitudes about the preferred family model bears out the observation that gender stereotypes continue to play a role in today's society. Most respondents to a survey on family models (specifically, 48% of those under age 30 and 54% of older respondents) prefer a patriarchal family model in which "the husband plays a dominating role in a family and bears responsibility for the material well-being, [and] the circle of duties of the wife includes the organization of family life, care of children and care of relatives."<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the distribution of family duties indicates that the patriarchal model is common. In 56% of households surveyed, the male head of household manages the family budget and in 51% makes decisions concerning expensive purchases.<sup>47</sup> In 68% of households, the woman cares for the children and in 65% undertakes household chores, such as cooking and cleaning.<sup>48</sup> The legacy of the Soviet period, which promoted a formal policy of gender equality, has ensured that women in Uzbekistan achieve high levels of education, are represented in the formal labor force and participate in public life. Yet the enduring patriarchal structure means that men have generally not taken on a greater share of family obligations nor ceded positions of power.

<sup>44</sup> Surveys are posted on the following Web site: [http://www.childinfo.org/mics4\\_surveys.html](http://www.childinfo.org/mics4_surveys.html).

<sup>45</sup> Government of Uzbekistan and UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, (Tashkent, 2006), 27.

<sup>46</sup> Institute for Social Research under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Institute for Social Research) and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family in the Situation of Society Transformation (on the example of the Republic of Uzbekistan)* (Tashkent, 2010), 11.

<sup>47</sup> Institute for Social Research and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family*, 18.

<sup>48</sup> Institute for Social Research and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family*, 18.

## Box 2. Women's Budgeted Time for Household Tasks

Time use studies show that women spend almost three times more time in nonpaid work than men. Women use almost 63% of this time for housekeeping work, such as cooking, cleaning, laundering, ironing and repair of clothing. In comparison, men spend only 11.5% of their time on such activities.<sup>49</sup>

Focus groups conducted in three regions (Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand viloyat) under an ADB-supported study on electricity supply provide further insights into the amount of time that women generally spend on unpaid household labor.<sup>50</sup>

According to female focus group participants, they usually spend around 14 hours a day doing various household tasks, for instance:

- Cooking: 3 hours per day
- Washing clothes (by hand): 3 hours per day
- House cleaning: 2 hours per day
- Talking children to and from school: ½ hour per day
- Shopping for food and household items: 2–3 hours per day
- Tending animals/ milking cows: unspecified time

Both women and men reported that they spend from 1–2 hours a day helping their children with homework or teaching them handicrafts.

The particular time burden on women has implications for ADB project planning and for development work in general. Women may very often be unable to participate in local decision-making or in project activities due to time constraints. Likewise, while women may be interested in pursuing entrepreneurial activities and other income-generating schemes, it may be impossible for them to reconcile household chores with formal employment unless they are given specific support to do so (through child-care programs, for example). Finally, improvements to basic infrastructure, such as consistent access to energy supply and clean water, may very well lighten the burden on women's time. However, it is also important that women are able to use the time saved for activities of their choice, including further education, leisure, cultural activities etc. Attention should be given to whether women have access to such other activities and also whether they might be impeded from participating by gender stereotypes.

In rural areas in particular, voluntary work is an important aspect of community life for women and men. A crucial difference, however, is that if the activity involves "routine work, which is free of charge then, as a rule, it is performed by women; however, if this activity is payable or provides advancement in the social status... then it is performed by men."<sup>51</sup>

Traditional gender norms are deeply ingrained in society and thus can be inadvertently reinforced in programs designed to ameliorate women's lives. Even official policy to improve the status of women is inhibited by widely held views that women's primary role is closely connected to motherhood and care for the household.<sup>52</sup> While women, of course,

<sup>49</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men in Uzbekistan*, (statistical collection, Tashkent, 2002), 105. Comparable information was not included in more recent *Women and Men in Uzbekistan* publications for 2007, 2010 or 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Victoria R. Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, Social and Poverty Analysis Report, TA UZB 7740 (ADB, 2011), 111.

<sup>51</sup> Global Water Partnership (GWP) in Central Asia and Caucasus, *Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management* (report on gender surveys in representative households in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2005), 123.

<sup>52</sup> Both the media and national policy statements reinforce notions that women's primary role is that of a homemaker, whose main concern is for the family, and attribute to women characteristics of devotion,

benefit from national programs that address the needs of the population, the large majority of state programs aimed at women concern reproductive and maternal health, with the important exception of special measures to increase women's representation in political office and employment programs. In the Central Asian region, as in Uzbekistan, national strategies and policies that consider women as "mothers," inseparable from issues of family and children are "reinforcing traditional ideas about gender roles and women's inferiority and vulnerability."<sup>53</sup>

Gender stereotypes also explain why women are underrepresented in political office and even in formal employment and have a great deal of influence over women's access to managerial positions, to decision-making posts and whether or not parents invest in their daughters' education.

Although traditional and stereotyped depictions of men and women are still common in Uzbekistan, this situation should not suggest that such cultural norms are fixed. The Women's Committee, cooperating with the Ministry of Public Education and civil society organizations, has organized various events to "enhance the role of fathers in family child-rearing practices."<sup>54</sup> For instance "Fathers' Assemblies" have been promoted among men as a way to engage with their children's teachers to discuss issues of child-rearing and their role and responsibilities. Within a project on reproductive health that included the development of Schools for Young Families, local groups initiated "Fathers' Schools" to encourage men to talk about issues of reproductive health.<sup>55</sup> These are important first steps toward instituting a more equitable model of gender roles and responsibilities and they should be expanded and replicated.

#### *Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions*

- Limited sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, particularly in sectors reflective of the ADB portfolio, complicate the process of identifying priorities and developing policy relevant to gender issues.
- The capacity to collect sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics exists but has not been adequately developed in state agencies or among project implementers.
- Gender norms and stereotypes have considerable influence over perceptions of the roles of men and women in society and are often inadvertently reinforced through official programs and policy.
- Despite women's achievements in many fields, strong perceptions that women are primarily associated with the private and family sphere are prevalent and often limit women's opportunities for self realization in public life.

selflessness and tenderness. Such images are very positive, but they also present women as passive and are generally not compatible with images of women in leadership roles in politics, business or even in civil society. For example see: State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*, [in Russian], quoting a presidential speech announcing 2012 as the Year of the Family; and National Information Agency of Uzbekistan, "Holiday Greetings to the Women of Uzbekistan by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan", 05 March 2012, <http://www.uza.uz/ru/politics/13892>.

<sup>53</sup> Dono Abdurazakova, *National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in South-East and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: Regional Study* (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe [UNECE], 2010), 16.

<sup>54</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan*, fourth periodic report (Tashkent, 2008), 84.

<sup>55</sup> Information provided by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

- ✓ Support efforts to institutionalize the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information.
- ✓ Promote greater use of sex-disaggregated information in policy setting in fields generally considered “gender neutral.”
- ✓ In the context of project planning and development, support needs assessments and other forms of project-specific gender analysis in order to understand current conditions more precisely.
- ✓ In the context of planning, consider the influence of stereotypes but also recognize that gender norms are not fixed and are subject to change. Take measures to promote a more equitable model of gender relations and expand conceptions about women’s role.
- ✓ Take care not to inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes within project development and implementation.

### **C. Women’s participation in political and public life**

A key feature of an equal society is the ability of women and men to be represented on equal terms in the governance of their country and in public life generally. Women and men have differing views about governance and distinct priorities for their country’s development. At present, women in Uzbekistan have fewer opportunities than men to influence policy or lobby their interests through formal channels because they are underrepresented in political office.

#### **1. Women in elected office**

Uzbekistan is an example of how positive measures can be used to facilitate women’s access to political office. In 2003 a quota system was introduced into the Law on Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan that requires political parties nominating members for election to the Oliy Majlis and to kengashes of people’s deputies to include at least 30% women among total candidates. The quota has played a key role in increasing the number of women in the Parliament with each election. Before constitutional reform and the creation of a bicameral parliament, women made up only 7.2% of members of parliament (MPs). After the 2004/2005 elections, they gained 17.5% of seats in the Legislative Chamber (lower house) and 15% of seats in the Senate (upper house).

Still, women’s representation in elected office remains lower than what is generally considered necessary to have an effective voice in decision-making (the “critical minority” of 30% or 40%). Women presently represent 15% of the Senate and 22% of the Legislative Chamber or 19% of the full Oliy Majlis. Women’s representation in the lower house has been increasing, but the number of women in the Senate has not changed from the previous election cycle.

No women chair any of the 11 parliamentary committees, and only two committees have female deputy chairpersons: the Committee on Labor and Social Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Inter-Parliamentary Relations. Of relevance to ADB operations, the Committee on Agriculture and Water Management and the Committee on Industry, Construction and Trade have very low representation of women; one of 13

members and two of 11 members, respectively, are female.<sup>56</sup> Women parliamentarians are better represented in committees concerned with labor and social affairs and with democratic institutions and civil society, which suggests that gender stereotypes about women's responsibilities for social issues may influence women's position within the legislative branch.

At present, the Speaker of the Legislative Chamber and the Ombudsman for Human Rights, an office connected to the Parliament, are both women. During the 2007–2008 elections, a woman was also nominated to stand as a candidate for the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the first time in the history of the country. While these singular examples suggest that notions about women not being suited to political office may be changing, it is also important to examine the pattern of women's access to elected office at various levels. For example, in 2008, there were several regions with no female representation, or only a single female MP, in the Oliy Majlis.<sup>57</sup> The number of women in regional and local representative bodies, kengashes (councils) of people's deputies, increases as the status of the office diminishes, suggesting that there remain considerable barriers to women's representation in power positions.

**Table 1. Women in Legislative and Representative Bodies**

|  | Proportion of Women (%) |
|--|-------------------------|
| Oliy Majlis  |                         |
| Senate (upper house)                                       | 15.0                    |
| Legislative Chamber (lower house)                          | 22.0                    |
| Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan            | 6.7                     |
| Kengashes of people's deputies                             |                         |
| Regional (viloyat) level and city of Tashkent              | 16.6                    |
| District (tuman) level                                     | 16.7                    |
| City level   | 20.4                    |
| Legislative, representative and executive offices combined | 17.1                    |

Sources: (for the Oliy Majlis): Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in National Parliaments* (data for 2012), <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif310710.htm> (accessed September 2012); (for other representative bodies): State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012), (data for 2010), table 6.1, 181.

The number of women in political parties has increased since the quota system was adopted, and on average, women constitute from 35% to almost 50% of the five major parties.<sup>58</sup> All political parties have women's divisions dedicated to preparing women to run in elections.<sup>59</sup> However, none of the major political parties have platforms that advocate for gender equality or take a position on women's rights. It also does not appear that there is any particular correlation between women as party membership and the number of female MPs in the Oliy Majlis. Because the electoral quota stipulates a numerical goal but does not regulate how women and men are placed on party lists, it is possible that while women make up more than two-thirds of the major parties, they occupy nonleadership roles and are thus not put forward as candidates in the same proportion as men.

<sup>56</sup> Information from the Web site of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan: <http://www.parliament.gov.uz/ru/structure/committee/>.

<sup>57</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties*, 24–25.

<sup>58</sup> Data for 2010. Information provided by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

<sup>59</sup> National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights, *Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, 108.

**Table 2. Women's Representation in Political Parties and in the Legislative Chamber, by Party**

|  | Proportion of Female Party Members (%) | Total Seats | Number of Female MPs <sup>a</sup> | Proportion of Female MPs (%) |
|--|--|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party                            | 36.6                                   | 53          | 11                                | 20.8                         |
| People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan                        | 40.7                                   | 32          | 8                                 | 25.0                         |
| Uzbekistan National Revival Democratic Party "Milly Tiklanish" | 47.5                                   | 31          | 5                                 | 16.1                         |
| Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan "Adolat"                 | 48.6                                   | 19          | 6                                 | 31.6                         |

Sources: Proportion of female party members for 2010 from: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012). Election results to the Legislative Chamber (2009–2010) from: Central Election Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "The Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan Held a Session on 12 January to Consider the Results of the Elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis," 31 January 2010, [http://elections.uz/eng/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_e/elections\\_to\\_legislative\\_chambe00.mgr](http://elections.uz/eng/news_and_events/news_e/elections_to_legislative_chambe00.mgr); Number of MPs from: Web site of the Legislative Chamber, "List of Deputies," <http://www.parliament.gov.uz/ru/structure/deputy/>.

<sup>a</sup> Note: three female MPs are without political party affiliation.

## 2. Women in governance

Although the government has undertaken measures to increase the number of women in the executive branch, it appears that women still face considerable obstacles to obtaining appointments. In 2008, women held only 6.2% of all executive branch positions.<sup>60</sup> Of the 14 ministries, only the Ministry of Economy is headed by female minister. Women make up 6.5% of the Cabinet of Ministers and hold a mere 4.2% of total ministerial positions.<sup>61</sup> Women do not chair any of the 11 State Committees and are only represented among members of two committees. Within the executive branch, women are more likely to be represented in deputy or department director positions. At present, there is one female deputy prime minister (the chairperson of the Women's Committee, a post reserved for a woman), but women account for 14.3% of "high-level directors" in government offices.<sup>62</sup>

Women are also underrepresented in bodies of local authority. The president submits potential candidates for regional-level leaders (hokim) for the 14 regional administrations<sup>63</sup> to provincial-level kengashes of people's deputies for approval. There are currently no female hokims, but according to data from 2008, women represented 11.9% of deputy hokims.<sup>64</sup> In Uzbekistan, local bodies of citizen self-governance, mahallas, are organized in villages, settlements and neighborhoods of town and cities. The mahalla is run by a committee of citizens, which is headed by the aksakal, an elected position. Of 10,126 mahallas, women chair 1,131 mahalla committees (11.2%).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2004–2007*, [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2010), 180.

<sup>61</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, [in Russian], 180, 181.

<sup>62</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, [in Russian], 181.

<sup>63</sup> The Republic of Uzbekistan consists of 14 regional administrations—twelve regions (referred to as *viloyat*), the city of Tashkent, which has the status of a region, and Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic.

<sup>64</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties*, 92.

<sup>65</sup> Information provided by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.



### 3. Structural barriers to women entering government

The reasons for women's underrepresentation in governance vary, but it has been suggested that even highly educated women may lack knowledge about how to run campaigns and have limited experience in the fields of political science and public administration.<sup>66</sup> Further, gender mainstreaming has not been undertaken in the major educational institutions that train future leaders, and women are unrepresented among the student body.<sup>67</sup> It appears that the electorate may be more willing to consider women as candidates for public office, but the continued influence of gender-based stereotypes should not be underestimated. The dominant norm of the male leader and female supporting role influences how society perceives the capacity of women to hold top government office as well as how women themselves view their career choices and goals. In every country, politics is a demanding profession, but the fact that women are also expected to take on the majority of childcare and family responsibilities means that a political career may be inconceivable for most women in Uzbekistan.

The increasing number of women in the Oliy Majlis and state efforts to increase female leadership should not be diminished. At the same time, it is important that attention not be devoted merely to filling numerical quotas but also to addressing the qualitative aspects of women's political participation, such as women's capacity to advance a gender equality agenda, to form coalitions and to be re-elected. The very low representation of women in regional and municipal offices is also a concern as it suggests that women have limited opportunities to participate in decisionmaking at the local and community level on the very issues that could have considerable influence on their daily lives.

### 4. Engagement in civil society

Civil society organizations offer another means for women and men to participate in public life and influence policy making. Civil society in Uzbekistan includes the following types of organizations: NGOs established by grassroots initiatives, NGOs that mainly work on government programs and initiatives, NGOs associated with political parties, and NGOs based on community-driven organizations, such as the mahalla.<sup>68</sup>

In Uzbekistan, women are active in nongovernmental organizations, and 210 women's NGOs are officially registered with the Ministry of Justice, comprising national and local NGOs as well as subdivisions of central women's NGOs,<sup>69</sup> such as the Women's Committee. The National Association of Nongovernmental Nonprofit Organizations of Uzbekistan (NANNOUz) reports that 63 "women's NGOs" are included among its membership. In this case, "women's NGOs" include any organization with a mission focused on issues of concern to or involving women but which is not necessarily managed or directed by a woman. NANNOUz estimates that from 70%–80% of all NGOs belonging to the association are, in fact, headed by women, confirming women's prominent role in social activities in Uzbekistan. In 2011, ADB funded the creation of a database of gender

<sup>66</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 11.

<sup>67</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report*, 22.

<sup>68</sup> ADB /Uzbekistan Resident Mission, *Civil Society Briefs: Uzbekistan*, (Tashkent, 2011), 2.

<sup>69</sup> National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights, *Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, 114.

and development organizations in Uzbekistan;<sup>70</sup> the GAD Directory will be accessible from the ADB Web site.<sup>71</sup>

Cooperation between the state and nongovernmental organizations is a part of official policy, but the CEDAW Committee raised concerns over government restrictions imposed on the activities of civil society organizations and the impact they would have on groups that work on gender equality and women's empowerment specifically.<sup>72</sup> The current National Action Plan to implement CEDAW Committee Conclusions responds to this point and confirms that NGOs that address women's issues should be supported.

Civil society organizations provide women with a means to participate in the public sphere, but the capacity of most NGOs is also limited. Few NGOs undertake advocacy work, but the Women's Committee is a "rare example [of a civil society organization], which participates in the protection of women's rights in the labor and domestic sphere."<sup>73</sup> About half of all NGOs are not active due to lack of funding.<sup>74</sup> Limited funding is an especially critical issue for the small number of women's NGOs that are engaged in service provision. Some such NGOs are able to sustain their work by offering fee-based training, as in the case of Business Women's Associations, and at least one women's NGO also operates as a microcredit organization. It is also generally understood that pro-government NGOs are the most active in Uzbekistan and receive more political and financial support; independent NGOs are much more limited in their ability to work effectively.<sup>75</sup>

An important development is a draft law on social partnership that would establish a model for cooperation between NGOs, public authorities and the business sector to develop and implement socio-economic projects, address humanitarian issues and protect the rights and freedoms of different groups.<sup>76</sup> The private sector has historically shown reluctance to cooperate with NGOs, but the draft law both defines a role for businesses and would support the provision of grants, tenders ("social orders") and charitable donations. The Chamber of Commerce of Uzbekistan is also supporting a dialog on developing a policy on corporate social responsibility, and several large multinational corporations (Uzcarlsberg and Gazprom, for example) already undertake social programs for employees, address environmental issues and sponsor charitable work, in some cases collaborating with NGOs on pilot projects.<sup>77</sup> Neither women's organizations or work on gender issues have thus far been supported by the private sector, but as policies on corporate social responsibility take shape it will be important to explore measures to better include women's NGOs within such initiatives.

Information was not available about the existence of NGOs in Uzbekistan that address gender issues relevant to a male audience or engage men in gender equality initiatives more broadly. An assessment by the United States Agency for International Development

<sup>70</sup> Under RETA 7563, Promoting Gender-Inclusive Growth in Central and West Asia DMCs.

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.adb.org/projects/44067-012/>

<sup>72</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan, paragraph 18.

<sup>73</sup> USAID, *2010 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition (Washington, DC, 2011), 215.

<sup>74</sup> USAID, *2010 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition, 212.

<sup>75</sup> USAID, *2010 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition, 213

<sup>76</sup> The process of drafting the Law on Social Partnership was initiated by several large civil society organizations and is supported by the Trade Union Federation. The draft law has not yet been introduced in Parliament.

<sup>77</sup> Mekhribon Mametova, "Increasing social responsibility," [in Russian], National Information Agency of Uzbekistan, 02 June 2011, <http://uza.uz/ru/business/15104/>.

(USAID) recommends that “NGOs should also be encouraged to engage both women and men in their activities and to overcome gender stereotypes about what are ‘men’s’ or ‘women’s’ issues,”<sup>78</sup> suggesting that the civil society sector is also influenced by traditional notions of the roles of women and men.

Individual and civic activism is generally considered limited in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, and this situation has historical and cultural roots. Uzbekistan has long been a settled and agricultural society (in contrast to neighboring countries with nomadic traditions) and the mahalla developed as both an institution of self-government and also an important “community framework for action.”<sup>79</sup> Although the organization and structure of the mahalla differ from those of civil society organizations, the mahalla nevertheless represents another means by which women and men can be engaged in community-based decisionmaking. Because local branches of the Women’s Committee maintain a close working relationship with mahallas at the grassroots level, working with the mahalla in projects that aim to address women’s empowerment directly may be a useful approach.

#### *Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions*

- Women’s low level of representation in political office, particularly in decision-making roles and in agencies with mandates covering ADB priority sectors, means that women are not involved in planning and policy-making.
- Government bodies, including elected offices and ministries, may lack the capacity to adequately serve female citizens.
- Women are underrepresented in administrative bodies that set priorities at the local level and the level of ADB project implementation. Thus, women’s influence over project design and implementation may be limited.
- Women’s civil society organizations, especially those which work at the grassroots level, can serve as a bridge between citizens, the state and ADB.

- ✓ Support efforts to increase women’s access to formal decision-making posts.
- ✓ Take special measures to ensure that women are able to participate in and influence decisions about ADB operations that will impact them and to participate in decision-making relevant to ADB projects.
- ✓ Women’s NGOs offer an avenue through which ADB can engage with female stakeholders and beneficiaries, especially at the local level.

#### **D. Gender disparities in employment and the labor market**

Women’s economic empowerment is critical for achieving gender equality and combating poverty. A legacy of the Soviet system is the generally high representation of women in the formal labor force in Uzbekistan, especially compared with other developing countries. Yet, clear gender-based imbalances nevertheless exist, persisting despite changes to the overall economic climate and employment patterns. How women are positioned in the labor market will determine whether they will benefit on equal terms with men from projects that increase employment opportunities and even from economic growth in general.

<sup>78</sup> Somach and Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*, 63-64.

<sup>79</sup> UNDP, Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, *Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies*, (Bratislava, 2011), 30.

## 1. Employment and unemployment patterns

The female employment rate in Uzbekistan increased from 1999–2008, at an average of 3.4% per year, but this may be reflective of an overall growth in employment since Uzbekistan also saw one of the highest growth rates in male employment in the CIS region during the same period.<sup>80</sup> From 2008–2009, women's economic activity rates declined for all Central Asian republics.<sup>81</sup>

The number of economically active women remains considerably lower than that of economically active men. Women make up almost half of the adult labor force (46%) but there is a clear gender gap in labor force participation. Official figures indicate that from 2007–2010, the employed population increased by 8.3%, but employment among men grew more rapidly than for women—a 10.8% increase for men but only 5.5% increase for women.<sup>82</sup> Between 2007–2010, the proportion of women in the working population decreased while the proportion of men increased. Taking into consideration that the European and Central Asian region, including Uzbekistan, saw high growth from 1999 to 2009, this widening gender gap is a cause for concern.<sup>83</sup>

### Box 3. Home-Based Work and Initiatives to Promote Women's Employment

The government acknowledges that there is a need to promote women's economic activity and has undertaken several programs to increase employment overall and to promote job creation for women, such as the Regional Program for Increasing Women's Employment for 2005–2007, which was re-approved in 2008, 2009 and 2010. According to official reports, around 400,000 new jobs are created each year, 40% of which are “set aside for women.”<sup>84</sup> The number of new jobs created for women has increased annually, as follows: 198,400 (2005); 204,600 (2006); 210,800 (2007), 403,142 (2009).<sup>85</sup> About half of such jobs target women in rural areas. It could not be determined how many women are currently employed under such schemes nor how the system of creating “jobs for women” functions. One measure that has been used is privileging small businesses that hire mainly women and are managed by women for specific loans.

2009 was declared the Year of Rural Development and Improvement, and the subsequent State program included an activity to train 2,000 unemployed women in basic business skills and provide them with start-up capital.<sup>86</sup> The Chamber of Commerce, Association of Business Women and Mikrocreditbank implemented the program.

<sup>80</sup> Sarosh Sattar, *Opportunities for Men and Women: Emerging Europe and Central Asia* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2012), 37.

<sup>81</sup> Malinka Koparanova, Senior Social Affairs Officer and Gender Focal Point at UNECE, “Challenges to Closing the Entrepreneurship Gaps in Central Asia: Implications for Policy Making” (presentation, UNECE Policy Seminar on Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia, Geneva, 19 September 2011).

<sup>82</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, [in Russian], 150.

<sup>83</sup> Sattar, *Opportunities for Men and Women*, 35.

<sup>84</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties*, 101 and Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation, “About the protection of women's rights in Uzbekistan” [in Russian], <http://www.uzembassy.ru/5508.htm>.

<sup>85</sup> Farida Akbarova, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Chairperson of the Women's Committee, “Women's Economic Empowerment,” (presentation, 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of ADB's Board of Governors, Tashkent, 02 May 2010).

<sup>86</sup> Appendix to the Year of Rural Development and Improvement national program, adopted by Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. PP-1046 of 26 January 2009.

Women's employment programs aim to create jobs that are considered particularly beneficial and suitable for women, namely by focusing on home-based work, service sector jobs (specifically during 2007–2010) and small business development and farming, such as raising livestock.<sup>87</sup>

The system of home-based work was established by a Presidential Decree "On Measures to Stimulate the Expansion of Cooperation between Large Enterprises and Service Production through Home-Based Work."<sup>88</sup> While this type of employment is open to both sexes, from its inception, home-based work has been envisioned as a measure oriented towards women, and women are thus given priority. As a private company director noted, "the benefits of home-based work for women are enormous...they work from home, under contract to supply finished products and receive a suitable payment. The key issue—they have time for household work and to take care of children."<sup>89</sup> A government report notes that home-based work provides women with opportunities to realize their economic potential "while taking into account the limited opportunities for women to combine domestic responsibilities with productive work and gives women the opportunity to earn income without separation from the family."<sup>90</sup>

The total number of women and men working in home-based employment has not been calculated, but it was reported that in 2008 large industrial enterprises created 97,800 jobs for women under contract for home-based work.<sup>91</sup> In the first half of 2008, the Women's Committee working with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection helped to create over 138,000 "work places for women," of which around 25,000 were home-based.<sup>92</sup> In 2010, it was planned that home-based jobs would be provided to "more than 208,000 women with many children, persons with disabilities and other citizens in need of social protection."<sup>93</sup>

In its most recent country review, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern over the increasing number of female home-based workers and whether they are afforded adequate social protection under labor law.<sup>94</sup> In fact, home-based work is considered formal employment regulated through a labor contract. Home-based work consequently provides employees with a work history (through labor books—*трудоуые книжки*) and entitlements to unemployment and pension benefits. This assessment was unable to determine whether home-based work provides paid leave for illness, injury, pregnancy or childcare, but home-based workers are covered by any collective agreements to which the contracting company is a party. Companies receive tax incentives for employing home-based workers.

It is important that employment schemes identify the real constraints that women face in finding employment, especially in rural areas where services such as free childcare are lacking. Creating jobs through home-based work programs does not necessarily address the deeper structural reasons for women's lack of economic activity. Arguably, measures such as home-based work can reinforce notions that a woman's work must accommodate her family obligations, rather than promoting a more equitable distribution of household responsibilities.

<sup>87</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 8.

<sup>88</sup> No. UP-3706 of 05 January 2006.

<sup>89</sup> H. Mamatrayimov, "The Advantages of Home-Based Work," [in Russian], National Information Agency of Uzbekistan, 19 September 2006, <http://www.hrc.uz/press/news/2006/09/19/trud>.

<sup>90</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 8.

<sup>92</sup> UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Achievements and Prospects for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], (United Nations, 2009), 11.

<sup>93</sup> Uz Daily (news portal), "In Uzbekistan in 2011, 216.2 thousand jobs will be created through home-based work," [in Russian], 20 December 2010, <http://www.uzdaily.uz/articles-id-5083.htm>.

<sup>94</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan, paragraph 32.

Like patterns of women's economic activity, unemployment rates in Uzbekistan show distinct gender patterns. Women's official unemployment rates have consistently remained higher than men's. There is some indication that women are not seeking jobs at the same rate as men, or at least not using official channels for assistance. According to data from 2010, women made up 53.7% of the total unemployed population but only 43.5% of those officially registered as unemployed.<sup>95</sup> Unemployed women generally spend more time looking for jobs than men and are on average unemployed for more than a year.<sup>96</sup>

## 2. Informal employment

In the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region, "a significant portion of [women] are informally employed and their share in family work is still much higher than men's. Women continue to be disproportionately represented in lower-quality jobs, characterized by low pay, poor working conditions and lack of social protection. This can be explained in large part by their greater family responsibilities and the challenges of combining family and work."<sup>97</sup> The Government Welfare Improvement Strategy for 2008–2010 drew attention to the increasing number of women employed by the informal economy in Uzbekistan.<sup>98</sup> Women are also more likely to earn income through small family-based businesses, such as farming or handicrafts. Informal work is important in terms of contributing to the family budget but it also leaves women without the social protections offered by formal employment, such as pensions, maternity leave, sick leave or holidays. Women in rural areas are especially vulnerable in the current labor market due to their lack of competitiveness and limited jobs available to them locally. As a result, women from rural areas are more likely to accept non-qualified, informal or seasonal work.

Even women who are neither engaged in formal employment nor in the informal sector still make important contributions to the economy in terms of providing "socially useful" labor by caring for children and creating conditions that support the employment of other family members. This contribution has not been calculated in terms of economic benefit, is not factored into national accounting nor is it included when calculating the GNP. "Underestimating the role of women in the labor sphere, which is still understood to refer to paid labor, gives rise to social and economic problems associated with the perception of women as inferior and secondary workers in the labor market."<sup>99</sup> Today, there is no stigma attached to unemployed women (as was the Soviet policy toward nonworking people), and in fact the predominant discourse supports such women as fulfilling their "true purpose." However, experts also note that in reality women's economically vulnerable position in the home is problematic and has even been associated with increased risk of domestic violence.<sup>100</sup>

## 3. Gender patterns in the labor market

The formal labor market in Uzbekistan exhibits occupational segregation, with women and

<sup>95</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*, [in Russian], table 4.1, 155; table 4.13, 167.

<sup>96</sup> Welfare Improvement Strategy for Uzbekistan for 2008–2010, 56.

<sup>97</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, *Economic Growth and Decent Work: Recent Trends in Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (Moscow, 2008), 8.

<sup>98</sup> Welfare Improvement Strategy for Uzbekistan for 2008–2010, 56.

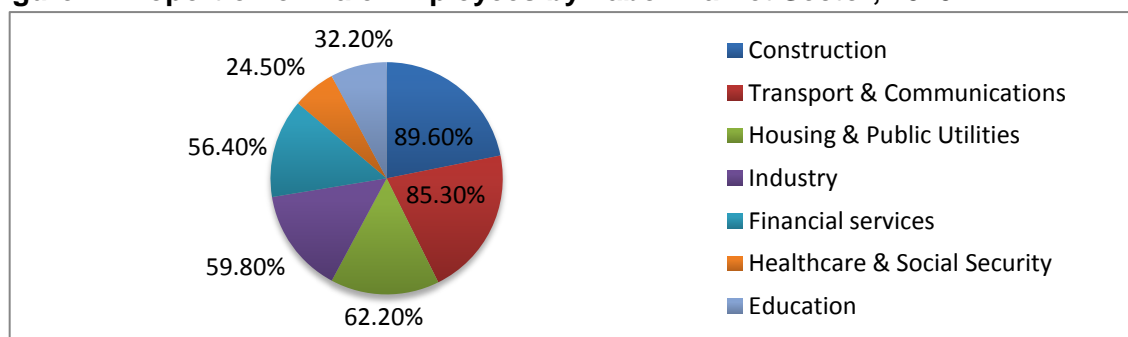
<sup>99</sup> Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, *Gender Expertise of the Family and Labor Codes of the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], (Tashkent: ADB, 2008), 60.

<sup>100</sup> Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, *Gender Expertise of the Family and Labor Codes*, 60.

men concentrated in distinct fields. Two fields of employment<sup>101</sup>—agriculture and trade and catering and sales—exhibit near gender balance among employees. Males account for 52% of workers in the first sector and females make up 54% of employees in the latter. Other sectors show greater segregation. The fields of education, healthcare, arts, culture and science are considered “traditional” for women,<sup>102</sup> and approximately a third of all working women are employed in these sectors combined.<sup>103</sup> The majority of employees in the fields of construction and transport and communications are male, which also account for just under a quarter of all working men.<sup>104</sup> The sectors in which women dominate, particularly education and health, are low paid, whereas men are overly represented among the workforce in fields with comparatively high salaries.<sup>105</sup>

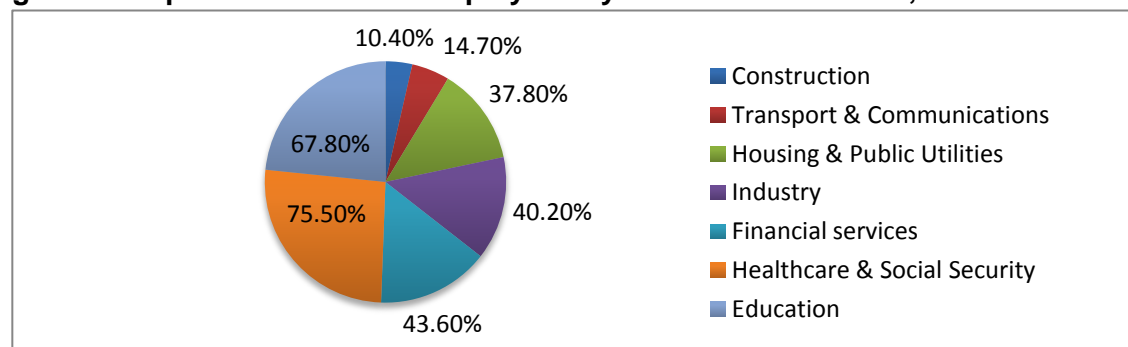
Agricultural work is the largest employer of both men and women. The following figures illustrate the proportion of men and women in the principal non-agricultural sectors of the labor market.

**Figure 1. Proportion of Male Employees by Labor Market Sector, 2010**



Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012), table 4.6, 159.

**Figure 2. Proportion of Female Employees by Labor Market Sector, 2010**



Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012), table 4.6, 159.

<sup>101</sup> National statistics compile data on male and female employees in the following sectors: (1) agriculture and forestry, (2) construction, (3) education, culture, art, science and scientific services, (4) financial services and insurance (5) healthcare, physical education and social security, (6) housing and utilities/ non-productive consumer services, (7) industry, (8) trade, catering, sales and marketing, (9) transport and communications and (10) other uncategorized. For the purposes of this assessment, shorthand versions of these categories were used.

<sup>102</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 12.

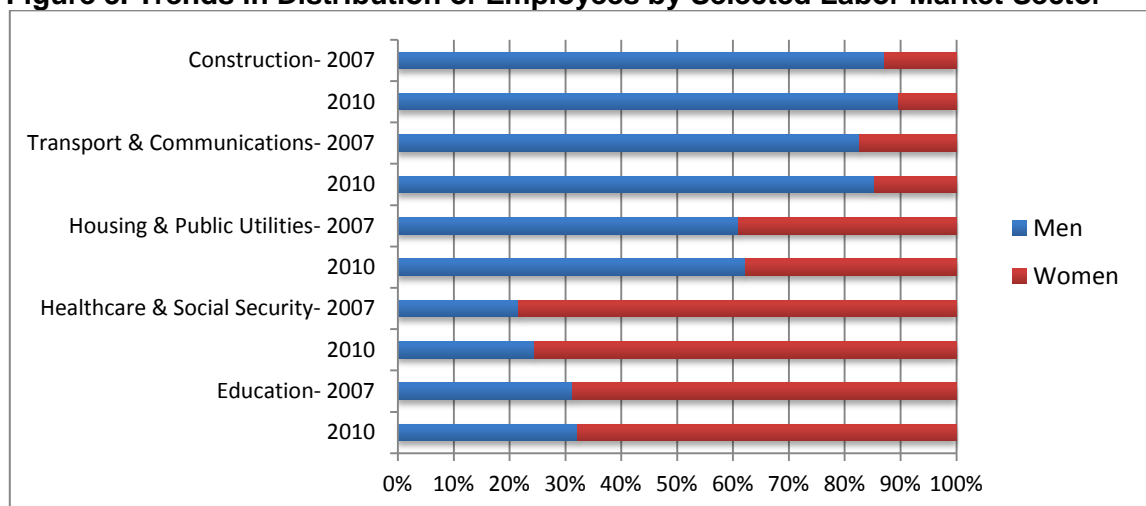
<sup>103</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

<sup>104</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

<sup>105</sup> Government of Uzbekistan/UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 28–29.

A comparison of 2010 labor market data to figures from 2007 indicates that gaps are increasing in the sectors that employ primarily men (construction and transport, for instance) but decreasing in sectors where women are generally overrepresented (healthcare and education). No doubt reflective of the greater overall increase in male employment, men are moving into non-traditional jobs. Women, on the other hand, appear not to be making a similar transition and may, in fact, be facing increasing competition for jobs.

**Figure 3. Trends in Distribution of Employees by Selected Labor Market Sector**



Sources: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2004-2007* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2010), 157; *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

Women are also less likely than men to be employed in the private sector. According to World Bank data, women are 34% and 36% of all fulltime workers in small enterprises and medium enterprises, respectively, and only 25% of workers in large enterprises.<sup>106</sup>

There are a number of reasons for women's low representation in the abovementioned sectors. Certainly, gender-based stereotypes play a role, and this is confirmed by the fact that a very small number of women enter such fields as industry or transport within higher education. In addition, there are legal limitations on women's ability to enter these fields. The Labor Code (Article 225) references an official list of Work in Dangerous Environments for which Female Labor is Wholly or Partially Prohibited.<sup>107</sup> The list consists of 44 categories and includes approximately 380 jobs, in such fields as transport, construction, natural resource extraction, manufacturing and industry, refining and processing and water supply and sanitation. The prohibited jobs are in high-risk sectors and are those that involve heavy physical labor or exposure to harmful and hazardous conditions. The purpose of the list is to protect women from potential harm and is related to women's reproductive functions. Other Labor Code provisions restrict night and overtime work and business trips for pregnant women and female employees with young children (to age 14) without the women's consent. Analysts note that "the prohibition on

<sup>106</sup> World Bank/International Finance Corporation (World Bank Group), *Uzbekistan Country Profile 2008*, Enterprise Surveys (Washington D.C., 2008), 14. Small enterprises are those that employ 1–19 persons; medium enterprises have 20–99 employees, and large enterprises have 100 or more employees.

<sup>107</sup> Adopted by the Ministry of Justice and approved by the Ministries of Labor and Health, No. 865, 05 January 2000.



women working in hazardous and dangerous industries while permitting men to work in the same conditions discriminates against the latter. Prohibiting women from working in hazardous conditions makes women dependent on the state which is making the decision for them about in which industries, at which time and in which conditions they should work.”<sup>108</sup>

In addition to occupational, or horizontal, segregation, the labor market also exhibits vertical segregation meaning that women are underrepresented in leadership and managerial positions. Across all economic sectors, men occupy 73% of management positions.<sup>109</sup> Of note, even in those areas where women are well-represented or that exhibit greater gender parity, such as agriculture, healthcare and social welfare and science, women account for only around a third of managers and in many cases, less than 20%. Women are even less likely to hold managerial or leadership positions in the private sector, making up only 12% of managers in small enterprises, 9% in medium enterprises and only 5.5% of managers of large enterprises.<sup>110</sup>

#### 4. Consequences of gender disparities in the labor market

Occupational segregation signifies the existence of gender inequalities and also impedes inclusive growth. The International Labour Organization (ILO) advises that, “policy objectives to promote gender equality should aim to fight against the tendency toward a discrimination- or exploitation-based definition of ‘women’s work.’”<sup>111</sup> Such policies should not only “broaden access for women to employment in an enlarged scope of industries and occupations,” but also encourage “male employment in sectors traditional [*sic*] defined as ‘female.’”<sup>112</sup>

The patterns of segregation described above contribute to the gender-based wage gap in Uzbekistan. Women’s salaries are on average 64% of men’s salaries.<sup>113</sup> The gender pay gap is reflective of the specific nature of women’s employment; women represent a greater share of part-time employees or workers in the informal sector, and this is connected to women’s need to balance working life with family responsibilities. The burden of family responsibilities effects women’s choices in employment and can place very real impediments to women’s economic independence.

Due to women’s lower level of formal employment, prevalence in part-time and informal sector work and lower salaries, women contribute much less to household budgets than men. According to household surveys, on average women’s income makes up around 13%-14% of the family budget.<sup>114</sup> If women are engaged in entrepreneurial activities, and including social benefits that women receive, the share of the budget increases to 20%. In this case, more than half of women’s family income is from the social benefits (namely

<sup>108</sup> Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, *Gender Expertise of the Family and Labor Codes of the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], (Tashkent: ADB, 2008), 58.

<sup>109</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, [in Russian], 180.

<sup>110</sup> World Bank Group, *Uzbekistan Country Profile 2008*, 13.

<sup>111</sup> ILO, *Women in Labour Markets: Measuring Progress and Identifying Challenges* (Geneva, 2010), 40.

<sup>112</sup> ILO, *Women in Labour Markets*, 40.

<sup>113</sup> UNDP Indicators, “Ratio of estimated female to male earned income,” accessible from: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/gender/show/20965898-F203-1EE9-B57CC0044C317BB8> (accessed April 2012).

<sup>114</sup> The surveys were small in scale and conducted in the Narpay rayon of the Samarkand oblast in 2008. Dinara Alimjanova, *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women of Uzbekistan, and Ways of their Economic Empowerment*, draft report (ADB/UNDP/Gender Program of the Swiss Embassy, 2009), 5.

pensions, disability benefits and child benefits). Women's low contribution to family incomes impacts their ability to influence decisions on how the household budget is allocated, for day-to-day expenditures as well as in terms of large purchases or investments into energy efficient or laborsaving devices, children's education, farming equipment, etc.

The Labor Code sets forth guarantees for maternity leave and establishes parental leave, specifying that childcare leave may be used in whole or in part by the mother, father, grandmother, grandfather or any other relative caring for the child. There is no separate right to paternity leave (in addition to maternity leave). Data on the number of men taking childcare leave is unavailable, but given gender-based stereotypes about women's role in childcare, it is assumed that few men are exercising their right to take parental leave.

Retirement age differs for women and men—age 55 for women (with at least 20 years' employment) and age 60 for men (with at least 25 years' employment).<sup>115</sup> The earlier retirement age for women is a legacy of the Soviet pension system under which women received credit for years out of the labor force while raising children. Today, women's shorter career histories and lower salaries, combined with longer life expectancy than men, means that women often face difficulties surviving on their pensions once they reach retirement age. The risk of old age poverty is especially significant for women.

The list of jobs appended to the Labor Code that are restricted to men contradicts nondiscrimination principles in labor law. Such prohibitions also create a situation in which men are expected to risk exposure to hazardous working conditions by virtue of being male. As of 2011, men represented 77.8% of all employees working in conditions that did not conform to norms for sanitation and hygiene in industry and 91.6% of those working in such conditions in construction.<sup>116</sup> An approach in line with international standards would require ensuring optimum occupational health and safety for all employees regardless of sex.

## 5. Gender and labor migration

Labor migration is responsive to local economic conditions and opportunities. By many estimates, Uzbekistan is the largest migrant sending country in Central Asia in absolute numbers, but the process of quantifying the number of migrants is complicated by several factors. Migration takes both legal and illegal forms; it can be temporary—especially for seasonal work—and can involve cross-border movement or may be purely internal, when people move from rural to urban areas. Labor migration is closely associated with the crimes of human trafficking and forced labor, but it does not necessarily involve exploitation.

Uzbekistan has experienced a high level of external labor migration, primarily to Russia and Kazakhstan, for a number of years. There are reportedly between two and eight million Uzbek immigrants residing abroad who contribute over \$1.3 billion in remittances annually, accounting for 8% of the GDP.<sup>117</sup> By other estimates, 7% of the economically

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<sup>115</sup> Article 289, Labor Code.

<sup>116</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*, [in Russian], table 4.10, 163; table 4.11, 164.

<sup>117</sup> Erica Marat, "Labor Migration in Central Asia: Implications of the Global Economic Crisis," (Washington DC, Stockholm: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2009), 16, 9.

active population has been involved in external or internal labor migration.<sup>118</sup> Studies suggest that men comprise from 60%–90% of Uzbek labor migrants working abroad,<sup>119</sup> while others note that labor migration is becoming increasingly feminized. Experts estimate that in Uzbekistan, women account for between 11% and 18% of the total number of migrant workers.<sup>120</sup>

A full analysis of the trends and characteristics of labor migration in Uzbekistan is beyond the scope of this assessment. However, it is useful to review several key topics concerning gender and migration. Although external labor migration is distinct from internal migration, many of the factors that influence the decision to migrate for work are common to both forms.

Unemployment is the primary “push factor” for both male and female labor migrants. Limited economic opportunities and low wages, especially in rural areas, has meant that the traditional model of a single male breadwinner supporting a family is no longer viable. “Families have to rely on dual incomes and working women become important contributors to their family budget. However, the sectors in which women were traditionally employed in the [Central Asian] region, such as textile manufacture, clothes manufacture and others, have considerably reduced their workforce due to the economic crisis and an inability to compete with cheap imported goods. ...At the same time, all women have to compete with men in sectors such as retail trade and catering in which, previously, most men were not interested in being employed. All these developments contribute to the formation of ‘push factors’ forcing many women to search for jobs in foreign countries and, thus, to consider migration.”<sup>121</sup>

Female labor migration is symptomatic of issues that women encounter in the labor market of Uzbekistan generally, such as women’s lack of competitiveness in the market and the low cost of women’s labor.<sup>122</sup> A survey of women and men participating in informal job bazaars (mardikor<sup>123</sup>) in Tashkent revealed that over half of surveyed women travelled to the capital to seek work due to their inability to find jobs in their places of residence, as compared to less than a third of men who gave this as their reason for migrating.<sup>124</sup> Other surveys show that high numbers of women are motivated to migrate due to low salaries in their place of origin (68.8%)<sup>125</sup> or long term unemployment. Among internal migrants specifically, all surveyed women had been unemployed for several years, most (48.4%) for between seven and ten years.<sup>126</sup>

Entrepreneurship is another factor that women cite as a motivation to migrate, especially

<sup>118</sup> Lyudmila Maksakova, “Feminization of Labour Migration in Uzbekistan” in *Migration Perspectives: Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, ed. Roger Rodriguez Rios, (Vienna: International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2006), 133.

<sup>119</sup> Marat, “Labor Migration in Central Asia,” 10.

<sup>120</sup> United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), CIS Regional Office, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers: Central Asia and Russia*, (Almaty, 2009), 21.

<sup>121</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 8.

<sup>122</sup> Evgeniy, Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan: Social, Legal and Gender Aspects*, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Gender Programme of the Swiss Embassy (Tashkent, 2008), 43.

<sup>123</sup> Mardikor refers to informal markets at which day laborers, typically male, are hired on a temporary and informal basis. Such work is performed without a contract and workers have little legal protection. Women’s participation in mardikor is a relatively new phenomenon. See *Shadow report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, and *Women’s Rights in Uzbekistan and Briefing Note to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*,

<sup>124</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 43.

<sup>125</sup> Maksakova, “Feminization of Labor Migration,” 135.

<sup>126</sup> Maksakova, “Feminization of Labor Migration,” 140.

the opportunity to earn capital to start a business. The majority (56.9%) of surveyed migrants stated that entrepreneurship was the primary reason they migrated, and of this group, 61.9% of respondents were women.<sup>127</sup> A separate survey, however, indicated that only 3% of women who migrated from Uzbekistan to Russia, and 5% of those who migrated from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan, were actually able to save sufficient money to start their own businesses.<sup>128</sup>

Both male and female labor migrants in Uzbekistan are usually supporting families. While one survey of internal labor migrants showed that among males, the share of single men is quite high (44.2%),<sup>129</sup> a separate survey of women from Uzbekistan working in Russia indicated that 82% of respondents had minor children or elderly family members, with an average of 2.5 dependents per woman.<sup>130</sup> Women's internal migration is also driven by the fact that when male partners and family members migrate, the women who are left behind often have to take on new roles such as earning money for the family. Given the "lack of agricultural and non-agricultural employment opportunities in rural areas... an increasing number of women [is seeking] temporary, informal, and often exploitative employment in the cities."<sup>131</sup>

Based on interviews conducted in Tashkent, internal labor migrants are generally young, and a large share lacks vocational training or professional education and have not previously been employed in the formal economy.<sup>132</sup> A not insignificant number of female migrants stated that they have a need for vocational education courses in order to apply for higher level jobs abroad; 33% of women migrating from Uzbekistan to Russia and 28% migrating to Kazakhstan responded in this way.<sup>133</sup> A case study provided by a representative of an employment agency in Uzbekistan illustrates the situation: "there are a lot of women with experience of working in textile factories, but they have been working with old machinery, which is no longer used in Russian factories. Our women do not have the experience of working with modern equipment; their knowledge is outdated... The qualifications of our women do not match their demands; the businesses in Russia require up-to-date specialists."<sup>134</sup>

Male migrants tend to work in temporary jobs in construction (69% of those surveyed), agriculture (36.2%) and repair work (25.8%).<sup>135</sup> Women are often employed in low-skilled work, much of it in domestic services. In Tashkent, 73.7% of female migrants reported working in household washing and cleaning jobs, followed by work cleaning and preparing land (45%).<sup>136</sup> Another survey suggested that internal female migrants are engaged more equally in trade, agricultural work (such as the sorting and packing of fruit and vegetables) and providing cleaning services.<sup>137</sup>

In addition to the positive contributions that labor migrants make to the financial wellbeing of their families, labor migration has negative repercussions for both men and women. ADB monitoring of its water and sanitation projects has shown that the population of

<sup>127</sup> Maksakova, "Feminization of Labor Migration," 135.

<sup>128</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 57.

<sup>129</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 43.

<sup>130</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 20.

<sup>131</sup> Somach and Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*, 60.

<sup>132</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 43.

<sup>133</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 36.

<sup>134</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 42.

<sup>135</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 43.

<sup>136</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 43-44.

<sup>137</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 119.

working-age males is very low in some project areas, which means that men may be unavailable to take part in community planning and priority-setting. Several ADB gender action plans support quotas for women's participation in project activities, but in some regions it may be necessary to reexamine the assumption that women are underrepresented and consider the implications of men's absence from their communities. Male migrants returning home may also "bring health problems that compromise their future earning potential and/or aggravate family relations, such as when the migrants have suffered dangerous working or living conditions, experienced abuse related to being trafficked, or become infected with sexually transmitted infections."<sup>138</sup>

Female labor migrants are especially vulnerable to exploitation, labor discrimination and poor working conditions and are exposed to the risk of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Analysis of incomes shows that female migrants consistently earn less than men (by 25%–30%)<sup>139</sup> and that among migrants earning less than \$50 per month, the share of women is double that of men.<sup>140</sup> A survey of female migrants from Uzbekistan showed that despite increases in the material well-being of the migrants' families, the employment status of the migrants themselves did not improve.<sup>141</sup> Specifically, the level of unemployment among the surveyed women in the home country had increased—in part because the women intended to migrate again and did not seek jobs in Uzbekistan but also due to the fact that they were unable to take extended breaks from work abroad. Still, it is significant that "as a rule, women do not return to their previous place of work,"<sup>142</sup> a fact which suggests that female migrants may increasingly be undertaking long-term migration. Migration may also have a particular psychological impact on women. Female migrants are more likely to face disruptions in and the deterioration of family relations than men and also face social stigma about leaving their places of residence for work, especially when their husbands or children do not accompany them.<sup>143</sup>

The government recognizes the need to expand job opportunities in urban areas to accommodate labor migrants, but the response has been primarily focused on developing "male" industries with less attention to employment for the women who accompany them or who migrate independently. The Women's Committee, with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and Chamber of Commerce, has supported programs oriented toward female migrants "to assist women migrants returning home as a result of the global economic crisis by creating jobs and opportunities for self-employment."<sup>144</sup> There is a need for further measures aimed at female migrants, especially in assisting women to find employment. Further recommendations aimed at women as well as young people as potential migrants include the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, increasing access to microcredit, and improving the quality and orientation of vocational training to meet local labor market demands.

<sup>138</sup> Somach and Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*, 60.

<sup>139</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 120.

<sup>140</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 83.

<sup>141</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 57.

<sup>142</sup> UNIFEM, *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, 57.

<sup>143</sup> Abdullaev, ed., *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*, 86.

<sup>144</sup> Dono Abdurazakova, *National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in South-East and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: Regional Study* (UNECE, 2010), 37.

### *Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions*

- Women's labor force participation is lower than men's, in part as a consequence of childcare and household work.
  - Women are more likely to work in informal and family-based employment which is unprotected in terms of pension, social insurance, maternity leave etc.
  - The labor market in Uzbekistan shows distinct gender patterns, with women overly represented in public sector jobs (healthcare, education), which carry the lowest salaries, and men predominating in technical and more profitable fields (natural resource extraction, construction and industry).
  - National employment programs for women appear to focus on creating job opportunities in narrow spheres that are considered "appropriate" for women and compatible with family responsibilities. Such programs may provide a short-term solution to unemployment but will not necessarily provide skills that are transferable to other markets and do not address underlying causes of women's lower rates of economic activity.
  - Protective legislation limits women's employment opportunities in several sectors in which ADB has projects, namely transport and construction.
  - Patterns of labor market segregation lead to a significant gender wage gap and also impede inclusive growth.
  - Women's lower salaries, and smaller contribution to family budgets, mean they have limited influence over household decision-making, such as investing in laborsaving devices, energy efficient equipment, children's education etc.
  - Labor migration is becoming increasingly feminized, and the limitations that women face in the local labor market are also "push factors" for migration. Women are often motivated to migrate by a desire to undertake entrepreneurial activities.
  - Men and women both experience the negative impacts of labor migration, such as long-term absence from their communities. Men face increased risk of work-related accidents and exposure to sexually-transmitted infections, and women are exposed to abuses related to employment, including discrimination.
- 
- ✓ Take special measures to facilitate the entry and re-entry into the workforce of women with children. Measures should include the equalization of gender roles and responsibilities.
  - ✓ Develop home-based and flexible work arrangements for women in profitable growth sectors, for example, information technology (IT). Job-creation for women could also include services to assist women to "graduate" from home-based work and enter the labor market or start a business.
  - ✓ Training opportunities should be available to assist women to enter "non-traditional" professions in the private sphere. Additionally, study of the role of gender stereotypes in the labor market should be undertaken to better identify barriers to women entering such fields.
  - ✓ Take into consideration the fact that labor market segregation may result in women not benefitting from employment opportunities in sectors where ADB operates. Consider special measures to allow women greater access to jobs in those sectors.

- ✓ Support policy reform to promote safe working conditions for all employees, regardless of sex, and counter stereotypes in ADB areas of focus regarding the kind of jobs that men and women can perform.
- ✓ Promote adherence to Uzbekistan's labor law and principles of nondiscrimination in the workplace, especially in private sector enterprises.
- ✓ Programs on employment, especially technical and vocational education and programs for youth, should address the factors that lead men and women to migrate for work.
- ✓ Improve understanding of the links between women's motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities and labor migration. Consider assistance targeting both women who plan to migrate as well as those who return in order to facilitate access to start-up capital and business training.

## E. Women in rural areas and their role in agricultural production

Uzbekistan is becoming increasingly urbanized, and as of 2011 only 48.8% of the total population lived in rural areas as compared to 64.2% of the population in 2007.<sup>145</sup> Urban migration reflects the fact that rural regions provide fewer economic opportunities than in the past. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood for rural communities and is a major employer of women. Farming enterprises represent a mixture of collective or shirkat farms (former state farms that were restructured as collective enterprises), co-operatives, individual household plots and independent farm units.<sup>146</sup> Shirkat farms account for about 50% of the value of all crops.<sup>147</sup> In addition, family plots, or dekhan farms, are critically important for food security for a large number of rural households.

Despite women's prominent role in agricultural production, the agricultural sector exhibits gender imbalances observed in other sectors, particularly in control over productive resources. Although women constituted over half of those engaged in the agricultural sector (52.6%) in 2008, of 235,000 registered farms, only 17,000 (7.2%) were headed by women.<sup>148</sup> It appears that after restructuring and merging of some shirkats into individual farms, the number of female-headed farms was reduced further to 12,084 (5.5%).<sup>149</sup> Women occupy only 4.2% of managerial positions in agriculture and tend to occupy low-paid positions.<sup>150</sup> Women's salaries represent only 82% of men's salaries in the agricultural sector.<sup>151</sup>

Women have benefitted substantially less than men from privatization of agricultural production and land allocation schemes due to the fact that state inaction on ensuring women's rights to property meant that "it is largely men who are in a position to acquire

<sup>145</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], table 1.6, 29.

<sup>146</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Uzbekistan Country Report*, Gender and Land Rights database, accessed from <http://www.fao.org/gender/landrights/home/en/>.

<sup>147</sup> FAO, *Uzbekistan Country Report*.

<sup>148</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties*, 114.

<sup>149</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report*, 5.

<sup>150</sup> Dinara Alimdjanova, "Gender Aspects of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Application for Uzbekistan," (presentation, FAO-IFAD-ILO Workshop on Gaps, Trends and Current Research in Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways Out of Poverty, Rome, 31 March–02 April 2009).

<sup>151</sup> Dinara Alimdjanova, "Gender Aspects of Agricultural and Rural Employment."

rights to land during privatization, a process that is facilitating the resurgence of patriarchal land rights.”<sup>152</sup> Despite a legal framework that supports equal rights in property ownership, cultural norms and traditions about men’s control of land prevail. Thus leasehold contracts and household plots are formally in the name of the male head of household, and land rights pass to sons who are expected to care for elderly parents. In cases of divorce, men are more likely to retain land, even family plots. The inequality of the situation means that “women have access to land through the household and provide most of the unpaid family labor that goes into food production on these plots [dekhan farms]. However, this does not give women *de jure* nor *de facto* rights to the land.”<sup>153</sup> Women’s inability to obtain lease rights to state land puts them at a serious disadvantage if those rights are privatized.

At the household level, even when women have a partial interest in land formally registered to the head of household, their lack of formal recognition means that the household head can make land transactions without involving them.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, in the absence of a male head of household, women in the family, or in fact other family members, may have no legal rights to participate in land transactions.

Changes in the agriculture sector are closely linked to an increase in labor migration both internally and to neighboring CIS countries. Population growth, especially in rural areas, has created jobseekers. Yet the transformation of shirkat farms into single-farmer enterprises has resulted in job losses in the agriculture sector and increasing short-term agricultural migration of poor low-skilled women workers.<sup>155</sup> In 2005, 32% of all working women and 26.4% of working men were employed in agriculture, as compared to 28.5% of women and 25.5% of men in 2010.<sup>156</sup> Non-agricultural employment and self-employment opportunities in rural areas are limited.

Women in rural areas face fewer opportunities to find non-agricultural work because the type of professions generally considered “suitable” for women, such as teaching and primary healthcare, are more limited outside of city centers. Their domestic burdens are also generally heavier than for women in urban settings as they also include looking after livestock, family farms or small businesses. Yet, the types of social support that are of particular benefit to women, such as affordable childcare, are lacking or very limited outside of towns and cities.

Rural areas are associated with more conservative values and rigid gender norms, especially about the role of women. Limited access to information and educational and training experiences means that rural communities have less exposure to gender-equitable models of behavior. At the same time, surveys in rural areas indicate that most people “understand the necessity for strengthening the role of rural women in solving social problems in rural regions, especially such issues as developing social infrastructure in villages.”<sup>157</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “Return to Patriarchy in Uzbekistan.”

<sup>153</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “Return to Patriarchy in Uzbekistan.”

<sup>154</sup> FAO, *Uzbekistan Country Report*.

<sup>155</sup> See: Evgeniy Abdullaev, “A Portrait of Women Migrant Workers in Uzbekistan,” *Development & Transition*, 8, (2007), UNDP/London School of Economics and Political Science, 17.

<sup>156</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2000-2005*, [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2007), 107; *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*, [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

<sup>157</sup> Global Water Partnership (GWP) in Central Asia and Caucasus, *Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management*, 123.



| <i>Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions</i>   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural women's unpaid domestic work is generally more time-consuming and burdensome than for women in urban areas, and social support services, such as childcare, is lacking. As a consequence, many rural women are not engaged in formal employment.</li> <li>• Agriculture is a primary source of livelihood for rural populations, and women play a major role in agricultural production. But women are underrepresented in groups responsible for decision-making in agriculture.</li> <li>• Women entrepreneurs in farming face distinct difficulties due to specifics of land ownership, lease rights, and the requirements of agricultural production.</li> <li>• Rural areas may exhibit more conservative attitudes about gender norms and the roles of men and women.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Within projects on women's empowerment, devote attention to the needs and priorities of rural women. Additionally, ensure that rural women can meaningfully participate in project planning and implementation, for example by providing childcare, accommodating women's schedules, holding meetings in accessible locations etc.</li> <li>✓ Within projects to promote women's entrepreneurship, give particular attention to the needs and priorities of female farmers engaged in small business activities.</li> <li>✓ Because a considerable portion of the ADB portfolio will have direct impact on the lives of citizens in rural communities, consider both the role of gender stereotypes and specific gender-based constraints for women in project development.</li> </ul>       |






## **F. Human development issues for women and men**

The ability of men and women to participate in and gain from development programs, especially in the long term, is dependent on such factors as their health and education. The relative health and educational status of women and men is also affected by economic status and infrastructure issues. ADB's work in sectors such as water supply and sanitation, energy, and transport has implications for infrastructure projects that could improve both conditions in healthcare and educational institutions and also access to such facilities.

### **1. Gender issues in education**

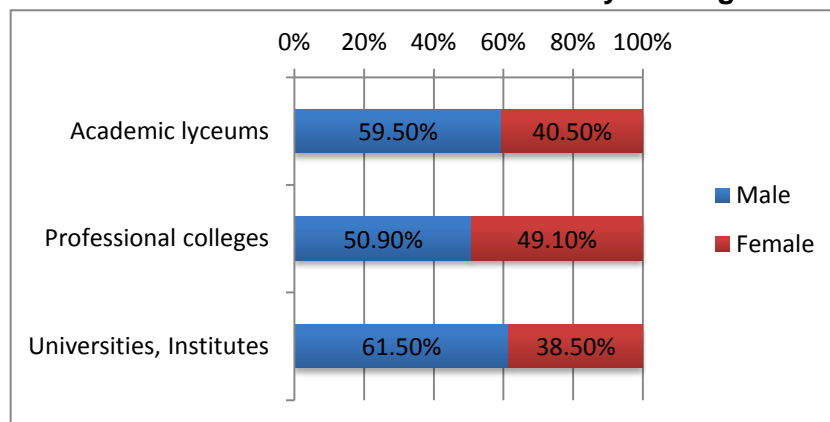
After educational reforms carried out in 2005, the educational system in Uzbekistan begins with preschool education and includes primary and secondary education (grades 1-9), provided for free by state schools. After grade 9, students may enter specialized secondary education or vocational education programs that are provided for free by state academic lyceums and professional colleges/vocational schools. Grades 1–12 constitute the compulsory educational system. Higher (tertiary level) education is provided by universities and institutes.

Equal access to education is guaranteed in Uzbekistan, and gender parity is seen in the enrolment rates of boys and girls at the primary and secondary levels. Literacy levels are equally high among young and adult women and men.<sup>158</sup>

Disparities in enrolment appear at the level of specialized secondary and higher professional education, and particular concern has been expressed over the decreasing attendance rates of young women. In his opening remarks at the international conference on *Preparing an Educated and Intellectually Developed Generation: the Key to Sustainable Development and Modernization of the Country*, the president stressed the importance of young people completing 12 years of compulsory education and obtaining specialist skills and professions. He noted “this especially concerns our girls. The most important thing is that a young family is only strong when a girl has a profession, she is independent, she has her own opinion and a place in life.”<sup>159</sup>

Women’s enrolment rates in post-secondary and higher education are lower than men’s, although the gap may be closing in professional colleges.<sup>160</sup> In the 2010–2011 academic year, enrolment rates were as follows:

**Figure 4. Male and Female Enrolment in Post-Secondary and Higher Education**



Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012). table 3.2, 117.

Specific barriers to girls continuing their education after the secondary level mainly concern cultural practices and traditions. Disparities in male and female enrolment, especially at the level of tertiary education, are attributed to “the relatively early marriage of a significant number of women (aged 18–20 years—the age to enter higher education) and the existence of gender stereotypes, especially in rural areas, which prevent girls from receiving a complete education.”<sup>161</sup> Often parents do not assist girls to enter post-secondary education; “if a girl is admitted to an educational institution on a fee paying basis, it is frequently an obstacle to her study as parents prefer to spend the money for

<sup>158</sup> Government of Uzbekistan/UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 30.

<sup>159</sup> Olam.uz (news portal), “Islam Karimov: 12 Years of Education is Vital for Us—Especially in Rural Areas,” [in Russian], 18 February 2012, <http://news.olam.uz/nauka/7684.html>.

<sup>160</sup> Academic lyceums and professional colleges are three-year institutions that provide a secondary professional education. Universities and institutes are tertiary educational institutions that prepare highly qualified professionals with a two level program—undergraduate (generally four years) and master’s programs (at least two years). State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2004–2007*, [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2010), 108–109.

<sup>161</sup> Welfare Improvement Strategy for Uzbekistan for 2008–2010, 57.

training their sons who will stay with them rather than for their daughters who will 'leave anyway because they will marry into other families'.<sup>162</sup> Families may consider that compulsory secondary education is sufficient for girls who will be primarily occupied with family life and managing a household.

The location of post-secondary and higher educational institutions also limit opportunities for girls. Most such educational facilities are in major cities, requiring travel or dormitory residence. Families are often reluctant for their daughters to "study far from home because they are afraid of the difficulties which [they] might encounter living in a hostel."<sup>163</sup>

NGOs have noted that distance-learning and correspondence courses are a preferable option for many young women because they can more easily be combined with family responsibilities.<sup>164</sup> Distance-learning is particularly useful for women in rural regions, and more effort is needed to expand the number of participating universities and course offerings. It would also be useful to support the expansion of distance-learning courses in fields that would be compatible with home-based work and are also in high-demand and profitable fields, such as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

### *Technical vocational education and training*

Ensuring that girls and boys have equal access to post-secondary and especially technical vocational education and training (TVET) is particularly relevant to ADB operations since it paves the way for future generations to find employment. The decreasing number of girls and young women entering higher education has serious implications for their ability to enter the job market and will undoubtedly limit their future career opportunities.

The government has devoted considerable attention and resources to developing a system of secondary special vocational education (SSVE) in collaboration with a number of international partners.<sup>165</sup> Three-year secondary specialized vocational education became compulsory in 2009, but SSVE is managed as an independent element of the overall educational system in Uzbekistan. Creating an SSVE system that is responsive to the needs of the labor market has been a critical goal in Uzbekistan, and is an issue that impacts all students. However, gender-based differences within the TVET system and higher education (post-secondary and tertiary) have received limited attention.

Analysis of TVET enrolment indicates that overall "there is general gender equity in the public TVET system"<sup>166</sup> but that differences appear in the selection of academic subjects. There are distinct gender patterns in the subjects that males and females study in both professional colleges and in institutions of higher education (universities and institutes).

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<sup>162</sup> UNDP Uzbekistan, *Education in Uzbekistan: Matching Supply and Demand*, National Human Development Report (Tashkent, 2007/2008), 146.

<sup>163</sup> UNDP Uzbekistan, *Education in Uzbekistan*, 146.

<sup>164</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report*, 29.

<sup>165</sup> For a description of international assistance, see: UNDP Uzbekistan, *Education in Uzbekistan*, 105.

<sup>166</sup> European Training Foundation (ETF), *Uzbekistan: ETF Country Information Note*, (Turin, 2010), 4.

**Table 3. Female and Male Students by Selected Specialization, 2010–2011 Academic Year**

|                                     | Professional colleges |                   | Higher education institutions |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                     | Female students (%)   | Male students (%) | Female students (%)           | Male students (%) |
| <b>Education</b>                    | 76.3                  | 23.7              | 52.9                          | 47.1              |
| <b>Healthcare</b> <sup>167</sup>    | 75.6                  | 24.4              | 43.8                          | 56.2              |
| <b>Transport and Communications</b> | 28.7                  | 71.3              | 10.4                          | 89.6              |
| <b>Agriculture</b>                  | 39.6                  | 60.4              | 17.7                          | 82.3              |
| <b>Industry and Construction</b>    | 39.6                  | 60.4              | 16.5                          | 83.5              |
| <b>Economics and Law</b>            | 46.9                  | 53.1              | 19.3                          | 80.7              |

Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012), table 3.14, 134; table 3.18, 142.

Concerning TVET specifically, the “most popular” areas of study are agriculture, manufacturing and healthcare. The “majority of offered specialities have [an] apparent “male” face and there is still limitation of options for girls which is driven both by traditional choice and availability of new profiles.”<sup>168</sup> Also of note, “the training curriculum is not flexible enough to allow students to change profile on a later stage of study.”<sup>169</sup> Young women tend to enter “female” fields of study, such as healthcare, teaching, embroidery, sewing and hairdressing, while preferred fields for boys are generally those that will lead to higher paying jobs, such as construction, engineering, transport and communications.

Another study notes that only “6%–20% of students of vocational colleges [concentrating on] agriculture, industry, construction and economics are girls. ...Such narrow traditional vocational training for women does not increase their competitiveness in the labour market.”<sup>170</sup> Importantly, there has historically been and continues to be a surplus of specialists in the education and the health sectors that leads to very high levels of competition for employment in these fields. Thus there is “a contradiction between social stereotypes and traditional preferences in vocational education of girls and the growing demands of the modern labour market.”<sup>171</sup>

The predominance of men receiving higher education and technical training in fields that are experiencing growth, and in which ADB operates (such as industry, transport and agriculture), suggests that women may not have equal access to such fields in the future. Measures to promote gender balance in academic subjects, such as quotas for enrolment that would assist women and men to enter non-traditional fields should be considered. Furthermore, while data are not available on how men and women fare in the job market after completing TVET courses, of 2007–2008 academic year graduates, 92.1% were employed in 2009, but only 46% of them were working in their specialization.<sup>172</sup> Sex-disaggregated data on post-TVET employment would be useful to establish the gender issues that could be addressed in this sphere.

<sup>167</sup> This category also includes students specializing in physical fitness and sport.

<sup>168</sup> ETF, *Uzbekistan: Country Information Note*, 3.

<sup>169</sup> ETF, *Uzbekistan: Country Information Note*, 4.

<sup>170</sup> Dinara Alimdjanova, *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women of Uzbekistan, and Ways of their Economic Empowerment*, draft report (ADB/UNDP/Gender Program of the Swiss Embassy, 2009), 21.

<sup>171</sup> Alimdjanova, *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*, 21.

<sup>172</sup> Center for Economic Research, “Narrowing the Gap between Vocational Education and the Labor Market,” *Development Focus*, 2 (2009).

#### Box 4. Initiative on Female Academic Achievement

The Women's Committee annually awards prizes to talented girls and young women for their academic achievement in the fields of literature, art, science, culture and education. Since 1999, when the national Zulfia prize was created, 168 girls, between the ages of 14 and 22, have received the prize and a State scholarship, the majority in the combined fields of science and education.<sup>173</sup> While it is not apparent whether the Zulfia prize is intended to promote non-traditional fields of study among girls, it is worth noting that past prize winners included female graduate students in the fields of agriculture (grain management), economics, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and chemistry.

Also relevant to the education sphere, the insufficient number of affordable preschool facilities in Uzbekistan is cited frequently as a critical factor influencing women's ability to work outside the home. The number of children attending preschools has decreased annually since 2001, and rural areas are the most affected.<sup>174</sup> Preschool attendance rates are 22% nationally but only 13% in rural areas.<sup>175</sup>

#### Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

- Gender parity exists in enrolment rates at the primary level, but female enrolment rates at the post-secondary and tertiary level are lower than for males and appear to be decreasing.
  - At the post-secondary level, there are clear gender patterns in enrolment, with young women dominating in "traditionally female" areas of study (health, education) and young men concentrated in technical fields (transport and communications, industry and construction, agriculture). The technical fields generally correlate with jobs in higher-paying sectors, while the humanities lead to work in lower-paid public sector jobs.
  - Both cultural practices (marriage after completion of secondary school) and logistical issues (location of educational institutions) limit girls' access to post-secondary education.
  - Improvements to TVET are especially needed in rural areas where labor migration rates are high.
  - The lack of accessible preschool and child-care facilities inhibits women with young children from reentering the workforce.
- 
- ✓ Support assessment and analysis of the factors that contribute to decreasing female enrolment rates, especially those connected with economic status and infrastructure insufficiencies (location, cost and lack of rural transport, for example).
  - ✓ Support measures to promote nontraditional fields of study for women—especially in connection with ADB core operational sectors such as construction, transport, energy and infrastructure—through special initiatives such as scholarships, internships, or mentoring programs.
  - ✓ Undertake gender analysis of the SSVE system; in particular examine whether girls have

<sup>173</sup> Information provided by the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

<sup>174</sup> The overall number of girls and boys attending preschool decreased from approximately 624,000 in 2000 to 520,000 in 2010, with consistently falling rates in rural areas. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2000–2005, Statistical Compilation* (2010), 79; and State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, [in Russian], table 3.1, 117.

<sup>175</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Children and Women in Uzbekistan*, fact sheet, [http://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media\\_11440.html](http://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media_11440.html).

access to fields of study that correspond to sectors of labor market in which there are employment opportunities and potential for growth, for example ICT.

- ✓ National prizes for high-achieving female students are a positive model that could be replicated and supported by the private sector/industry and linked to recruitment, work-place internships or other forms of employment support.
- ✓ Encourage the government to include support for preschool education in rural and urban development projects. Consider such issues as affordability and access and also include indicators that would measure impact on women's employment.

## 2. Gender issues in health

The effects of gender differences on the health of individual men and women is a complex subject, and a full discussion is beyond the scope of this assessment. There are currently no health-related projects in the ADB portfolio for Uzbekistan, but historically ADB has supported initiatives on maternal and child health. Furthermore, several of the gendered differences in health outcomes in Uzbekistan may have relevance to future ADB projects.

Considerable state attention has been devoted to improving reproductive health indicators, with a particular emphasis on maternal and child health. Rates of maternal mortality have been reduced, but the majority of maternal deaths are still due to preventable causes (primarily haemorrhage).<sup>176</sup> While the vast majority of maternal deaths occur within the healthcare system, there are disparities in services between urban and rural healthcare facilities, with 45% of deaths occurring in rural district hospitals.<sup>177</sup> The government acknowledges that a combination of challenges hinders improvement of maternal health, among them the prevalence of anemia, poor nutrition, “economic pressures that keep women doing hard physical work while pregnant [and] lack of financial means [that] prevents many women from receiving adequate antenatal care.”<sup>178</sup> Significantly, the “inadequate support provided by men” in combination with women’s lack of awareness of health risks also contribute to maternal mortality.<sup>179</sup> Further study is needed to establish the role played by deficiencies in infrastructure, such as lack of access to clean water, inconsistent energy supply and limited transportation, in poor maternal health outcomes and maternal mortality.

The overall focus of reproductive health programs has been on women with “only secondary efforts to include men’s involvement in family planning” despite high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among some groups of men.<sup>180</sup> Data indicate that men are at particular risk for HIV infection. According to the World Health Organization, of newly diagnosed infections in 2010, 54% were among males, and the dominant mode of transmission was injecting drug use (67% of newly reported cases where transmission mode was known) followed by heterosexual contact (31%).<sup>181</sup>

While it has not been studied in depth in Uzbekistan, labor migration is associated with increased risk for STIs, including HIV/AIDS, especially among male migrants. In turn,

<sup>176</sup> United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *A Review of Progress in Maternal Health in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, New York, 2010), 121.

<sup>177</sup> UNFPA, *A Review of Progress in Maternal Health*, 121.

<sup>178</sup> Government of Uzbekistan/UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 41.

<sup>179</sup> Government of Uzbekistan/UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 41.

<sup>180</sup> Somach and Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*, 62.

<sup>181</sup> Uzbekistan HIV/AIDS Country Profile, WHO Regional Office for Europe (2011).

female partners of male migrants are placed in a vulnerable position, due to lack of awareness of risk factors as well as the inability to negotiate safe sex practices. Greater efforts are needed to provide comprehensive information on reproductive and sexual health to men and women, including youth, as well as to increase services tailored to men.

### 3. Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is a critical issue for women in Uzbekistan, especially domestic violence. Globally, domestic violence is linked to women's subordinate role and a patriarchal system that privileges male power and control. A study of family relations found that this pattern is similar in Uzbekistan where 69% of perpetrators of violence are men (specifically, husbands) and women are most often the victims of domestic violence (64%).<sup>182</sup> The most frequently cited reasons for violence in the family were women's "independent decision making" (20%) and negligence in carrying out household duties (19%).<sup>183</sup>

Several positive steps have been taken to improve the response to domestic violence in Uzbekistan. A draft Law on the Prevention of Violence in the Family has been developed alongside amendments to the relevant articles of the Criminal and Administrative Codes,<sup>184</sup> but these legislative initiatives have not been adopted yet. The lack of a law means that there is no legal definition of "domestic violence" or "violence against women," and no special liability for perpetrators of such violence. Instead, domestic violence incidents are treated under general criminal law provisions. State efforts to address domestic violence have primarily entailed conferences, seminars and training events aimed at medical professionals, law enforcement officers, judges and mahalla committee members.<sup>185</sup>

Particular attention has also been given to developing centers that offer social support to women victims of domestic violence and their children. The Women's Committee created and operates Women's Social Adaptation Centers in ten regions, which coordinate with the Women's Helpdesk.<sup>186</sup> Through these initiatives, women receive psychological support and legal counselling, and a shelter was opened for domestic violence victims in Bukhara in 2007, the only such shelter in the county. From 2007–2008, 13 women and 12 of their children received temporary housing assistance through the shelter.<sup>187</sup> Such centers are very important but their capacities are also quite limited. International good practice recommends that one crisis center should operate per 50,000 people and at minimum one place in a shelter should be provided for each 10,000 people.<sup>188</sup> Women's Social Adaptation Centers do not receive state funds and so are dependent on outside financing.<sup>189</sup> It should also be noted that neither Women's Social Adaptation Centers nor the Women's Helpdesk is devoted exclusively to addressing violence against women. Both

<sup>182</sup> Institute for Social Research and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family*, 24.

<sup>183</sup> Institute for Social Research and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family*, 24.

<sup>184</sup> UN Secretary-General's Database on Violence Against Women, *Response of the Government of Uzbekistan to the questionnaire on violence against women* (2009), <http://Webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/home.action>

<sup>185</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties*, 74–76.

<sup>186</sup> A program of the Civic Initiatives Support Center and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

<sup>187</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties*, 85.

<sup>188</sup> For example, see: European Information Centre Against Violence Against Women, *More than a Roof Over Your Head: A Survey of Quality Standards in European Women's Refuges* (Vienna 2002); UN Secretary-General's Campaign Unite to End Violence Against Women, *Crisis Centers in Kyrgyzstan*, material from the Kyrgyzstan, Time to Act! campaign (2010).

<sup>189</sup> International Gender Policy Network (IGPN), *Development Cooperation and Gender, Regional Advocacy Report for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*, (Prague, 2008), 9–10.

institutions also conduct activities related to women's entrepreneurship and employment. This situation raises questions about the capacity and specialized expertise of staff, ability of the centers to meet safety requirements and to address the complex and often long-term needs of domestic violence victims.

The CEDAW Committee expressed concern over the persistent lack of data about the incidence and forms of violence against women, limited research into root causes, the absence of specific legislation and the "culture of silence and impunity" which surrounds the problem.<sup>190</sup> There is no publicly available official data on the prevalence of domestic violence in Uzbekistan; for example it is not included in the *Women and Men in Uzbekistan* statistical compilations. Nor is there a mechanism to coordinate the collection of such information (for example, between law enforcement organs, healthcare facilities, service-providing centers, Women's Committee offices and even mahallas). The government has included several points in the current National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Committee Recommendations on the subject of violence against women, including the development of a specific action plan, strengthening the law enforcement response, conducting research and data-collection.

In addition to the devastating consequences for the victim and to the family as a whole, domestic violence also has a serious impact on women's economic status and implications for the larger community and nation. Alongside physical and psychological abuse, domestic violence can take the form of control over a woman's earnings and prohibitions against working. Specifically, "it is rather common in Uzbekistan that a husband and his parents prohibit the wife to work... and take away woman's own money. Many housewives...were working before marriage, but fear of the wife's economic independence and the related status in society serves as a motive for prohibition to work, dependence and violence."<sup>191</sup> A 2010 study confirmed that in 9% of surveyed households violence took the form of financial restrictions.<sup>192</sup>

Women's lower economic status, and lack of financial independence, is a primary reason that women remain in violent relationships, as living independently and supporting children alone does not appear to be a viable option. After feelings of "shame" and "fear" of the abusive spouse or of dividing the family, victims cited "financial dependence" as the reason for not seeking outside assistance in cases of domestic violence (14% of cases).<sup>193</sup>

While the economic impact of gender-based violence on the larger community has not been studied in Uzbekistan, assessments in other countries have found that violence against women places a considerable strain on national resources. Violence against women "reduces the capacity of victims/survivors to contribute productively to the family, the economy and public life; drains resources from social services, the justice system, health-care agencies and employers. While even the most comprehensive surveys to date underestimate the costs, they all show that the failure to address violence against women has serious economic consequences."<sup>194</sup> Analyses conducted in other countries to measure the costs of violence show that economic losses due to direct costs (expenditures related to services for women, medical care, law enforcement costs, legal

<sup>190</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan, paragraph 21.

<sup>191</sup> Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs, *Shadow Report*, 13.

<sup>192</sup> Institute for Social Research and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family*, 23.

<sup>193</sup> Institute for Social Research and UNFPA, *Mutual Relations in a Family*, 42.

<sup>194</sup> United Nations (UN), *Ending Violence against Women: From Words to Action*, A Study of the Secretary General (New York, 2006), iii.



costs, property damage) and indirect costs to the private sector (lost or reduced productivity at work, absenteeism) amount to billions of dollars per year.<sup>195</sup> Prevention efforts are generally thought to be more cost-effective than treating the consequences of violence once it has occurred.

#### *Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions*

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements have been made in maternal health, but further work is still needed to address risk factors for poor maternal health outcomes and to improve men's participation in reproductive and sexual health projects.</li> <li>• The lack of a legal definition of domestic violence and statistical data inhibit the development of a comprehensive legal and social response.</li> <li>• Gender-based violence is a critical barrier to achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan, and such violence has implications both for women's economic independence and for the economic well-being of the country as a whole.</li> <li>• Women's economically vulnerable position is a factor that prevents them from leaving violent relationships in the case of domestic violence.</li> <li>• The current system of social support for victims of domestic violence is not sufficient to provide the comprehensive services needed by victims.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Consider any health outcomes associated with infrastructure projects, such as maternal health issues related to lack of water and energy supplies and men's risk for STIs associated with labor migration.</li> <li>✓ Support the institutionalization of a process to collect statistics on domestic violence within capacity-building projects on gender-sensitive data.</li> <li>✓ Support research and analysis of the connections between women's economic status and vulnerabilities to gender-based violence, especially domestic violence.</li> <li>✓ Encourage the government to include the provision of services for domestic violence victims within urban development and urban planning projects.</li> </ul>   |

<sup>195</sup> See: UN, *Ending Violence against Women*; World Health Organization (WHO), Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention, *The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence* (Geneva, 2004).

### III. MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN ADB OPERATIONS

#### A. ADB strategy and progress toward gender mainstreaming targets in Uzbekistan

Strategy 2020, ADB's long-term strategic framework, highlights gender equity as one of five drivers of change.<sup>196</sup> Strategy 2020 notes that women are the largest group excluded from the benefits of economic expansion in the regions where ADB operates, and that gender equity is essential for the reduction of poverty, improvement of living standards, and the sustainability of economic growth. Women's empowerment is a goal that ADB shares with its developing member countries (DMCs).

ADB policy on Gender and Development (GAD) adopts mainstreaming as a key strategy for promoting gender equity and women's empowerment.<sup>197</sup> The ADB approach to GAD, and specifically to the promotion of gender equality, is a dual one that includes (i) treating gender as a crosscutting theme in all social and economic processes and (ii) adopting targeted measures to address egregious gender disparities.

ADB guidelines set forth four categories for integrating gender in projects, ranging from those that include gender equality and/or women's empowerment as a primary outcome to those that may offer some benefits to women. The categories are: (1) Gender Equity Theme (GEN); (2) Effective Gender Mainstreaming (EGM); (3) Some Gender Elements (SGE), and (4) No Gender Elements (NGE).<sup>198</sup> Projects that are categorized as either GEN or EGM are deemed to include "significant gender mainstreaming." The Results Framework formulated in light of Strategy 2020 established corporate targets to be met by 2012, namely that 40% of all ADB operations and 50% of those financed through the Asian Development Fund should include significant gender mainstreaming.

ADB has taken significant steps to introduce gender mainstreaming into its portfolio in Uzbekistan. Since the previous Country Gender Assessment was completed, ADB project design has shifted its focus from one in which women were beneficiaries primarily in social sector projects to an approach that addresses gender in other core operational areas. Formerly, gender responsive project design had only been applied in a project to reduce maternal mortality and a project to address disparities in the quality of education between rural and urban areas (with measures to ensure girls and boys had equal access to education and that the learning environment was not replicating gender biases or stereotypes).<sup>199</sup> At present, 11 of 23 active projects in the Uzbekistan portfolio (counting tranches separately) have gender action plans (GAPs). Of the 11 projects, nine are classified as EGM and two as SGE, indicating that the 40% target for gender mainstreaming (GEN or EGM classifications) has been met. An overview of the content of the GAPs is included in the relevant sector analyses that follow.

ADB has also supported the placement of seven gender consultants in project executing agencies, some on a full-time basis and others combining work under different projects. While the gender specialists are time-bound consultants, engaged for ADB projects only,

<sup>196</sup> ADB, *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008–2020* (Manila, 2008), 1.

<sup>197</sup> ADB, *Gender and Development*, (Manila, 2003), viii.

<sup>198</sup> In 2012, the SGE classification replaced the former "SGB- some gender benefits" classification. See Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects for full definitions.

<sup>199</sup> The Woman and Child Health Development Project (2005–2009) and the Rural Basic Education Project (2008–2011), respectively.

their posting in key agencies is an indicator of ADB intent to support the implementation of project level GAPs. Through the work of the National Gender and Development Officer, ADB also assists in capacity-building and networking of the consultants and in coordinating their work.

Several regional technical assistance (RETA) projects have been implemented to advance ADB's gender and development policy in Uzbekistan. From 2000–2006, gender and development projects provided financial support to local NGOs to carry out programming in support of women.<sup>200</sup> Such projects provided training to targeted groups (female entrepreneurs, women farmers, unemployed women in rural areas) and strengthened the national machinery for the protection of women's rights and development of gender equality policy, with a focus on compiling statistics and reporting under CEDAW. In addition to the positive impacts to beneficiaries, such projects also served to provide ADB with concrete experience in implementing gender focused projects on a small scale. Such projects may be used as models for replication and scale up in other parts of the country.

## **B. General considerations for gender mainstreaming**

In addition to a discussion of specific entry points that is included at the conclusion of each of the following sector analyses, several overarching recommendations are presented here. These are fundamental considerations that should be addressed in all sectors.

**Develop projects that target women and address gender disparities.** ADB projects with gender action plans focus on three types of interventions for women; they address women as beneficiaries (of improved services, for example); as participants (in decision-making and project implementation); and as potential employees (under job creation schemes). Such activities are integrated into larger ADB projects but are not the primary focus. Stand-alone projects that target women or address gender disparities directly would help to further operationalize ADB gender and development policy. As noted above, ADB already has experience in Uzbekistan using the RETA mechanism for this purpose. Further opportunities could be explored for the development of women-targeted projects linked to ADB core areas.

**Create meaningful opportunities for women to be involved in projects.** The majority of ADB gender action plans include provisions for the inclusion of women in projects, a practice that is also used by other donors and international organizations to increase women's participation, especially in non-traditional spheres. "Participation" should be understood broadly so that women are included in project design, implementation and monitoring. Furthermore, it is important that participation requirements be fulfilled in a meaningful, and not *pro forma*, manner.

A meaningful approach, included in some GAPs, involves focusing on women's participation in decision-making. It is a good practice to use multiple approaches simultaneously to increase the number of women in non-traditional spheres and decision-making roles (for example, scholarships for girls to pursue technical fields of study, targeted educational and training programs for women entering the workforce, capacity-building and mentoring to support women already working in non-traditional fields or in policy-making bodies; outreach to employers about hiring and promotion process; or media campaigns to reduce gender-based stereotypes). It is also important to ensure that mechanisms for women's participation will remain in place beyond the life of the specific

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<sup>200</sup> RETA 5889/6143: Gender and Development Initiatives.

project (for instance, the adoption of quotas for committees or boards; the inclusion of gender balance goals in charters for community bodies; or affirmative action to increase women's employment in executing agencies).

**Increase the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data.** A hurdle common to work in all ADB sectors is the absence of sex-disaggregated data or gender sensitive information on which to base project planning. Current GAPs emphasize the collection of project-specific baseline data, generally at the inception and end of projects. A more comprehensive approach would entail using sex-disaggregated data as a component of gender-sensitive project design, implementation and monitoring. Qualitative information is also needed to improve the understanding of the causes behind any gender disparities and inequalities. It is a good practice to also build the capacity of key stakeholders to collect and use sex-disaggregated statistics and gender-sensitive information, which offer a more nuanced picture of gender differences.

**Clearly Identify gender disparities, objectives, targets and strategies.** Gender disparities are the result of many factors, and in project design it is important to clearly identify the specific problem to be addressed and to delineate strategic goals and targets. For example, activities to increase gender sensitivity among stakeholders or to develop training programs tailored to women should outline specific deficiencies; for example, *in what sense are current policies or staff of executing agencies not gender sensitive? What are women's specific and unmet needs in terms of training and education?* Likewise targets, included in GAPs, should be based on clear problem analysis and take into consideration issues that both can and cannot be addressed within the project. For instance, whether a target of 30% for women's participation in project implementation is reasonable and achievable will be affected by the factors that have previously contributed to women's low participation—many of which it may be impossible to address during the project. Consideration could be given to such issues as whether measures have been taken to assist women with childcare responsibilities, which may prevent them from undertaking other activities, whether differences in regional conditions inhibit women's participation, or whether the time-limits of the project itself are sufficient to achieve the goals. Realistic and meaningful targets should flow from the problem analysis which will ultimately improve monitoring and evaluation and measuring change.

**Include information about contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment in project monitoring.** From 2010, monitoring of project GAPs has been included in quarterly country portfolio reviews, and in 2011, ADB institutionalized a system to evaluate progress under the GAPs using a standardized monitoring template with gender-specific indicators. The indicators are reviewed periodically and revised as necessary, and the information they generate is discussed at GAP monitoring meetings and used regularly by the Uzbekistan Resident Mission. The use of a common reporting system has improved the effectiveness of the monitoring process and aided in data collection. However, due in large part to the structure of the performance indicators, project monitoring currently focuses on numerical outputs. It is a good practice to undertake greater review of the qualitative aspects of project implementation. Assessments of whether specific outputs have improved the situation for women or contributed to a reduction in gender gaps would be particularly valuable and an important long-term goal.

## IV. GENDER ISSUES RELEVANT TO ADB OPERATIONS

### A. Water Supply and Sanitation

Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked desert country and so ensuring access to safe water and sanitation are crucial concerns. Water is increasingly becoming scarce in the region, and experts predict that supplies to Uzbekistan will only decrease due to climate change and as upstream demands increase.

At independence, Uzbekistan inherited a well-developed network of water supply and sanitation (WWS) infrastructure, but the system is now out-dated, in need of repair and is not operating efficiently. Although most urban and rural areas are supplied with water, water mains in cities and towns have not been replaced in over a decade, which leads to frequent breakages, intermittent water supply and contamination.

Assessing the extent to which urban and rural populations have access to safe drinking water and sanitation is complicated by varying statistics. According to official estimates in 2006, "the availability for urban users is high, ranging from 83% to 95%. Among rural users, it ranges from 32% in Karakalpakstan to 88% in Djizak. On average, 6% of the urban population does not have access to safe drinking water; in rural areas this rises to 21%."<sup>201</sup> In 2010, an estimated 98% of urban and 81% of rural residents had access to drinking water from "improved water sources."<sup>202</sup> For the urban population, drinking water is generally piped into the premises (85%), but rural coverage for piped water is only 26%. Data compiled by UNDP in 2011, indicate that approximately 70% of rural populations are living in dwellings that are not connected to a public water network.<sup>203</sup>

When water is not piped into the dwelling or yard, the most common sources of water are: public standpipes/hand pumps (used by 23% of surveyed households), wells or boreholes (13%), protected wells or springs (6%) and water delivery from tanker trucks (6%); only 5% of households make use of unimproved water supplies.<sup>204</sup> According to an ADB assessment, even households, clinics and schools that make use of public standpipes experience frequent interruptions in the service. Remote areas depend on "Suvokava"<sup>205</sup> departments to deliver water to rural households, clinics and schools, but such deliveries are not sufficient to satisfy high demand for potable water.<sup>206</sup> Even households connected to water pipes suffer from instability and fluctuations in the supply<sup>207</sup> or are located at

<sup>201</sup> Government of Uzbekistan/UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 57. These figures are also included in the Welfare Improvement Strategy for Uzbekistan for 2008-2010, which was adopted in 2007.

<sup>202</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP), *JMP 2012 Country and Regional Drinking Water and Sanitation Coverage Estimates for 1990, 2000 and 2010*, Excel file that can be accessed from this Web page: [http://www.childinfo.org/sanitation\\_data.php](http://www.childinfo.org/sanitation_data.php).

<sup>203</sup> UNDP, Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, *Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies*, (Bratislava, 2011), 27.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006*, (final report, Tashkent, 2007), 45. ADB-supported household surveys conducted in Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand regions mirrored these findings, with a slightly larger portion of the population receiving water delivered by tankers or using open water supplies. Victoria R. Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, Social and Poverty Analysis Report, TA UZB 7740 (Manila: ADB, 2011), 66.

<sup>205</sup> District water supply/delivery organization.

<sup>206</sup> Information from socio-economic analysis reports carried out under ADB WSS projects in Ferghana Valley, Kashkadarya and Termez (2010).

<sup>207</sup> Households were surveyed in the Navoi, Fergana and Kashkadarya oblasts. Institute for Social Research, *Results of Sociologic Survey*, Second Inception Report, TA 7671-UZB, ADB Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 2011), 38.

considerable distances from the main city water pipelines and experience low water pressure and limited water schedules during peak hours.

If they can afford it, families purchase roof tanks for the storage of water for use during off periods. Other households install small handpumps and must use very hard and salty underground water for domestic, technical needs and sometimes for drinking.

Access to sanitation shows a pattern similar to access to drinking water. As of 2006, only 38% of the country's urban population had access to centralized sanitation or municipal sewers, as compared to 3%–5% of the rural population.<sup>208</sup> A more detailed survey found that urban residents without access to a piped sewer system used some type of pit latrine.<sup>209</sup> Most rural residents were using pit latrines, only 4.8% of which were a flush type. Only 0.3% of rural residents had access to a piped sewer system.<sup>210</sup> A recent survey found that water deficiencies have hindered the development of sewage systems in several regions. Few respondents had access to sanitation facilities; lack of sewage systems was mentioned by 87.2% of respondents in the Kashkadarya region, 73.8% in the Navoi region, and by 65.8% of urban residents and 95.9% of rural residents in Fergana.<sup>211</sup> Most households in the ADB project areas in the Fergana Valley do not have bathrooms with piped water supply or showers, and instead they use cesspits. Likewise, clinics and schools are generally not connected to a centralized sewage system.

## 1. Relevant government policies and commitments

Government policy related to water supply and sanitation makes no reference to gender. It focuses on infrastructure improvements rather than issues of access to services or the extent to which improvements in the WSS sector may have particular benefit to women.

The Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2008–2010 sets targets for expanding access to public utilities and improving their quality, measured mainly through areas to be provided with a centralized supply of drinking water and pipelines to be repaired or replaced. The Welfare Improvement Strategy outlines specific activities that require investment, such as the reconstruction of water supply and sanitation systems and the installation of water meters in domestic properties, but these activities and objectives are not linked to the gender and development issues outlined elsewhere in the strategy.

Several plans and programs have been adopted which aim to rehabilitate water supply systems and increase coverage to both urban and rural areas. The National Water Supply and Wastewater System Development and Modernization Plan for 2009–2020 aims to achieve close to 100% water supply coverage in most urban areas and 85% in rural areas by 2020. A presidential decree on infrastructure construction for 2011–2015 includes an objective to supply all urban and rural water consumers with meters by 2012.<sup>212</sup> Such policy documents speak generally about expansion of coverage and improving health and hygiene but do not include a gender perspective or foresee any particular improvements in the lives of women. Project objectives are described in terms of high-level outcomes, and the plans do not make use of any methodologies to capture information about the extent to which men and women will benefit from such improvements.

<sup>208</sup> Government of Uzbekistan/UN Country Team, *Millennium Development Goals Report*, 58.

<sup>209</sup> JMP, *Estimates for the Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities: Uzbekistan*, (2012 update), 8.

<sup>210</sup> JMP, *Estimates for the Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities: Uzbekistan*, (2012 update), 8.

<sup>211</sup> Institute for Social Research, *Results of Sociologic Survey*, 38.

<sup>212</sup> *On the Acceleration of Development of Infrastructure, Transport and Communication Construction in the years 2011–2015*, Presidential Decree No. PP-1446 of 21 December 2010.

## 2. Gender issues related to water supply and sanitation

The critical weaknesses of the current WSS system impact both men and women in substantially similar ways, and improving access to safe water and sanitation is directly related to reducing poverty and improving public health overall. However, reviewing the gender dimensions of water supply and sanitation projects reveals that while women “are the primary collectors, transporters, users, and managers of domestic water and promoters of home and community-based sanitation activities. ...in many societies women’s views are not systematically represented in decision-making bodies. WSS projects provide major opportunities to close this gap.”<sup>213</sup>

**Improvements to water supply can ease women’s household workload.** There are clear gender-based roles and responsibilities concerning the domestic sphere in Uzbekistan, and women perform most household chores. According to surveys in urban areas of Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand regions, wives are responsible for household chores (in 68% of households), followed by daughters and daughters-in-law (56% of households), as compared to rural areas where the figures are higher—wives in 73% of families and daughters and daughters-in-law in 63% of households. Husbands or sons-in-law were reported to be responsible for non-paid domestic work in only 2%–8% of households.<sup>214</sup>

Women are thus the major users of water in the household (for preparing meals, cleaning, laundering, bathing children, tending household gardens and livestock etc.) and experience the impact of limited and poor water quality more acutely. When a source of drinking water does not exist on the premises, adult females are primarily responsible for collecting and purchasing water for domestic use as well as for storing and managing household water, regardless of who is the head of household. In a majority of surveyed households (58%) an adult female usually collects water, followed by adult males are the in 36% of households, but there are also considerable regional differences. For instance, in households in the Western region, it is much more likely for water to be collected by adult women (69%) as compared to the Eastern region where water collection is shared more evenly between women and children under age 15 (both male and female).<sup>215</sup> Although it is relatively rare for children to collect water, girls more often perform this task than boys, with the exception of the Eastern region. If water collection requires travel of several kilometers and the transport of heavy loads, men perform this work.

Accessing water is time-consuming, and women and children may need to collect water two to three times a week. According to household surveys in rural regions, the nearest water source varies from one to three kilometers, and women report they spend from an hour and a half to two hours per day collecting water.<sup>216</sup>

Even when households do have access to piped water, the water may not be safe to drink and the supply is not guaranteed. Urban female-headed households living in apartments are generally limited to the piped-water supply and have few alternatives, other than purchasing water. In winter, piped water supply to multi-story apartment buildings can be compromised when electrical water pumps do not work due to electricity outages. In these situations, women must carry water upstairs and use bathrooms outside of the building.

<sup>213</sup> ADB, *Gender Checklist: Water Supply and Sanitation*, (Manila, 2006), 3.

<sup>214</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 51.

<sup>215</sup> UNICEF/State Committee on Statistics, *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*, 96.

<sup>216</sup> GWP in Central Asia and Caucasus, *Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management*, 127.

**The gendered impacts of lack of access to clean water and sanitation services.** In addition to the differential impact of limited water supplies at the household level, women also have different needs in terms of water and sanitation in public places. Women who are employed outside of the home work predominantly in public institutions, such as schools and clinics. Men are much more likely to be employed in private enterprises. Many public institutions suffer from unsatisfactory water supply and sanitation facilities. According to an ADB survey in the Ferghana Valley, students in educational institutions, including preschools, schools and colleges, usually only have access to unisex latrines without piped water or hand-washing facilities.<sup>217</sup> Such unsatisfactory sanitary conditions present risks for illness, and in schools may also be linked to absenteeism among girls, especially adolescents. The situation in clinics and hospitals is similar, and as a result, female doctors and teachers are frequently engaged in water delivery activities to the detriment of their main professional responsibilities. It is important that WSS projects that include the renovation of public buildings take the hygiene and sanitation needs and priorities of women and girls into consideration.

Participatory processes in ADB WSS projects have given women opportunities to raise concerns and complaints regarding water supply and sanitation, but gender differences in the nature of such complaints have not been fully documented or analyzed.

**Women's responsibility for family hygiene and childcare.** The poor quality of water and sanitation has a particular effect on women due to their responsibilities for childcare and family hygiene. The majority of households, both urban and rural, treat water before use, and women generally are responsible for this task. Most commonly, households boil water (from 97%–99% of households) or let the water stand and settle for some time. A very small number use solar disinfection systems.<sup>218</sup> The ability to boil water, however, depends on access to fuel and energy supplies, and due to frequent gas and electricity shortages, families often consume water that has not been boiled. The use of untreated water can result in water-borne illnesses, such as diarrhea, to which young children are especially susceptible. In rural areas, people may consume untreated water from irrigation and drainage canals that may contain impurities such as chemical fertilizers. According to ADB supported focus group discussions and surveys, in households with piped water, the incidence of diarrhea is 5–7 times lower than in households that consume water from open reservoirs.<sup>219</sup> Due to their traditional caregiving roles, women are especially burdened when children or other family members in the household are ill.

Chronic shortages and inadequate supply of water impact domestic and personal hygiene. Women are not able to clean their houses as often as necessary when water is scarce, thus contributing to the incidence of illnesses related to unsanitary conditions. In terms of personal hygiene, a survey in the Fergana Valley found that women and girls bathe less frequently when water in the household is limited. Men and boys, who do not face the same social restrictions as women, are able to bathe publicly in rivers and canals.<sup>220</sup>

**Water supply and women's productive and income-earning activities.** The gender-related aspects of improved access to WSS should not be limited to reducing women's

<sup>217</sup> Islohotkonsaltservis Group of Companies (IKS Group), *Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment–Tranche 2, Poverty and Social Assessment*, ADB Uzbekistan (Tashkent: 2010).

<sup>218</sup> UNICEF/State Committee on Statistics, *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*, 94.

<sup>219</sup> Research conducted by the Social Center “Tahlil” in the towns of Galaasiya (Bukhara region) and Karmana (Navoi region), and in the city of Termez in 2009.

<sup>220</sup> IKS Group, *Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment*.



household workloads. Improved WSS services could also expand women's access to income-generating activities.

In Uzbekistan, expanding opportunities for women to combine employment with family obligations, with a focus on home-based work and small enterprise, has been a priority. However, many of women's informal sector activities, such as baking, food preparation or making confectionary, require water and hygienic conditions. Even carpet weaving requires water for the dying process. The decree establishing home-based work requires workers to notify contracting companies of "the inability to fulfill orders within time limits due to circumstances not in the workers' control (lack of electricity, water, gas etc.)."<sup>221</sup> Since home-based workers are paid by the piece, however, the lack of basic services would still result in a loss of income. Because many households lack sufficient water for daily use, it is critically important that schemes to develop women's entrepreneurship also take into consideration whether the present water supply and sanitation system will meet the demands of micro and small businesses that are run from home.

Consistent and safe water supply, as well as sanitation services, would give women's opportunities to operate small enterprises such as hairdressing salons, cafes or catering businesses. Schemes to develop women's entrepreneurship must therefore take into consideration whether the water needs of women running small businesses are being met at present. The Year of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, a 2011 national program, included a point on improving small business connectivity to basic services, such as electricity and gas supply, water supply and heating.<sup>222</sup> It could not be established to what extent women's home-based production, or micro enterprises, were recognized under the national program or given any priority for improved services. Further study is needed to understand the connections between the viability and profitability of women's businesses and WSS insufficiencies.

**Women's participation in decision-making about water supply and sanitation.** As noted in this assessment, women generally occupy a subordinate position in the household and men are considered the decision-makers, especially concerning the family budget. Studies have shown that in Uzbekistan there are clear differences in patterns of household expenditure on water between poor and non-poor families. For instance, poor families spend a greater share of their household income on food items and often try to save money and reduce their consumption of purchased drinking water. Wealthier families are able to use private cars to bring water from remote areas where there are relatively safer sources of water such as reservoirs.<sup>223</sup> It is important to understand how women factor into such decision-making over how the household budget will be used for water since they are the primary water users in the home.

Because few women occupy leadership roles in local government where presumably decisions are made about WSS improvements, their priorities and interests are given limited consideration in formal-decision making around water issues or even municipal planning and budgeting.

At the community level, ADB has included activities in WSS projects to increase women's participation in water consumer groups and in consultative processes. Other organizations,

<sup>221</sup> *On Measures to Stimulate the Expansion of Cooperation between Large Enterprises and Service Production through Home-Based Work*, Presidential Decree No. UP-3706 of 5 January 2006.

<sup>222</sup> See: *2011—Year of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* [in Russian], Presidential Resolution of 07 February 2011, <http://www.gov.uz/ru/year/4494>.

<sup>223</sup> KS Group, *Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment*.

UNDP for example, have also taken measures to ensure that women are included in community-level water management activities. Such efforts appear to be very localized and project-specific. It could not be determined to what extent a system or structure for women's participation in planning concerning water and sanitation, beyond individual projects, has been developed.

In addition, both the Women's Committee and individual women have been active in hygiene promotion activities within WSS projects. Women are very important stakeholders in this area given their responsibilities for childcare and domestic hygiene and also their social and educational roles. However, women's high level of participation in such work is not necessarily an indicator of increased participation in decision-making. In fact, there is a risk that women's engagement in hygiene promotion activities could reinforce stereotypes about women's role in unpaid community or socially oriented activities.

**Gender mainstreaming in the water supply and sanitation sector.** The primary actors in the WSS sector have limited capacity to undertake gender mainstreaming and advance gender aware policies and strategies. Line ministries (primarily the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Ministry of Health, especially the Department for Sanitation and Epidemiology) and the Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency (Uzkommunkhizmat) share responsibility for WSS sector projects. The Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency is in charge of water and sanitation services at the national level, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources coordinates regional water agencies in rural areas. It is difficult to gauge women's representation in policy-making positions in the WSS sector overall, but at the national level, there is no female leadership in either ministry that addresses water and sanitation. Men hold top leadership positions in the Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency and direct each of the agency's divisions.<sup>224</sup> Further information about staffing or human resource practices in this agency or in water supply companies was not available for the assessment.

Gender balance in staffing is itself an important component of gender mainstreaming and it also facilitates the development of gender-aware policies. Gender action plans under ADB WSS projects call for gender balance in project management units, but equal representation of women may not be sufficient to promote gender aware policies. Gender mainstreaming requires that consideration of gender issues becomes standard practice and this generally requires promotion and oversight of such practices by high-level management. It would also be useful for development partners working on WSS issues to coordinate on common schemes for the inclusion of women in key positions in the WSS sector.

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<sup>224</sup> See Web site of the Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency: <http://www.uzkommunkhizmat.uz/UKH%20%20Rukovodstvo.htm> (for information on management) and <http://www.uzkommunkhizmat.uz/UKH%20%20Struktura.htm> (for structure of the agency).

### 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB water supply and sanitation projects

| Start year | Project Title<br>Loan Number  | Gender Classification | Main activities under GAP   |
|------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| 2010       | Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment–<br>Tranche 3<br>L2825  | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 20%–30% quotas for women's representation in water consumer groups, public meetings, consultative workshops, hygiene promotion teams.</li> <li>• Use of 20%-30% quotas for women's participation in training activities.</li> <li>• Informational materials on hygiene that target boys and girls, women.</li> <li>• Decrease waterborne diseases (intestinal diseases).</li> <li>• Improve separate latrine facilities in schools.</li> <li>• Collect sex-disaggregated baseline and end-line information in wastewater subproject areas.</li> <li>• Include GAD issues in socioeconomic profiles at wastewater subproject.</li> <li>• Participation of women leaders in seminars and workshops on wastewater and sanitation plans.</li> </ul> |
| 2010       | Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment–<br>Tranche 2<br>L 2633 | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 20%–30% quotas for women's representation in water consumer groups, public meetings, consultative workshops, hygiene promotion teams.</li> <li>• Use of 20% quotas for “jobs created for women.”</li> <li>• Use of 20%–30% quotas for women's participation in training activities.</li> <li>• Informational materials on hygiene that target boys and girls, women.</li> <li>• Collect sex-disaggregated baseline data.</li> <li>• Gender balance in project management unit.</li> <li>• Create Information and Consultancy Centers of Vodocanals and Public Commissions of hokimiyats.</li> <li>• Decrease waterborne diseases (intestinal diseases).</li> <li>• Improve separate latrine facilities in schools.</li> </ul>                   |
| 2009       | Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment–<br>Tranche 1<br>L 2564 | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 20%–30% quotas for women's representation in water consumer groups, public meetings, consultative workshops, hygiene promotion teams.</li> <li>• Use of 20% quotas for “jobs created for women.”</li> <li>• Use of 20%–30% quotas for women's participation in training activities.</li> <li>• Informational materials on hygiene that target boys and girls, women.</li> <li>• Collect sex-disaggregated baseline data.</li> <li>• Gender balance in project management unit.</li> <li>• Create Information and Consultancy Centers of Vodocanals and Public Commissions of hokimiyats.</li> <li>• Decrease waterborne diseases (intestinal diseases).</li> <li>• Improve separate latrine facilities in schools.</li> </ul>                   |
| 2009       | Surkhandarya Water Supply and Sanitation Project<br>L2466               | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and men receive information about project.</li> <li>• Women participate in project planning and consumer representative groups.</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of executing agency to conduct gender analysis and mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Vulnerable women have equal access to water supplies.</li> <li>• Women clients take part in M&amp;E of impact of improved</li> </ul>   |

water supply.

- Hygiene promotion activities (seminars, round tables, workshops) including provision of basic hygiene information.
- Women's participation in vodokanal training activities (technical skill development and leadership), study tours.

#### 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to water supply and sanitation in Uzbekistan and suggested questions to consider.

**Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation.** Also, consult best practices for developing gender sensitive projects in the WSS sector.

- ✓ Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to water and sanitation? For example, how is water supply implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprise?
- ✓ Have the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality been engaged in consultations and project planning?
- ✓ Have WSS projects that address women's specific needs been considered (e.g. improving household water supply both for domestic use and for home-based businesses)?

**Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring and in the collection of endline data in order to show the gender impacts of WSS projects.**

- ✓ Have time use studies been carried out to measure any decrease in the burdens on women's time devoted to collection and treatment of water? Has qualitative information been collected on decreasing workloads for women? Have methods been considered to assess how women are using any time saved?
- ✓ Has baseline data been collected on the incidence of waterborne diseases, by sex and age? Has qualitative information been collected on the impact of illness on other family members, specifically women, in terms of time spent caring for ill people, days of lost work, cost of medicines, treatment etc.?
- ✓ Have assessments established the gendered impact of poor sanitation services in schools, for example girls' decreased school attendance or impact on female teaching staff? What indicators or methodologies have been used to measure positive changes due to improved sanitation?
- ✓ Are targets for women's participation in project implementation related to assessments of women's current representation in key organizations, such

as water consumer groups? How will women's effective participation in project and community decision-making be measured?

**Ensure that hygiene promotion activities are gender-sensitive and do not reinforce gender stereotypes.**

- ✓ Are informational materials responsive to different hygiene practices of men and women, boys and girls? Are different messages used to target men and women, based on their differential knowledge and household roles?
- ✓ What measures can be taken to ensure that women's engagement in hygiene promotion activities does not reinforce stereotypes about women's role in unpaid community or socially-oriented activities? Are women engaged in hygiene promotion activities within WSS projects given formal job descriptions and/or paid for this work? Can hygiene promotion activities be formalized and compensated?

**Promote participation of women in design and implementation of infrastructure projects.** Additionally, take into consideration the perspectives of men and women regarding water use and sanitation facilities.

- ✓ Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision-making about WSS investments? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their role in household work that implicates specific water consumption patterns?
- ✓ Are there water consumer groups that address domestic water issues? What is women's representation in such groups? What factors may be preventing women from participating in such groups and/or taking on leadership roles?
- ✓ Are investments made in areas that will have a direct benefit to women and girls (such as construction of separate toilet facilities in schools or prioritization of WSS projects in healthcare facilities)?
- ✓ Have women's NGOs that advocate on behalf of specific groups of women (women with disabilities, single mothers, self-employed women, women in rural regions etc.) been included in consultations with the government? With ADB? Have women been included in project design?
- ✓ What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?
- ✓ Are customer satisfaction surveys, disaggregated by sex, used to determine if WSS services have improved and are, in fact, meeting the distinct needs of women and men?

**Create opportunities for income generation and employment for women in WSS projects.**

- ✓ Identify the constraints facing women in home-based, micro and small-scale enterprises that are specifically related to weaknesses in current water supply and sanitation services. What business opportunities could women take advantage of if they had consistent supply?
- ✓ What types of income-generating activities do women in the target area engage in? Do these include small businesses or home-based activities that could be expanded or supported by the provision of clean water and sanitation services?
- ✓ Can women be encouraged and supported to gain employment within water supply companies, especially in support services or as water meter controllers? How can employers be encouraged and supported to recruit women? What measures are taken to counter stereotypes among employers about “women’s work”?

**Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in WSS-related planning and analysis.**

- ✓ Are gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data on such topics as time devoted to water collection, consumption patterns and costs regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- ✓ How do male leaders view their responsibilities to female citizens and women users of public services?
- ✓ Among government officials, municipal and community leaders, ministries and WSS sector employees, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women in terms of water supply and sanitation facilities? Are management and staff of executing agencies informed about women’s needs and the agency’s responsibilities toward women?
- ✓ Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyse questions about the gender aspects of WSS improvement and the implications for project design?
- ✓ What is the representation of women either in leadership positions in the WSS sector or on the staff of executing agencies? What barriers have prevented women from holding such positions? What opportunities are there to support increased participation by women in professional, technical and decision-making positions?
- ✓ Is there gender balance among consultant teams, including gender specialists and international experts?
- ✓ Has gender been mainstreamed into the national WSS development plan? Does the national plan allow for periodic surveys to collect sex-disaggregated data and/or gender-sensitive information?

## **B. Natural Resources**

Because agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the rural population, management of natural resources is an important issue for Uzbekistan. Irrigation and drainage are key to agricultural production, and water supply is critical to productivity, competitiveness and environmental management. Limited water resources impact food production, which could potentially result in food insecurity if the population of the country continues to increase. At present, poor infrastructure and deteriorating equipment contribute to substantial water losses, losses in agricultural production and in farm income.

As in other sectors, natural resource issues can have far-reaching consequences for the entire population. It has been noted that irrigation projects can be considered pro-poor, and improving non-viable systems may be more cost-effective than creating social safety nets. In addition, GDP growth in agriculture is considered to be much more effective in raising income for the poor than growth in non-agricultural sectors.<sup>225</sup>

### **1. Relevant government policies and commitments**

Government policy and programs on natural resources, specifically on water resource management, make no reference to gender differences. Provisions are not made for women's participation in policy decisions nor do official documents refer to gender equality in access to land or water resources. Rather, programs and strategies focus on regulatory and infrastructure improvements.

In regard to low-paid employment, the Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2008–2010 notes that “seasonal and temporary agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable as well as those working on their own small plots, especially in the regions experiencing land quality and irrigation problems” but without mention of women's role in such small-scale farming. Although the Welfare Improvement Strategy has a chapter on gender and development issues, the topic of women's lack of access to critical productive resources, such as land and water, is not addressed.

The 2009 national program for the Year of Rural Development and Improvement<sup>226</sup> covered a wide range of topics, including land improvement and reclamation of water for irrigation. The Program included measures to strengthen water users associations and other specialized irrigation construction and maintenance systems but did not address the issue of gender-balanced participation in such institutions.

The State Program on Land Reclamation for 2008–2012<sup>227</sup> focuses on technical objectives such as construction and repair of drainage systems for agricultural land. The National Investment Program, likewise, addresses irrigation and drainage projects without specific attention to improving the access of particular populations, such as female farmers.

### **2. Gender issues related to natural resources**

Women play a key role in agricultural production and face specific issues relevant to farming as a small business. They are also disadvantaged in terms of access to economic opportunities and are particularly vulnerable to poverty. These factors suggest that the

<sup>225</sup> ADB, *Water Resources Assessment for Country Partnership Strategy: Uzbekistan 2012-2016*, Draft (2012).

<sup>226</sup> Resolution of the President No. PP-1046 of 26 January 2009.

<sup>227</sup> Resolution of the President No. PP-817 of 19 March 2008.

gender-based consequences of natural resources projects should be given special consideration.

**Women's participation in water users associations.** Water users associations (WUAs) were introduced to take over the role of state and collective farms in managing irrigation systems. They are independent structures with members from private farms and households that nominate candidates for leadership. Leadership includes the chairperson, a board and various management committees. An important role of WUAs is the management of conflicts and resolution of disputes that arise between water users and management of irrigation systems. For women in agricultural production, representation and participation in WUAs is a significant way to be involved in formal decision-making processes about water use.

In 2007, there were 1,407 WUA registered farms in Uzbekistan yet “very few involved women in water resource management.”<sup>228</sup> A case study of WUAs in the Fergana region noted that women made up 52% of agricultural workers but only 12.5% of farm leaders in one target area (Akbarabad, Uzbekistan).<sup>229</sup> Additionally, of 40 WUA members, three were women, and there was only one woman out of the seven WUA council and committee members.<sup>230</sup> Female farmers (from Djizak, Namangan, Samarkand and Tashkent regions) who participated in focus groups under another study confirmed that none of these regions had female WUA members.<sup>231</sup>

Women's lack of representation in WUAs has serious repercussions for their ability to take part in decisions about issues that directly impact their livelihoods. Women are disproportionally represented among land users and workers of dekhkan farms (household plots), and most irrigation conflicts revolve around the irrigation of precisely such dekhkan farms. Priority is given to irrigating large leasehold farms that produce wheat and cotton under government orders, and dekhkan plots, which are responsible for more than 80% of agricultural production and ensuring food security for a large number of households, are deprived of water. Unauthorized watering of garden plots is a permanent problem and a source of conflicts between private farmers, the population, and WUAs. At present, there are no specific regulations on equal water distribution for dekhkan farms under the WUA scheme.

A recent gender assessment drew attention to government plans to consolidate farms, which would result in a tenfold decrease in the number of farm owners and thus representatives in WUAs. Because women are already underrepresented among farm owners, this change could have further negative consequences for their ability to participate in the resolution of disputes concerning water access. It was suggested that it will be important to base WUA representation not only on land ownership but also land use as well as include representation of residential water users, ensuring a greater possibility for women's participation.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Dinara Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan During the Institutional Reform Period* (Tashkent: Tashkent Gender Studies Center, 2009), 12.

<sup>229</sup> Iskandar Abdullaev and Murat Yakubov, *Assessing the Gender Performance of the Water Users Associations of Central Asia: Case Study from IWRM* (Integrated Water Resources Management) *Fergana Project* (Tashkent: International Water Management Institute and Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Water Coordination Commission, 2006), 6.

<sup>230</sup> Abdullaev and Yakubov, *Assessing the Gender Performance of the Water Users Associations*, 6.

<sup>231</sup> Dinara Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*, 9.

<sup>232</sup> Somach and Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*, 61.



The reasons for women's low representation in WUAs is explained by the fact that there are no requirements that women be represented among WUA members or leadership, and such associations are generally considered the domain of men. It is not culturally acceptable for women occupy to the position of *merab*—a manager of agricultural water supplies—and this stereotype is widely held by male WUA members.

However, the taboo observed across Central Asia on women attending public meetings is not strong in Uzbekistan. It has been suggested that women's participation in WUAs could be improved by deliberately inviting women to meetings, supporting the participation of a small group of active women or by developing "quotas for women in the WUA membership, management and governance structures."<sup>233</sup>

Under ADB projects, water users associations, staffed entirely by women, have been created within mahallas in the project area. These associations appear to be separate entities from official WUAs and are closely linked to local Women's Committee groups that are active in the community. The mandate or authority of the mahalla-based WUAs could not be determined under this assessment. It is important that efforts be taken to increase women's representation in mainstream WUAs and other bodies that manage natural resources and also that parallel women-only structures not be created. ADB project monitoring in 2012 indicated that the number of female WUA members has increased from 5% in 2007 to 9.3% in Bukhara, Kashkadariya and Navoi oblasts during project implementation, suggesting that there are opportunities for women's greater involvement.

**Policy-making bodies concerning agriculture and natural resources are male-dominated.** Although women make up close to half of those formally employed in agriculture and forestry (48.3%),<sup>234</sup> they are underrepresented in government bodies concerned with agricultural reform. For instance, there are no women among the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. Few women occupy leadership roles in local government where presumably decisions about water management are made. Thus, the priorities and interests of women may not be given adequate consideration in formal-decision making about water resources.

Professional education and training on natural resource issues may have a limited focus on gender and women's concerns due to the fact that there are few female high-level specialists in the field. The Tashkent Irrigation and Land Reclamation Institute prepares specialists for the entire country who go on to work in the water sector and in agriculture. In the 2006-2007 academic year, 575 female students were enrolled in this institute<sup>235</sup> (the current student body is reported to be 4,280 students).<sup>236</sup> While women represented almost half (47.8%) of all teaching staff in 2008, they made up only 22% of lecturers and 16% of professors.<sup>237</sup>

**Gender aspects of climate change.** International practice shows that "climate change and gender inequalities are inextricably linked. By exacerbating inequality overall, climate change slows progress toward gender equality and thus impedes efforts to achieve wider

<sup>233</sup> Abdullaev and Yakubov, *Assessing the Gender Performance of the Water Users Associations*, 9.

<sup>234</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

<sup>235</sup> Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Water Coordination Commission (SIC ICWC), "Gender and Higher Education in Uzbekistan," Gender and Water, newsletter of the Gender and Water Network (GWANET) in Central Asia, 3(10) (2008), 4.

<sup>236</sup> See: Web site of the Tashkent Irrigation and Land Reclamation Institute: <http://www.tiim.uz/ru/about/history/>.

<sup>237</sup> SIC ICWC, "Gender and Higher Education in Uzbekistan," 4.

goals like poverty reduction and sustainable development. Gender inequality can worsen the impacts of climate change... meanwhile, taking steps to narrow the gender gap and empower women can help reduce these impacts.”<sup>238</sup> How gender is implicated in climate change has not been adequately studied in Uzbekistan, but the topic is highly relevant to natural resource management.

Uzbekistan has been a member of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change since 1994 and ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 1999. Activities carried out in cooperation with international organizations and national projects on adaptation and reducing risks of climate change in Uzbekistan have been primarily aimed at “developing observation and early warning systems for water management, improving the quality of land resources, biodiversity conservation, improving health systems and increasing energy efficiency.”<sup>239</sup> The gender aspects of climate change have not been widely integrated into policy discussions in Uzbekistan, but a UNDP-supported project on promoting a low-emission development strategy<sup>240</sup> highlights several key gender considerations:<sup>241</sup>

- Men and women have differential access to and control over natural resources.
- Energy needs and usage differs between men and women based on the gendered division of labor.
- Effective and targeted strategies to change behaviors and practices should take such differences into consideration.
- Women’s equal involvement in decision-making (from the household level to the level of international negotiations) on environmental and climate change issues will enable women to share their knowledge and practices and will increase innovative approaches.

Within ADB projects, it will be important to devote greater attention to identifying how men and women may be impacted differently by climate change in Uzbekistan, how they may each contribute to climate change responses and the capacity of men and women to adapt to change. Projects concerned with natural resources, in particular with water scarcity, agriculture and food security, could support gender analysis of climate change risks and management.

### 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB natural resources projects

| Start year | Project Title<br>Loan Number                           | Gender Classification | Main activities under GAP   |
|------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 2009       | Water Resource Management Sector Project<br>L2492/2493 | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational campaigns targeting women.</li> <li>• Women’s involvement in project monitoring and implementation.</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of ministerial staff and project managers to conduct gender analysis and</li> </ul> |

<sup>238</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/UNDP, *Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change*, (2009), 80.

<sup>239</sup> State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Protection of Nature, “Climate Change: Priority Requirements in Uzbekistan,” [in Russian], 14 October 2011, <http://uznature.uz/rus/newsmain/337.html>.

<sup>240</sup> Supporting Uzbekistan in Transition to a Low-Emission Development Path (2011-2015).

<sup>241</sup> Komila Rakhimova, UNDP/Uzbekistan, “Gender Issues in the Context of the Low-Emission Development Strategy,” [in Russian], (presentation: <http://leds.uz/ru/download/>).

| Start year | Project Title<br>Loan Number           | Gender Classification                                   | Main activities under GAP   |
|------------|--|---|---|
|            |  |   | mainstreaming.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender awareness raising among local authorities.</li> <li>• Increase number of women working in private farms.</li> </ul>   |
| 2007       | Land Improvement Project<br>L2245-2246 | “SGB” [Note: ADB GAD Classification introduced in 2009] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal participation of female and male stakeholders.</li> <li>• Use of 30% quotas for women’s representation in decision-making in associations and participation in trainings.</li> <li>• Women’s needs addressed in project design and implementation.</li> <li>• Women’s involvement in M&amp;E; use of sex-disaggregated information.</li> <li>• Women’s participation in demonstration farms.</li> <li>• Women’s representation within private and dehkan farm associations.</li> </ul> |

#### 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to natural resource management, primarily water resources, in Uzbekistan and suggested key questions to consider.

**Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation.** Also, consult best practices for developing gender sensitive projects in such areas as: natural resources management, closing gender gaps in agriculture and climate change.

- ✓ Review national programs that address women’s issues. What are the entry points relevant to natural resource management and particularly access to water resources? For example, how is irrigation implicated in national programs to promote women’s microenterprise, looking particularly at farming as an entrepreneurial activity? Do programs on microlending to women address women’s limited title to and control over land (and thus lack of collateral for bank loans)?
- ✓ Can links be made between ADB projects on land and water resources and projects on women’s economic empowerment or initiatives to implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women? For instance, projects on natural resources could include awareness-raising for women about their equal rights to own land as well as education targeting men about the importance of women’s rights to property and inheritance.
- ✓ Have the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women’s empowerment and/or gender equality been engaged in consultations and project planning?
- ✓ Have projects that address women’s specific needs regarding natural resources been considered (e.g. improving female farmers’ access to water for irrigation)?

**Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring and in the collection of endline data in order to show the gender impacts of projects on natural resources.**

- ✓ Has baseline data been collected on men's and women's access to and control over natural resources? Has information been gathered to establish whether there are differences in how men and women manage water resources (i.e. inefficient use)? What indicators or methodologies have been used to measure positive changes in access to and efficient use of natural resources?
- ✓ Has baseline data been collected on women's specific roles in agricultural production, for example number of women managing and working in various types of farming enterprises? What are women's roles in both private farms and household agricultural production?
- ✓ In what specific agricultural areas are men and women represented as owners or managers? (compare various crops and products, for example, cotton, wheat, fruit, vegetables, livestock, poultry). Where are men and women represented along agricultural value chains? How are natural resources—especially water—implicated in the productivity of different crops/livestock and for activities at various points along value chains?
- ✓ What indicators or methodologies have been used to measure the effect of improvements in water resource management on women's lives (in such areas as productivity of small businesses and family plots, employment and income-generating opportunities)?
- ✓ Are targets for women's participation in project implementation related to assessments of women's current representation in key organizations, such as farmers' associations or WUAs? How will women's effective participation in project and community decision-making be measured?
- ✓ Have assessments established the gendered impacts of climate change? Specifically, what might be the impact on women of decreased water supply and food scarcity? Has there been analysis of the behaviors and practices of men and women that could either exacerbate or offset environmental changes?

**Promote participation of women in design and implementation of projects on natural resource management.** Additionally, ensure that the perspectives of men and women regarding water and land use, are addressed in project design.

- ✓ Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision-making about irrigation investments and improvements? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their role in agricultural production and especially in managing small farms or family plots?
- ✓ Are there water user associations that address issues concerning irrigation? What is the level of representation of women in such groups? What factors may be preventing women from participating in such groups and/or taking on leadership roles?

- ✓ Have measures been taken to ensure that women are integrated into mainstream associations and committees that make decisions concerning natural resources? What steps have been taken to overcome any stereotypes about women's role in natural resource management? Have good practices to increase female members of WUAs under ADB projects been studied and replicated?
- ✓ Have women's NGOs or other organizations that advocate on behalf of women farmers been included in consultations with the government? With ADB? Is there support for the establishment or development of women farmers' associations? Could networking and cooperation between such associations and existing women's groups, such as the Women's Committee or Associations of Business Women, be facilitated? Have women generally been included in project design?
- ✓ Are women's groups and women's NGOs, especially those active in the environmental movement, been included in national and international discussions of climate change?
- ✓ What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?

**Create opportunities for income generation and employment for women in natural resources projects.**

- ✓ Identify the constraints facing women engaged in farming as a business. Do women farmers have the same access to resources (including credit, equipment, machinery, tools, seeds, knowledge, skills etc.) as male farmers? What barriers do women in farming face in accessing such resources and how can these be addressed in projects on land improvement?
- ✓ Have specific programs been developed to support women entrepreneurs in agriculture in terms of training, technical assistance and access to credit?

**Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in planning and analysis under agriculture and natural resources projects.**

- ✓ Are gender-sensitive information, and sex-disaggregated data, on patterns of water use in agricultural production and access to irrigation channels regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- ✓ Are gender-specific data and information about health problems resulting from waterborne diseases which are attributable to environmental degradation (*See also, WSS section above*) used in policy discussions on climate change?
- ✓ Among government officials, municipal and community leaders, ministries and employees responsible for land and water management, is there

adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women and men in terms of water use for irrigation?

- ✓ What measures are planned to address the prevailing gender-based stereotype that “domestic water concerns women, but water as a natural resource concerns men”? How will progress toward dispelling stereotypes be measured?
- ✓ Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyse questions about the gender aspects of natural resource management and the implications for project design?
- ✓ Are there processes for public consultations on water and irrigation investments and do they include mechanisms to ensure that women’s voices are heard?

## C. Energy

Uzbekistan has abundant fossil fuel energy resources with rich coal, oil, and gas reserves, and is also the second most energy intensive country in the world. Although there is almost universal household electrification in Uzbekistan, many regions experience considerable gaps in power supply.

Surveys and focus groups conducted in the Bukhara, Djizak, Samarkand<sup>242</sup> and Kashkadarya<sup>243</sup> regions (viloyat) illustrate the persistent issues in access to energy. Almost all households have a grid-connected energy supply, but the quality of services can be quite poor and varies considerably between urban and rural settings. While almost 89% of surveyed urban households in Djizak region reported satisfaction with power supply stability, only 29% of surveyed rural households in Samarkand region were satisfied. Among all surveyed rural households, 81% experienced daily interruptions in electricity, which generally last for at least one hour and very often for more than five hours. Other issues raised by respondents included the low voltage of electricity and current fluctuations that damage electrical appliances.

There appears to be greater variation in energy availability in public sector institutions. In Kashkadarya region, for example, it was reported that hospitals are given priority and so do not generally experience electricity shortages, but hospital staff participating in focus groups in other regions described daily interruptions in energy supply. Such interruptions affect equipment needed for testing, refrigeration of medicines, pumping of water and even meal preparation. All regions reported electricity cutoffs in educational institutions, including in dormitories.

Inefficient and inadequate energy supply is attributed primarily to deficiencies in the Soviet-era power infrastructure. Low energy costs to consumers also mean that there are few incentives to conserve energy, and attention to renewable sources of energy has generally been limited.

Energy inefficiencies have serious consequences for economic growth overall since existing power supplies are insufficient in some regions to meet the needs of increased industrialization. Poor supply also impacts social service provision to the population and the day-to-day quality of life of affected households.

### 1. Relevant government policies and commitments

Government policy related to the energy sector does not include provisions on ensuring women's participation or refer to gender equality goals. Rather, both national and regional strategies focus on infrastructure improvements.

The Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2008–2010 outlines a medium-term investment policy that includes investment projects in energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Although specific attention is given to the energy needs of the growing rural population, up-grading of inefficient equipment in public sector institutions (notably schools and hospitals) and measures to reduce costs to consumers and energy

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<sup>242</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*.

<sup>243</sup> Saurjan Yakupov and Nodira Azimova, *Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project, Social and Gender Analysis of Talimarjan Clean Power Project*, ADB Uzbekistan (Tashkent: Sharh v Tavsiya Sociology Center, 2010).

intensity, none of these objectives are linked to the gender and development issues outlined elsewhere in the strategy.

The Welfare Improvement Strategy also notes the development of a National Strategy for Renewable Energy Sources (an initiative supported by UNDP), but it does not appear that the strategy has been finalized. A draft Law on Renewable Energy Sources was discussed in early 2012 and would set targets for increasing the level of use of renewable energy for 2020 and 2030. The discussion was part of the UNDP “Supporting Uzbekistan in Transition to a Low-Emission Development Path” project that includes participatory policy discussions, conducted with the Center for Economic Research. The UNDP project calls for gender mainstreaming in activities related to climate change and a low-emission development strategy.<sup>244</sup> In theory, such policy discussions and debates should produce gender-related findings and recommendations that could be incorporated into future government policy.

## **2. Gender issues related to energy supply**

Entire populations suffer when energy supplies are scarce and inefficient. Likewise, both men and women benefit from improvements. Yet there are also important links between gender and energy. “Although decision makers may view their energy-related choices as gender neutral, men and women are affected differently by energy policies wherever their home, work and community roles differ.”<sup>245</sup> Energy planning and reform projects tend to focus on increasing supplies of electricity, or other fuel sources, with limited attention to women’s energy demands, including the specific needs of rural women which may differ greatly from those of women in urban areas. Instead, the use of “[a]pproaches that favor demand-side considerations rather than supply-side energy targets are more likely to positively reflect women’s actual needs.”<sup>246</sup>

### **Improvements to domestic energy supply can ease women’s household workload.**

There are clear gender-based roles and responsibilities concerning the domestic sphere in Uzbekistan, and women perform most household chores. According to surveys in urban areas of Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand regions, wives are responsible for household chores (in 68% of households), followed by daughters and daughters-in-law (56% of households), as compared to rural areas where the figures are higher—wives in 73% of families and daughters and daughters-in-law in 63% of households. Husbands or sons-in-law were reported to be responsible for non-paid domestic work in only 2%–8% of households.<sup>247</sup>

Women are the major users of household electricity and experience the impact of frequent and prolonged power interruptions more acutely. Power interruptions and energy shortages at the household level also increase the time burden on women. Women in focus groups described the direct impact of power interruptions in terms of having to prioritize cooking and bathing children during the time when there is electricity supply. Because outages are inconsistent, women face difficulties budgeting their time for productive and reproductive activities. The situation is especially difficult for rural women, but it also affects women in cities that are not adequately served by power supplies.

<sup>244</sup> UNDP Uzbekistan, “Supporting Uzbekistan in Transition to a Low-Emission Development Path,” program description: <http://www.undp.uz/en/projects/project.php?id=169>.

<sup>245</sup> UNDP Energy and Environment Group, *Gender and Energy for Sustainable Development: A Toolkit and Resource Guide*, (New York, 2004), 10.

<sup>246</sup> UNDP Energy and Environment Group, *Gender and Energy*, 11.

<sup>247</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 51.



Women in paid employment outside the home are doubly affected by energy insufficiencies because they must manage household chores and family needs during non-working hours while also coping with frequent power interruptions.

Insufficient and unreliable energy supply also means that households are unable to make use of laborsaving devices. For instance, most homes use gas or wood stoves for heating (only 4%–5% of surveyed households had central heating or electric heaters) and electricity is rarely used for cooking (gas is used in 61% of households and firewood in 39%). Among rural households, only 38% had wells on their property and of these, only 7% had electric pumps. The reliance on firewood and hand (non-electrical) pumps present women with additional household chores in the form of collecting water and fuel. Few rural households have refrigerators (only 37% as compared to 66% in urban areas)<sup>248</sup>, which may require women to spend more time purchasing fresh produce or preserving food. Washing machines are rare, and thus 87% of women in urban areas and 97% of women in rural areas reported doing laundry by hand.<sup>249</sup> The time and energy burden of such tasks reduces women's time for educational pursuits, for income generating activities, for family and community activities and for leisure.

Shortages and lack of gas for heating during winter months also significantly increase the vulnerability of women, most of whom spend more time at home than men. Women from low-income families, single mothers, and female-headed households are especially vulnerable.

Women stand to benefit greatly from improved access to energy that eases household workloads and time burdens. However, it should also be kept in mind that the provision of electricity alone may not necessarily reduce the time women spend on household work if attention is not also given to education about energy efficient and laborsaving devices and promotion of the use of modern fuels. As has been noted about developing countries generally, "while small amounts of electricity at home in the evening hours may improve the quality of life for some members of the family, including through illumination for reading, and entertainment and communication through radios and televisions, for other members of the family it may simply extend the working day. In the former case it is men, and to some extent children, who benefit most, while in the latter case it is women who usually bear the burden."<sup>250</sup>

**Insufficiencies in energy resources have gendered impacts.** Women's energy needs are closely related to their role in household management, and thus investment should be made in areas that will meet their specific energy needs. However, energy projects rarely focus on women's roles, needs or priorities. For instance, very little financing has been devoted to providing women with improved cooking options. UNICEF data confirms the findings from regional surveys that in Uzbekistan natural gas is much more commonly used for cooking than electricity, but that 23.5% of rural households use firewood for cooking.<sup>251</sup> Regional studies carried for ADB found that 68% of surveyed households in rural areas used wood stoves due to unavailability of natural gas.<sup>252</sup>

According to a World Bank review of its global energy access investments from 2000-2008, most investment—almost half—was to physical improvements to electricity access,

<sup>248</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 74.

<sup>249</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 75.

<sup>250</sup> UNDP Energy and Environment Group, *Gender and Energy*, 10.

<sup>251</sup> UNICEF/State Committee on Statistics, *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*, 91.

<sup>252</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 14.

followed by supportive investments in energy access (policy development and capacity-building, for example) and investments into energy efficiency.<sup>253</sup> Most energy efficiency investments were specifically to the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region. Significantly, less than 5% of lending was devoted to promoting the transition to modern cooking fuels. “The main area that lags behind the rest clearly involves promoting the transition to more modern forms of energy for cooking.”<sup>254</sup>

As noted above, very few households included in a three-region survey had washing machines, and women in focus groups reported that although they would like to use washing machines, they saw no possibility to purchase them as long as electric and water supplies to the home remain insufficient.<sup>255</sup> Women participating in a survey conducted in the Kashkadarya region explained that even when there is electrical equipment (vacuum cleaners, irons, washing machines) in the home, they consider electricity tariffs high and save money by cleaning and laundering by hand as often as possible.<sup>256</sup>

Very few women in the Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand viloyat reported that they have electric sewing machines (6% of urban households and 7% of rural households), but far more use treadle sewing machines (48% of urban and 62% of rural households).<sup>257</sup> Because home-based work has been promoted as an important means by which women can be employed and also manage household duties, it is critical that proper conditions needed to carry out such work are provided. Handicrafts and piecework sewing are popular forms of home-based enterprises. If energy supplies are insufficient to support modern equipment, home-based work may prove too burdensome for women to adopt.

In general, women in Uzbekistan would benefit from energy policies and projects that consider such measures as assisting households to transition to modern cooking fuels that are more sustainable and the use of improved cook stoves; tariff structures that are affordable and cover the electricity needs of the average family; and greater coordination of projects on access to energy, water supply and increasing income-generation activities. Such activities could be included in projects or developed through public-private partnerships, microfinance schemes or even through targeted subsidies or grants.

**Energy supply and women’s productive and income-earning activities.** The gender-related aspects of improved access to energy should not be limited to reducing women’s household workloads. An improved energy supply could also expand women’s access to income-generating activities. For example, women could not only use refrigeration in the home, but they would also be able to engage in food production and the sale of prepared foods as a business venture. Consistent power supply could enable women to operate small enterprises such as hairdressing salons or internet cafes. Electric lighting in public spaces, such as on streets and in bus shelters, would create a safer environment for women to participate in income-generating and community activities.<sup>258</sup>

In Uzbekistan, expanding opportunities for women to combine employment with family obligations, with a focus on home-based work and small enterprise, has been a priority.

<sup>253</sup> Douglas Barnes, Bipul Singh and Xiaoyu Shi, *Modernizing Energy Services for the Poor: A World Bank Investment Review- Fiscal 2000–08* (Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2010), 28.

<sup>254</sup> Barnes, et al., *Modernizing Energy Services for the Poor*, 28.

<sup>255</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 105.

<sup>256</sup> Yakupov and Azimova, *Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project*, 33.

<sup>257</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 62.

<sup>258</sup> See generally: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Energy and Gender in Rural Sustainable Development*, (2006).

When energy supplies are inadequate or unaffordable, this impedes any businessperson's ability to run a small or home-based business. However, many of women's informal sector activities, such as food production, baking, handcrafts and carpet making, are energy-intensive and therefore especially affected by energy availability and price. The decree establishing home-based work requires workers to notify contracting companies of "the inability to fulfill orders within time limits due to circumstances not in the workers' control (lack of electricity, water, gas etc.)."<sup>259</sup> Because home-based workers are paid by the piece, however, the lack of basic services would still result in a loss of income.

A focus group discussion highlighted another issue with the existing electricity supply that has a direct impact on home-based production. Home-based businesses are subjected to different tariffs, even though it is not possible to separate electricity consumption between the business and the home. Consumers are asked to pay an advance based on the higher (business) tariff that is 25%–30% more than the tariff for home consumption, an amount that can be prohibitively high for starting entrepreneurs.<sup>260</sup> Small business owners (both male and female) in the Kashkadarya region gave examples of how entrepreneurs were prevented from opening businesses or were not able to operate at full capacity due to insufficient electricity supply.<sup>261</sup> Because women's enterprises are generally much smaller than those run by men, or are operated from the home, and women lack access to financial capital, women are especially impacted by high tariffs and power outages.

It is important that schemes to develop women's entrepreneurship also take into consideration whether the energy needs of women running small businesses are being met at present. The Year of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, a 2011 national program, included a point on improving small business connectivity to basic services, such as electricity and gas supply, water supply and heating.<sup>262</sup> It could not be established to what extent women's home-based production, or micro enterprises, were recognized under the national program or given any priority for improved services. Further study is needed to understand the connections between the viability and profitability of women's businesses and major problems with energy supply.

ADB recognizes that compared with conventional power sources, renewable energy and technologies to increase efficiency provide a wide range of opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. However, it has also been suggested that in general "modern energy technology businesses have been viewed as 'men's work', while women operate more traditional, and less profitable, biomass-based microenterprises."<sup>263</sup> Thus, it is important to provide women with opportunities to establish "modern energy businesses," which can be accomplished in a variety of ways: including (1) setting targets for women to become clean energy employees and entrepreneurs; (2) providing women with training and microcredit to adopt new technologies; (3) partnering with women's organizations to identify constraints business women face in this area; and (4) using gender-sensitive outreach materials.<sup>264</sup> Women's participation in developing clean technologies and renewable energy, as "green entrepreneurs," should be linked to projects that support

<sup>259</sup> *On Measures to Stimulate the Expansion of Cooperation between Large Enterprises and Service Production through Home-Based Work*, Presidential Decree No. UP-3706 of January 5, 2006.

<sup>260</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 87.

<sup>261</sup> Yakupov and Azimova, *Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project*, 27.

<sup>262</sup> See: *2011—Year of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* [in Russian], Presidential Resolution of 07 February 2011.

<sup>263</sup> Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), *Gender Equality in Financing Energy for All*, (Oslo, 2011), 9.

<sup>264</sup> Norad, *Gender Equality in Financing Energy*, 8-9.

women and SME development and promote women's participation in climate change initiatives.

**Gender-based roles in decision-making about energy efficiency.** Research conducted in the Kashkadarya region illustrates the typical dynamic in terms of how men and women are involved in making decisions about household electricity consumption. Women are the main consumers of energy in the home, but men are primarily responsible for paying electricity bills. Men make the key decisions in the household and manage the family budget, which means they usually decide which appliances to buy. However, women make choices about how they use electrical appliances in the home.<sup>265</sup> Other surveys found that in 61% of households men alone made decisions on which household appliances to buy and in only 29% of households did men and women make such decisions jointly.<sup>266</sup>

Worldwide, it appears that women do value new and efficient energy technology, and “women are key buyers of solar lighting systems, representing up to half of this vast and growing market”,<sup>267</sup> for example. It may well be the case that women in Uzbekistan are also interested in installing household solar systems, but at present they may not have sufficient social or financial capital to initiate such changes. A pilot project, run by two local charitable foundations,<sup>268</sup> offers some examples of how renewable energy can be used in social sector facilities and to enhance women's small business opportunities. Project beneficiaries, who received modular systems powered by solar and wind energy, included a hospital, rural health centers, crafts people and woman farmers.<sup>269</sup>

**Gender-specific outreach about energy efficiency and services.** According to ADB-supported surveys in Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand viloyat, awareness of efficient energy use is low among households. Only 7% of respondents reported knowing about energy-saving labels on electrical appliances, and only 8% used energy efficient light bulbs (despite the fact that 54% of all respondents said they knew of their advantages).<sup>270</sup> No sex-disaggregated data was provided, so it is not clear whether knowledge levels differ between women and men. Still, gender-sensitive marketing that would both target and assist women who are interested in energy efficiency improvements to access credit or other schemes should be considered.

In terms of payment for energy services, surveys in the Kashkadarya region revealed some differences in how men and women view billing and costs. Female focus group participants reported that they were willing to pay from 80–150 soum more per month for “reliable and better power supply.” Male respondents, however, stated that consumers would not be ready to pay higher prices due to old debts from unpaid bills.<sup>271</sup>

According to focus groups conducted in Samarkand with “vulnerable women” (females heading households, including widows, single mothers and wives of labor migrants working in other countries), their monthly electricity payments account for 5% to 15% of their monthly income. Mahalla leaders in Samarkand and Djizak cities reported that

<sup>265</sup> Yakupov and Azimova, *Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project*, 33.

<sup>266</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 51.

<sup>267</sup> Norad, *Gender Equality in Financing Energy*, 5.

<sup>268</sup> The Alternative Energy Sources for the Social Sector project managed by the Forum of Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan Foundation and the Nongovernmental Noncommercial Organization Social Initiatives Support Fund (SISF).

<sup>269</sup> Forum of Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan Foundation, “Energetic search for new sources of energy,” [in Russian], 20 December 2012, <http://www.fundforum.uz/ru/news/energichnie-poiski-novix-istoch-energ/>.

<sup>270</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 17.

<sup>271</sup> Yakupov and Azimova, *Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project*, 37.

women in vulnerable positions may request assistance from the mahalla for paying electricity bills. However, many women are unaware of this option or are reluctant to apply for such financial support. Gender-sensitive outreach may be needed to address men's dissatisfaction with increased electricity prices. Also, subsidies for single-parent households should be considered that would be more accessible and appealing to women in conjunction with campaigns to increase knowledge of existing programs and remove stigma that may be associated with requesting public benefits.

Surveys indicate that there is generally limited awareness among electricity consumers of their rights and responsibilities. More than half of respondents (58%) reported that they rarely contacted Uzbekenergo personnel to report problems. Vulnerable women (single mothers, low income women, women with disabilities) in particular were found to be “quite timid” in making complaints about poor service.<sup>272</sup> The ADB project to install advanced electricity metering systems will also include a component on awareness raising of the rights and obligations of electricity users, and so attention should be given to any gender-specific barriers consumers face in protecting their rights.

**Gender mainstreaming in the energy sector.** The primary actors in the energy sector have limited capacity to undertake gender mainstreaming and advance gender aware policies and strategies. The energy sector is under the ownership and operation of the state, managed by Uzbekenergo,<sup>273</sup> and overseen by several ministries. It is difficult to gauge women's representation in the energy sector overall. Respondents to this assessment pointed out that women have a greater presence in Uzbekenergo than in ministries. This appears to be the case in Tashkent where 42.9% of Uzbekenergo employees are female,<sup>274</sup> but Tashkent may be exceptional. Women represent less than 30% of all Uzbekenergo employees in the Bukhara region, 23.7% in Samarkand and only 10% in Djizak regions.<sup>275</sup> In contrast, top management of Uzbekenergo (the chairman and four deputies) is all male. Approximately 25% of staff at the Talimarjan Power Station is female. Women in the energy sector mainly work as accountants, cleaners, telephone operators/dispatchers, inspectors, technicians and engineers.

While it appears that women are fairly well represented in the energy sector as a whole, it does not seem they have reached “critical mass” in terms of technical, professional and management positions that would allow them to influence policy decisions. Further efforts could be undertaken to promote women in technical and higher education that would lead to careers in the energy sector. At the same time, women already working in the field should be supported to develop professionally through retraining programs, mentoring and other measures. Limited attention has been given to these aspects of promoting gender balance in the sector. For example, in Samarkand, in the 2009–2010 academic year, only 12 female students graduated from the Energy Department of the Polytechnic Institute, as compared to 60 male students. Twenty male employees of the Samarkand Electric Networks (State Joint Stock Company), but no female employees, attended retraining courses at the Uzbekenergo staff retraining Center in 2010.<sup>276</sup>

The capacity of key energy institutions to undertake gender mainstreaming is not only measured by the proportion of female employees. Often, “energy institutions are already engaging with gender issues, but they lack a systematic framework for analysis, action and

<sup>272</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 20.

<sup>273</sup> A State-owned joint-stock company.

<sup>274</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 21–22.

<sup>275</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 21–22.

<sup>276</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 21.

monitoring.”<sup>277</sup> This situation appears to be the case in the Talimarjan Power Station. “Gender concerns...have not been an issue of discussion in the power plant before simply because of unawareness of the management” and as a result existing databases and human resources indicators are not disaggregated by sex.<sup>278</sup> Capacity building for gender mainstreaming is included in gender action plans under some ADB energy projects. Going forward, it will be important to ensure that gender mainstreaming and gender aware policies become industry norms and that top management is engaged in modeling and promoting these practices. At the same time, greater coordination and cooperation among donors and development partners on setting gender targets and indicators for energy sector projects would be useful.

### 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB energy projects

| Start year | Project Title<br>Loan Number)                  | Gender Classification | Main activities under GAP   |
|------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 2011       | Advanced Electricity Metering Project<br>L2779 | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment opportunities for women in Uzbekenergo and in service centers.</li> <li>• Working conditions improved for men and women.</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of Uzbekenergo to conduct gender analysis and mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Improve awareness of female consumers of their rights and energy efficiency.</li> <li>• Creation of 24-hour customer hotlines.</li> <li>• Formation of core group of women comprising 3-5 potential women leaders in urban and rural areas.</li> </ul>  |
| 2010       | Talimarjan Power Project<br>L2629/2630         | SGB                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve gender sensitivity of Uzbekenergo and power plant staff.</li> <li>• Improve gender sensitive approach in power plant: appointment of gender focal point, review of human resources policies and workplace environment, collection of sex-disaggregated statistics.</li> <li>• Enhance power plant community/environment: development of women's associations, community center, renovation of employee housing.</li> <li>• Affirmative action to increase number of female employees.</li> <li>• Provision of adequate number of separate toilets/shower rooms women and men.</li> <li>• Provision of sufficient housing for young families of employees of Talimarjan.</li> </ul> |

### 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to the energy sector in Uzbekistan and suggested key questions to consider.

**Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation.** Also, consult best practices for developing gender sensitive projects in the energy sector.

<sup>277</sup> Norad, *Gender Equality in Financing Energy*, 7.

<sup>278</sup> Yakupov and Azimova, *Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project*, 43.

- ✓ Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to energy supply? For example, how are consistent electricity supply or energy efficiency implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprise?
- ✓ Can links be made between ADB projects to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy and projects on women's economic empowerment? For instance, projects to support female entrepreneurs could include incentives for establishing modern energy businesses and modeling clean energy practices.
- ✓ Have the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality been engaged in consultations and project planning?
- ✓ Have energy projects that address women specific needs been considered (e.g. improving household energy supply both for domestic use and for home-based businesses and assisting in the transition to modern cooking fuels)?

**Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring and in the collection of endline data in order to show the gender impacts of energy projects.**

- ✓ Have time use studies been carried out to measure any decrease in the burdens on women's time if sufficient electricity is supplied to allow women the use of laborsaving devices in the home? Has qualitative information been collected on decreasing workloads for women? Have methods been considered to assess how women are using any time saved?
- ✓ Are indicators and assessment methodologies used to measure the effect of infrastructure improvements on women's lives (including such topics as access to consistent, sufficient and affordable electricity supply that would allow the use of laborsaving devices in the home, use of modern cooking fuels and technologies)?
- ✓ Have household-level surveys been conducted that provide information about male and female energy consumption patterns and needs, household expenditure on utilities and access to clean energy? Are there sex-disaggregated data about female-headed households, single parents, pensioners etc.
- ✓ Have gender audits been conducted in Uzbekenergo (and its branches) and relevant power plants to establish information about: gender balance in staffing; levels and positions occupied by men and women; recruitment systems; women's access to managerial positions; barriers to advancement; family-friendly policies and working environment, etc.? Do such audits include input from the women and men working in the relevant organizations?
- ✓ Are targets for women's participation in project implementation related to assessments of women's current representation in key organizations? How will women's effective participation in project and community decision-making be measured?

**Promote participation of women in design and implementation of energy infrastructure projects.** Additionally, take into consideration the perspectives of men and women regarding energy consumption and energy efficiency.

- ✓ Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision-making about energy investments? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their role in household work that implicates specific patterns of energy consumption patterns?
- ✓ Are investments made in areas that will have a direct benefit to women, such as the promotion of modern cooking fuels and ensuring access to efficient cook stoves and heaters?
- ✓ Do installation or connection costs and rate structures take account of the energy needs and incomes of poor households, particularly of economically vulnerable women? Has consideration been given to credit or other arrangements that would enable households and small enterprises to access new services? Have bill payment assistance schemes for poor households been considered? If so, are there any barriers that might prevent women from using such schemes and how will they be addressed?
- ✓ Are methods included to address the level of satisfaction of male and female consumers with energy supply and costs as well as the level of knowledge among women and men of their rights as customers? Consider how the perspectives of different groups of women and men, for instance single-mothers, women heading households, pensioners, may differ.
- ✓ Are separate and specific messages for women and men needed in promotional materials about energy use? Does the promotion and marketing of advanced metering technology and energy efficiency take a gender-sensitive approach? Are different messages used to target men and women, based on their differential knowledge, household roles and consumption patterns?
- ✓ Are activities used to promote consumer rights, and have critical differences in how men and women protect their rights as consumers been identified? What gender-specific messages, information and advice can be promoted?
- ✓ Have women's NGOs that advocate on behalf of specific groups of women (women with disabilities, single mothers, self-employed women, women in rural regions etc.) been included in consultations with the government? With ADB? Have women been included in project design?
- ✓ What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?

**Within energy projects, create opportunities for income generation and employment for women.**

- ✓ Identify the constraints facing women in home-based, micro and small-scale enterprises that are specifically related to weaknesses in energy supply.



What business opportunities could women take advantage of if they had consistent and affordable energy supplies?

- ✓ What types of income-generating activities do women in the target area engage in? Do these include small businesses or home based activities that could be expanded or supported by the provision of efficient and affordable energy?
- ✓ What kinds of measures could be taken to improve women's access to income generating activities connected to energy improvements, such as reduced or delineated tariffs for home-based business, small grants for microfinance for the purchase of energy efficient equipment or new technologies?
- ✓ Can women be encouraged and supported to gain employment within the energy service provider, especially in support services? How can employers be encouraged and supported to recruit women? What measures are taken to counter stereotypes among employers about "women's work"?

**Support employers in the energy sector to undertake gender mainstreaming of the work environment.**

- ✓ Have there been any initiatives to identify reasons for low participation related to the demand or supply of professional women?
- ✓ Have measures been taken to address any barriers to women's participation? Or have efforts been made to invest in projects that will have a greater impact on women's employment opportunities (for instance, in developing models of customer service)? Are workplace policies in place that support work and family life balance?
- ✓ What measures can be included in project design to address prevailing attitudes and gender stereotypes about women's potential to be employed in the energy sector? How will progress toward dispelling stereotypes be measured?
- ✓ What actions are being taken to work with employers to change attitudes and hiring practices and facilitate the hiring of women in non-traditional jobs?
- ✓ Is professional training to aid women to enter non-traditional fields included in the project design? What additional support will be offered women, such as career counselling, job placement, mentoring?

**Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other stakeholders to mainstream gender in energy-related planning and analysis.**

- ✓ Are gender-sensitive information, and sex-disaggregated data, on energy availability, consumption patterns and costs regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- ✓ How do male leaders view their responsibilities to female citizens and women users of public services?

- ✓ Among government officials, municipal leaders, ministries and energy sector employees, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women in terms of energy consumption? Are management and staff of executing agencies informed about women needs and the agency's responsibilities toward women?
- ✓ Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyse questions about the gender aspects of improvement to energy supplies and the implications for project design?
- ✓ What is the representation of women either in leadership positions in the energy sector or on the staff of executing agencies? What barriers have prevented women from holding such positions? What opportunities are there to support increased participation by women in professional, technical and decision-making positions?
- ✓ Is the national energy development plan gender mainstreamed? Does the plan allow for periodically surveys to collect sex-disaggregated data?

## D. Transport

Both the government and ADB view improving the transport sector as important to broader national strategic objectives of economic growth and increasing competitiveness. There is significant potential for Uzbekistan to become part of overland transit corridors between Europe and South-East Asia. The government's mid-term strategy for 2011–2015 includes plans for completing modernization of the road network falling on the three Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) corridors that cross the territory of Uzbekistan. The ultimate goal is to provide sustainable year-round road connectivity across the country and to neighboring countries, but it has been recognized that this goal cannot be achieved by improvements to physical infrastructure alone. Therefore, while a major part of investment is dedicated to the reconstruction of existing road networks, other "softer" investments are anticipated, such as improving institutional effectiveness, planning and project management and increasing road safety.

At the level of strategic planning, transport projects are seen to contribute to poverty reduction by facilitating the mobility of persons and goods and therefore improving access to markets, to educational and employment opportunities and to health services. Although the links between gender and transportation/mobility is the subject of regular discussions between donors and the government, the integration of gender equality goals in project design is still very much a donor driven initiative. Attention is much more often given to immediate outputs (construction and rehabilitation projects) rather than the rationale behind road development—increasing access and mobility. The Rural Access Index is an indicator used in the transport sector to show the relationship between physical isolation and poverty; it also reveals associations between mobility and specific MDGs, such as the reduction of maternal mortality and promotion of gender equality. Increased access for rural populations impacts men and women differently, for example it could "potentially increase men's migration, and may result to [sic] increased workload on women in the farm and household."<sup>279</sup> According to the Rural Access Index, 57% of rural residents live less than two kilometers from the nearest all-season road in Uzbekistan, a figure that is rather low in the CIS region.<sup>280</sup>

When addressing gender issues during project planning in the transport sector, it is useful to keep in mind the fact that women's status means they have specific transport requirements. For example, the rehabilitation of large intercity highways has been a priority for both the government and ADB, but women may, in fact, benefit more from the development of local and feeder roads that provide access to markets, health centers, schools, farms etc. Likewise, as transportation users, women travel to different destinations than men and for different reasons. Such issues are explored below in more detail and should also be addressed at the project preparation stage, in discussions with the government and also included in project document preparation.

### 1. Relevant government policies and commitments

Government policy and programs in the road and transport sector do not refer to gender or equality in access and do not include provisions on ensuring women's participation in transport-related decisions. Rather, national programs focus on infrastructure improvements, measured in terms of quantifiable outputs (kilometers of constructed or

<sup>279</sup> Peter Roberts, Shyam KC, Cordula Rastogi, *Rural Access Indicator: A Key Development Indicator* (Washington DC: World Bank Group, 2006), 2.

<sup>280</sup> UNDP, Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, *Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies*, (Bratislava, 2011), 29.

rehabilitated roads, for example). Several programs make note of related objectives to increase employment but without reference to any measures to include women among those receiving training or to ensure the creation of jobs that would be accessible to women.

Since 2006, the government has adopted a number of national programs aimed at development of the road sector with a focus on construction. The presidential resolution On Measures for the Development and Reconstruction of Uzbek National Highway for 2009–2014<sup>281</sup> and implementation program aim to create a unified national transport system, to increase the efficiency of road transport and increase employment through jobs creation. The program includes measures for the training of key specialists, but no mention is made of promoting the employment of women specifically. The program also calls for the development of a separate program on roadside infrastructure.

The national Program of Roadside Infrastructure and Services for 2010–2015<sup>282</sup> gives greater scope for attention to equal access to employment opportunities and to women's specific needs and priorities. The government recognizes the need to develop business infrastructure and services in conjunction with road construction and repair, and the program envisions the construction of 240 objects in 19 locations, namely camp sites, motels, filling stations, service stations offering medical and emergency assistance, short-term parking spots with sanitation facilities and tourism services.<sup>283</sup> The program is also viewed as a source of new jobs for young people. It does not appear that any specific attention was given to the development of roadside businesses that would be particularly accessible to women, but the hospitality sector, retail and tourism services should all be areas that fit with traditional views of women's employment. Within the topic of roadside infrastructure development, greater attention could also be given to the safety of pedestrians, often women with children, as well as ensuring that roadside sanitation facilities meet the needs of women and girls.

## 2. Gender issues related to transport

### **Limited quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data pertaining to transport.**

Very little concrete information is available on such issues as: the number of male and female drivers (road users) in Uzbekistan, public transportation use disaggregated by sex, or accessibility of urban transport for women and men in terms of cost and timetables, and including such groups as single parents, the elderly, disabled persons and rural users. Likewise, the number of people, disaggregated by sex, employed in specific jobs within the transport sector would be useful for project planning. Qualitative information on the impact of inefficiencies in transport infrastructure (relating to poor road conditions and transport logistics) on SME owners, both men and women, who engage in trade would also be important to establish gender differences in the sector.

**Benefits of improved roads to women's entrepreneurship and employment.** Minimal attention has been devoted to assessing the mobility of rural populations, especially women, and whether improvements to major highways alone will increase their access to services and employment opportunities. Thus, local authorities should be encouraged to improve local roads in conjunction with ADB and government work on major corridors.

<sup>281</sup> No. PP-1103 of 22 April 2009.

<sup>282</sup> Presidential Decree of 22 October 2009.

<sup>283</sup> Uzavtoyul, "Results: Press Conference," 11 August 2012, [http://www.uzavtoyul.uz/en/news/company\\_news/?ELEMENT\\_ID=9](http://www.uzavtoyul.uz/en/news/company_news/?ELEMENT_ID=9).

Women and men in Uzbekistan may use roads as a main or additional source of income. Markets at roadside shelters provide local women with opportunities to sell fruit, bread and other products, as well as to organize dining places for travelers or souvenir stalls. The relatively high level of car ownership has given rise to a specific demand for the sale of car components and spare parts, fuel and lubricants and for maintenance services.<sup>284</sup> As described above, the national Program of Roadside Infrastructure and Services for 2010–2015 does not mention any goals on improving women’s employment opportunities but the implementation of the program could include gender-sensitive measures so that women have equal access to jobs created under the program. Planning processes should identify ways to support women’s employment in the sectors outlined in the program and in which women have or are likely to start businesses, such as in the hospitality and tourism industries. Additionally, it is important to identify new areas of women’s employment and build the capacity of female entrepreneurs so that they can take advantage of the new markets and opportunities created by road and transport improvements.

As noted in this assessment, the government has adopted programs for women’s employment and support for women’s small and home-based businesses. ADB monitoring of transport projects confirms that women in the target areas are often not formally employed and rely heavily on family members for remittances, but they are also interested in developing roadside businesses to offer products and services to travelers. While such women in rural and isolated regions already have many skills that could be applied to home-based enterprises, they generally lack business experience and training. Improved roads and transport, combined with skill-building, could greatly assist women to sell their goods to a larger market and to expand their enterprises. While it has not been the subject of study in Uzbekistan, the importance of gender in value chains has increasingly become a focus of economic growth programs. Put simply, “women’s work” tends to be labor-intensive and undervalued and is clustered around specific points on value chains, rather than being represented along the chain. The ability to access improved roads and transport systems can help women to gain greater access to stages higher along value chains.

**Potential gender-specific benefits of improvements in crossborder transport and logistics.** In addition to the possibility of linking transport projects to activities that support women to enter into business, the improvement of transit corridors may also be beneficial to women with established enterprises. Women’s NGOs that participated in an ADB focus group raised the issue of support for businesswomen seeking to enter markets outside of Uzbekistan. Such women lack knowledge and capacity to develop export businesses and specifically need training on customs and tax procedures, export strategies, transport logistics and identifying new markets. These observations are confirmed by a survey conducted among 100 female entrepreneurs in Samarkand region and the city of Tashkent. The majority of respondents dealt primarily with local markets (76.7% of respondents in Samarkand and 60.3% in Tashkent) and few also did business in neighboring areas (21% and 34.4% respectively).<sup>285</sup> Only 2.3% of Samarkand-based and 5.2% of Tashkent businesses exported goods or services to international markets. In interviews, the businesswomen expressed confidence that there is a demand for their products (dried fruit and preserved foods, cotton, silk, wool and dairy products) and services (handicraft production, embroidery and ceramics) outside of Uzbekistan, but the “current infrastructure for export activities is too complex and so small businesses are not

<sup>284</sup> Institute for Social Research, *Results of Sociologic Survey*, 14.

<sup>285</sup> UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Achievements and Prospects for the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], (United Nations, 2009), 24.

yet able to enter international markets on their own.”<sup>286</sup> Uzbekistan has the lowest percentage of exporting firms in the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region, with only 2% exporting as compared to 30% importing.<sup>287</sup> Significantly, small enterprises are much less likely to export than large ones (15% of large firms as compared to only 1% of small firms), which further suggests that women’s businesses may be particularly disadvantaged in entering foreign markets given their smaller size. Assessment is needed of the institutional and logistical barriers in cross-border transport that female entrepreneurs face as well as analysis of how such issues could be addressed under projects on transport and SME support.

**Gender differences in access to and use of public transportation.** Private car ownership has increased in Uzbekistan since 2005. According to the results of a recent welfare assessment, conducted in the Navoi, Fergana and Kashkadarya regions, almost a third of surveyed households own cars (30.3%).<sup>288</sup> Surveys conducted in other regions (Bukhara, Djizak and Samarkand) found that 31% of urban households and 25% of rural households have cars, minibuses or jeeps. Rural households are more likely to use bicycles (31% of households as compared to 16% of urban households).<sup>289</sup> No information is available about gender patterns of vehicle ownership or use, but observers note that women are much less likely to drive cars than men in Uzbekistan, and this is supported by the common viewpoint that driving is a “male” profession.

Surveys conducted among rural populations revealed few gender differences in people’s perceptions about transport use. The majority of respondents in the Tashkent and Namangan regions (72.2%) reported that men and women use public transport equally, and when asked specifically about their use of public transport to travel to hospitals and polyclinics, a high percentage of both women and men affirmed that they use public transport and not private cars.<sup>290</sup> The majority of participants in household surveys in Karakalpakstan and the Bukhara region, however, stated that men use transport more often than women. Concerning travel to healthcare institutions, it appears that men were slightly more likely to use public transport and women more likely to use private cars. It was also noted that men usually accompany children when traveling by public transport.<sup>291</sup> In general, public transport is not well developed in Uzbekistan, and people are more likely to use privately-run minibuses that operate regular services.

No significant gender differences were found in respondents’ answers to questions about reasons for using public transport (travel to markets, schools or other public agencies, to engage in small business activities etc.), frequency of transport use, distance travelled or number of stops. It appears that respondents were not asked about the existence of any social prohibitions on unaccompanied women and girls using public transport or whether respondents travel on foot—all of which might have revealed greater gender differences. Given the fact that women are infrequent drivers in Uzbekistan, and are more often engaged in taking care of household and family needs rather than formal employment, it is

<sup>286</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 24.

<sup>287</sup> World Bank/International Finance Corporation (World Bank Group), *Running a Business in Uzbekistan, Enterprise Surveys Country Note Series*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008), 3.

<sup>288</sup> Institute for Social Research, *Results of Sociologic Survey*, 14.

<sup>289</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 14.

<sup>290</sup> Islohotkonsaltservis Group of Companies (IKS Group), *Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program*, draft Poverty and Socio-Economic Assessment, ADB Uzbekistan (Tashkent: IKS Group, 2011), 27.

<sup>291</sup> IKS Group, *Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program*, Poverty and Socio-Economic Assessment, ADB Uzbekistan (Tashkent: IKS Group, 2010), 27–28.

important to determine what their specific transport needs are as well as whether there are any constraints on women's mobility that prevent them from accessing transport on equal terms with men. The level of satisfaction with current transport should also be determined for both women and men. As a general rule, women most often travel for household needs and are more likely to make relatively short trips with frequent stops. For this reason, long waiting times and poor service place additional burdens on women.

Finally, the limited availability of long-distance transport may have a specific impact on girls' access to education. The Welfare Improvement Strategy for 2008–2010 notes that children from remote areas, especially girls, face difficulties attending secondary and vocational educational institutions due to long travel times and the high cost of travel. The situation is also true for higher educational institutions, most of which are located in regional centers or in Tashkent. Apparently, a travel card scheme for students, paid for by the local budget, is under consideration to assist young people in remote areas to access schools and vocational education establishments.<sup>292</sup> If such a program is adopted, it will be important to ensure that girls have equal access to such travel cards and that other barriers to girls' mobility (such as safety on public transport) are also addressed.

Men's and women's distinct views on such issues as the cost of transportation and the efficiency and safety of transportation stops and stations, should also be solicited when determining investment priorities in the transport sector.

**The cost of public transport and women's mobility.** The affordability of public transportation is another issue with important gender dimensions, given women's lower incomes, limited claims on household resources and likelihood to travel with frequent stops (thus requiring payment of multiple fares). A welfare assessment in several regions showed that expenses for transport (including payments for gasoline) accounted for the largest portion of household expenses and amounted to 77,000 soum and 79,000 soum (per month) for urban and rural households, respectively.<sup>293</sup> In other regions, monthly expenditures on transport were somewhat lower but still made up 10% of total household expenditures (55,440 soum for poor households and 71,710 soum for non-poor households).<sup>294</sup> Findings from Karakalpakstan and the Bukhara region showed that household expenses on transport were lower as respondents more often traveled on foot. Information was not provided about what portion of total transport expenses was used for public transportation and what portion was used to purchase fuel for household vehicles. It is also likely that rural populations rely less on public transportation because such services are underdeveloped.

With the introduction of private minivans, municipal transport services have received few investments and declined in many cities. For instance, it has been estimated that Samarkand requires 150 additional buses.<sup>295</sup> In Bukhara, where once there were 25 city bus routes, 21 were suspended when minibuses were introduced.<sup>296</sup> Typically, such minibuses are operated privately and may charge more than public transport. Private minibuses do not necessarily honor any benefits or subsidies that might be available to low-income travelers on municipal transport.

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<sup>292</sup> Institute for Social Research, *Results of Sociologic Survey*, 34.

<sup>293</sup> Institute for Social Research, *Results of Sociologic Survey*, 17.

<sup>294</sup> IKS Group, *Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2* (2011), 20.

<sup>295</sup> IKS Group, *OSCE Project on Transport Issues*, Final Report [in Russian], OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 2007), 110.

<sup>296</sup> IKS Group, *OSCE Project on Transport Issues*, 110.

Further analysis is needed to determine whether public transport is currently affordable for the populations that rely on it and also whether it is accessible to women in terms of cost. It is not clear whether women's reported lower use of public transport is related to the fact that they cannot afford to pay current prices. Likewise, it is not known whether any schemes exist to subsidize travel costs for women considered vulnerable (e.g., single mothers, females heading households, widows, women with disabilities).

**The transport and construction industries are male-dominated in terms of policy making and employment.** The fact that the transport and construction sectors are male-dominated has implications for women's participation in decision-making in these sectors and the extent to which they are positioned to benefit from investments in these spheres, especially in employment. There is no single state entity overseeing the transport sector, but the Cabinet of Ministers is the coordinating body. As noted, there are very few women in ministerial positions in national government or in regional and local governance and policy-setting positions. In the public sector, there are currently no women in upper management of the Republic Road Fund (under the Ministry of Finance), Uzavtoyul, the state-held company responsible for the construction and renovation of public roads,<sup>297</sup> or Uzbekistan Railways.<sup>298</sup> Of the five current national and sector focal points for the CAREC Program in Uzbekistan, there is one woman: a deputy department head of the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Trade and Investment.

Very few women work for the Road Fund or construction companies. Female employees tend to occupy administrative positions and as support staff (secretaries, cleaners or nurses) and thus have little influence on decision-making. The limited presence of women in the field is connected to a low level of awareness overall of gender issues and the fact that management does not view gender mainstreaming as a priority. It is important to further identify where project partners and implementers lack the capacity to advance gender aware policies and strategies.

Increased employment in the construction industry has been a direct benefit of road construction and transport improvement projects. In Uzbekistan, as is true in the majority of developing and developed countries, women are underrepresented as workers in both the construction and transport sectors. In 2010, of all working men in Uzbekistan, 15.1% were employed in construction and 8.1% in transport and communications, compared with only 2.1% of all working women in construction and 1.7% of women in transport and communications.<sup>299</sup> In the same year, men represented 89.6% of all employees in construction and 85.3% of those working in transport and communications.<sup>300</sup> There are specific limitations on women's ability to enter these fields. Notably, the Labor Code references an official list of "Work in Dangerous Environments for which Female Labor is Wholly or Partially Prohibited." Among the areas of work included in the list are jobs related to road transport and construction and jobs affiliated with railway and underground subway operations.

Patterns of enrolment in professional institutions also show gender imbalance. In the 2010–2011 academic year, 71.3% of the students in the field of "transport and communications" and 60.4% in "industry and construction" in professional colleges were male.<sup>301</sup> Only 4.8% of all females enrolled in professional colleges were studying transport

<sup>297</sup> See: Web site of Uzavtoyul: com <http://www.uzavtoyul.uz/r/management/>.

<sup>298</sup> The company Web site lists three female department heads: [http://www.uzrailway.uz/rus\\_p\\_8\\_p\\_2.html](http://www.uzrailway.uz/rus_p_8_p_2.html).

<sup>299</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

<sup>300</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*, [in Russian], table 4.6, 159.

<sup>301</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], table 3.14, 134.



and communications and only 17.1% were enrolled in courses related to industry and construction. These figures suggest that few female graduates will have the required skills to find work in these sectors. Still, it is notable that the proportion of women in educational institutions is slightly higher than the number of women employed in each field, which suggests that there may be a possibility for companies to recruit more women to the workforce.

Stereotypes play a role in the jobs that men and women hold in these sectors. In Uzbekistan driving as a business is considered a “male job” that requires a certain physical condition and ability to travel extensively. Although there are a few cases of women commercial drivers in urban areas in Tashkent and the Fergana valley, women drivers do not work on interregional routes that generally bring higher income. When asked about the possibility of women working in road construction companies, virtually all male employees under an ADB project responded positively, but they qualified their responses and noted that “women’s work” would be as cleaners, dish washers or accountants. There is a strong perception that women are “naturally” unsuited for work that involves hard physical labor, operating heavy machinery, living on construction sites and long-term travel.

In addition to changing stereotypes about what work women are capable of performing, other factors could also lead to an increase in female participation in the transport sector if given due consideration. For instance, changes to the transport sector, such as the introduction of more service-related, logistics and support jobs would offer the type of employment that many women might prefer, for example office work with regular hours. Attention could also be given to hiring women for positions that might be considered “lighter” work, for examples as conductors or drivers of municipal transportation. Efforts are also needed to improve women’s access to vocational training in technical fields and build the capacity of employers to develop work environments more likely to attract women.

**Gender dimensions of road safety.** Government programs on roads and transport include some investment into improving road safety with a recognition that road accidents are a leading cause of injury and death in Uzbekistan. Road safety is a concern both for drivers and for populations that live along major roads and use public transport. Surveys conducted in rural areas of the Tashkent and Namangan regions, under an ADB-supported poverty and socioeconomic assessment, found that residents had several specific safety concerns, such as the lack of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, posted speed limits, road signs, street lights and public transport stops and shelters.<sup>302</sup> Participants in household surveys in Karakalpakstan and the Bukhara region also prioritized improving the safety and security of public transportation.<sup>303</sup> These regional findings correspond to conclusions from an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) assessment that highlighted similar issues for pedestrians, such as inadequate road signs, lack of compliance with speed limits, as well as the fact that official data on road accidents is very limited and not analyzed regularly.<sup>304</sup> Such issues concern the entire population but may have a particular impact on the safety of women and children. In general, women are more likely to travel on foot and are often accompanying children, which places them at particular risk for traffic accidents. Many educational

<sup>302</sup> IKS Group, *Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2* (2011), 24, 29, 30.

<sup>303</sup> See generally: IKS Group, *Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2* (2010).

<sup>304</sup> IKS Group, *OSCE Project on Transport Issues*, 151.

institutions have two shifts and so children, as well as women accompanying children, often return home from school after dark.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic injuries account for more than a third of all fatalities caused by unintentional injuries in Uzbekistan.<sup>305</sup> Information about the gender dimensions of road safety is limited, but official statistics indicate that men face more than three times greater risk of dying as a result of accidents, trauma or poisoning than women.<sup>306</sup> In 2005, the male mortality rate due to road traffic accidents was 21.3 per 10,000 as compared to 4.5 per 10,000 for women.<sup>307</sup> The increased mortality rate for men may be a reflection of the prevalence of male drivers. Although WHO figures indicate that the rate of road traffic injuries (fatal and non-fatal) involving alcohol is considerably lower in Uzbekistan than in the European Union, the much higher prevalence of alcoholism and drug abuse among males (in 2007, 91.5% of those diagnosed with alcoholism and 95.2% of those diagnosed with narcotics abuse were men)<sup>308</sup> may be a significant contributing factor to male mortality associated with road accidents.

While such figures are imperfect measures of the gender issues implicated in road safety, they do suggest that greater attention should be given to the reasons behind the disparate impact on men. The WHO Regional Office for Europe and government of Uzbekistan have signed collaborative agreements on injury prevention and a number of activities have been carried out, such as “mass-media campaigns raising awareness on road traffic injuries, seminars and courses on first aid, specific legislative amendments to counteract drink-driving, excessive speed and to promote seat belt and helmet wearing.”<sup>309</sup> There is no indication whether gender-specific messages were used to target males and to counteract risky behaviors associated with gender norms, such as alcohol consumption or lack of seatbelt/safety helmet use among men. Furthermore, WHO projects have focused on the health sector rather than stakeholders in the road and transport industries. Social and educational programs related to road safety could be better integrated into road design projects that address the technical aspects of road safety. The CAREC Corridor Road Investment Program,<sup>310</sup> in fact, includes a gender action plan with a component on informing men and women in the project area about traffic safety. As written, however, the gender action plan does not identify any particular gender dimensions of road safety nor elaborate how public awareness programs will address issues relevant to men and women, boys and girls, specifically.

Issues of women’s personal safety (including risk of robbery, violence or sexual assault) should also be considered in the context of road and transport projects. Transport routes and schedules, the location and condition of transport stations and waiting areas (for example, are they well-lit and visible?) as well as the times of day that women use public transit and how they implicate women’s safety should all be studied in greater detail. Although ADB surveys do not provide analysis of the extent to which women and girls are exposed to physical insecurity, information from rural areas about the lack of transport stops, poor lighting, irregularity of transport service and over-crowding of both waiting areas and transportation suggest that safety is a serious concern. In regard to safe cities

<sup>305</sup> Data for 2009. World Health Organization (WHO), *Progress in the Prevention of Injuries in the WHO European Region: Uzbekistan*, country assessment, 3.

<sup>306</sup> State Committee on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010* [in Russian], table 1.20, 52.

<sup>307</sup> WHO, *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health*, Country Profiles (Geneva, 2011), 53.

<sup>308</sup> WHO, *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health*, 53.

<sup>309</sup> WHO, Regional Office for Europe, *WHO Reports on Fifth annual European Meeting of Violence and Injury Prevention National Focal Persons of the Ministries of Health*, meeting report (Copenhagen, 2010), 6.

<sup>310</sup> Loan 2772, Second CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program—Project 1.

projects, UNWomen notes that “initiatives encouraging safe public transit for women and girls should not be limited to improving motorized forms of transport. That is, well-maintained footpaths, pedestrian streets, well-lit sidewalks, bicycle lanes... are all integral ways of making cities safe for women and girls, as well as making them more friendly and livable in general. In concert with these efforts, public transit systems in particular must be planned and designed to accommodate women’s specific needs in terms of the routes they travel, the times of day they depend on public transit, the places they wait for public transit, and the places they get dropped off by public transit.”<sup>311</sup>

**Unclear links between gender, transport sector work, sexually transmitted infections, and human trafficking.** An important priority for ADB infrastructure projects is to ensure that the improvement of transport corridors does not also facilitate the movement of illegal goods, the spread of diseases, or an increase in illicit practices such as commercial sex work or human trafficking. In Uzbekistan, gender action plans under CAREC projects include awareness-raising and prevention activities on HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections and human trafficking. Specific activities have included: (1) a needs assessment conducted among local hokimiyat and mahallas to identify current social conditions, including reproductive health issues; (2) a round table for representatives of the police, healthcare workers and the project management unit on HIV prevention; and (3) a training session for male construction workers on sexual health. While these are all important initiatives, it is not clear how they address the gender dimensions of the HIV epidemic or human trafficking. Furthermore, critical links between each of these social problems and the transport sector have not been sufficiently established in the local context.

More than half of newly diagnosed cases of HIV are among males, and the dominant mode of transmission is injecting drug use (67% of newly reported cases in 2010 where transmission mode was known) followed by heterosexual contact (31%).<sup>312</sup> It has been recommended that greater attention be given to the different risk factors and impacts of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among men and women, with particular attention to risk groups such as labor migrants and trafficked persons.<sup>313</sup> However, there is insufficient information to establish that (male) truck drivers or road construction and transport workers engage in high-risk behaviors or are at a particular risk for STIs. Nor is it clear that commercial sex is a primary vector for the spread of HIV infection. Further surveillance and vulnerability mapping on HIV/AIDS in Uzbekistan is needed to identify the gender issues that should be addressed through prevention work.

The government has taken steps to address the issue of trafficking in persons, through the passage of a law, development of a national action plan, provision of assistance to victims and promoting greater public awareness of the problem.<sup>314</sup> While it has been documented that human trafficking operates via border crossings from Uzbekistan and within the country’s borders, and that it makes use of roads and railways, there is also considerable legal movement of migrant workers using these same corridors and forms of transport. There has been little concrete mapping of the populations at risk for trafficking from and

<sup>311</sup> UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), “Safe Public Transit for Women and Girls,” Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women and Girls, <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/252-safe-public-transit-for-women-and-girls-.html>.

<sup>312</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe, *Uzbekistan HIV/AIDS Country Profile* (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2011).

<sup>313</sup> Somach and Rubin, *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*, 60.

<sup>314</sup> The Law on Combating Human Trafficking, adopted on 18 March 2008. According to Presidential Decree No. PP-911 of 08 July, 2008, *On Measures to Improve the Efficiency of Combating Human Trafficking*, a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking is adopted every two years.

within Uzbekistan, including the mapping of gender-based risk factors or the methods and transit corridors employed by traffickers. Moreover, human trafficking shares many links with illegal migration, commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, all issues that have clear gender components but about which there is very limited information in Uzbekistan. Generalized awareness-raising projects are useful, but they are much less effective than campaigns that are based on research and analysis of the problem and that target specific risk groups or behaviors.

### 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB transport projects

| Start year | Project Title<br>Loan Number                            | Gender Classification | Main activities under GAP   |
|------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| 2011       | CAREC Corridor 2<br>Road Investment<br>Program<br>L2635 | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender sensitivity training for residents, hokimiyats, mahallas.</li> <li>• Livelihood training for men and women.</li> <li>• Support local association of women entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Collect sex-disaggregated data on road stakeholders.</li> <li>• New jobs created for women</li> <li>• Creation of core group of women leaders.</li> </ul> |
| 2010       | CAREC Corridor 2<br>Road Investment<br>Program<br>L2746 | SGB                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender sensitivity training for residents, hokimiyats, mahallas</li> <li>• Livelihood training for men and women</li> <li>• Collect sex-disaggregated data on road stakeholders</li> </ul>   |

### 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to transport in Uzbekistan and suggested key questions to consider.

**Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation.** Also, consult best practices for developing gender sensitive projects in the transport sector.

- ✓ Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to transport? For example, how are restrictions on women's mobility (due to such factors as poor quality feeder roads or availability and cost of transportation) implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprise?
- ✓ Can links be made between ADB projects to develop roadside infrastructure and projects on women's economic empowerment? For instance, projects to support female entrepreneurs could be included within road construction and rehabilitation projects to ensure that women's businesses are included among roadside enterprises.
- ✓ Has ADB engaged with the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality in consultations and project planning?

- ✓ Have projects that address women specific needs in terms of mobility and transport been considered (e.g. rehabilitation of local and feeder roads, provision of transportation on routes used by primarily women)?

**Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring and in the collection of endline data in order to show the gender impacts of transport projects.**

- ✓ Have assessments been conducted on male and female transport patterns, such as representation among drivers and pedestrians, and the reasons for such choices? Are there any specific barriers to women's or men's mobility (e.g. certain roads are not accessible; cost of fuel and transportation; limited coverage to rural areas social prohibitions on travel; etc.)? Have women and men been polled about their satisfaction with current transport options?
- ✓ Are indicators and assessment methodologies used to measure the effect of road improvement projects on the lives of women and girls (including in such areas as access to markets, education, health services, income-earning opportunities)?
- ✓ Have surveys been conducted on use of public transportation disaggregated by sex, including such issues as accessibility of urban and rural transport for women and men in terms of cost and timetables? Are specific groups, such as single parents, students, the elderly and persons with disabilities included?
- ✓ Is sex-disaggregated data collected on the incidence of road accidents and fatalities, among drivers, passengers and pedestrians?
- ✓ Have studies been conducted of the specific vulnerabilities of men working in the transport sector to HIV/AIDS and other STIs? Have surveys been undertaken to identify the nexus between increased mobility, labor migration, commercial sex work and human trafficking in Uzbekistan?
- ✓ Are targets for job creation for women related to assessments of women's current representation in key industries, either as employees in construction companies or as entrepreneurs? How will improvements in women's economic opportunities be measured?

**Promote participation of women in design and implementation of transport projects.** Additionally, take into consideration the perspectives of men and women regarding road construction and transportation.

- ✓ Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision-making about transport and road construction? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their domestic role that results in specific travel needs, for example to markets, schools, healthcare facilities etc.?
- ✓ Do transport projects take into consideration the development of corresponding roadside infrastructure, such as sanitary facilities and facilities specifically for people travelling with children?
- ✓ Have women's NGOs that advocate on behalf of specific groups of women (women with disabilities, single mothers, self-employed women, women in

rural regions etc.) been included in consultations with the government? With ADB?

- ✓ How will the gender dimensions of road safety be addressed? What specific messages and initiatives will be directed towards men's risk for road-related accidents and fatalities?
- ✓ Do road safety initiatives also take into consideration issues of women's personal safety as pedestrians and transport users, for example in terms of pedestrian crossings, visible and well-lighted transport stops, transportation timetables, over-crowding on public transportation etc.? Is consideration also given to the safety issues of adult pedestrians or transport users and the children traveling with them?
- ✓ What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?

**Within transport projects, create opportunities for income generation and employment for women.**

- ✓ What types of income-generating activities do women in the target area engage in? Do these include small businesses or other activities that could be expanded or supported through greater access to feeder roads or major highways?
- ✓ What kinds of measures could be taken to improve women's access to income generating activities connected to roadside infrastructure improvements, such as in highway rest stops, the hospitality and tourism industries etc.?
- ✓ Can women be encouraged and supported to take a greater role as owners and/or operators of transport services? Can women be supported to start businesses in new industries that are connected to road development, such as auto parts and fuel retail services, maintenance services or road-side rest stops?
- ✓ Identify any constraints facing women in home-based, micro and small-scale enterprises that are specifically related to limitations on mobility. What business opportunities could women take advantage of if they had improved access to markets?
- ✓ What specific constraints do women with established businesses face in terms of accessing larger markets, transport logistics or export strategies? Can these issues be addressed within activities on job creation for women in transport projects, for example through educational and training programs?
- ✓ Can women be encouraged and supported to gain employment within transport and construction companies? How can employers be encouraged and supported to recruit women? What measures are taken to counter stereotypes among employers about "women's work"?

**Support key employers in the transport sector to undertake effective gender mainstreaming of the work environment.**

- ✓ What is the representation of women on the staff of key institutions implicated in road and transport projects (for example, the Republic Road Fund, Uzavtoyul, Uzbekistan Railways and others)? What is the representation of women on staff of ADB implementing partners and consultants? What positions do women hold?
- ✓ Have there been any initiatives to identify reasons for low participation related to the demand or supply of professional women?
- ✓ Have measures been taken to address any barriers to women's participation? Or have efforts been made to invest in projects that will have a greater impact on women's employment opportunities (for instance, in developing models of customer service)? Are workplace policies in place that support work and family life balance?
- ✓ What measures can be included in project design to address prevailing attitudes and gender stereotypes about women's potential to be employed in the construction and transport industries? How will progress toward dispelling stereotypes be measured?
- ✓ What actions are being taken to work with employers to change attitudes and hiring practices and facilitate the hiring of women in non-traditional jobs?
- ✓ Is professional training to aid women to enter non-traditional fields included in the project design? What additional support will be offered women, such as career counselling, job placement, mentoring?

**Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in transport-related planning and analysis.**

- ✓ Are gender-sensitive information, and sex-disaggregated data, on mobility, transport patterns, costs and satisfaction with transport options regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- ✓ Among government officials, municipal leaders, ministries and employees, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women in terms of transport options? Are management and staff of executing agencies informed about women needs and the agency's responsibilities toward women?
- ✓ Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyse questions about the gender aspects of transport infrastructure improvement and the implications for project design?
- ✓ What is the representation of women either in leadership positions in the transport sector or on the staff of executing agencies? What barriers have prevented women from holding such positions? What opportunities are

there to support increased participation by women in professional, technical and decision-making positions?

## **E. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Private Sector Development**

Since 2005, support for entrepreneurship, and particularly the development of small businesses, has been a key priority, since private enterprise is increasingly becoming a major economic driver in Uzbekistan. In 2011, small business and private enterprise combined made up 54% of the GDP, with micro and small firms alone accounting for 33.7% of GDP.<sup>315</sup> According to official statistics, small enterprises employ 74.5% of the working population, just over 70% of whom are individual entrepreneurs and just under 30% of whom are engaged in micro and small businesses.<sup>316</sup>

New legislation and state programs to create an environment supportive of private enterprise and develop a market economy have meant that opportunities to start a business have improved in many ways. However, World Bank surveys of the business environment identify several obstacles that still hinder small and medium enterprise (SME) development, including: informal payments (related to licensing and inspections) and inadequacies in the electrical power infrastructure that lead directly to lost profit (surveyed firms reported experiencing six power outages a month, on average).<sup>317</sup> The underdeveloped financial structure is also unable to meet business demands for credit and other financial products. While such constraints affect small businesses run by both men and women, female entrepreneurs feel a greater impact due to differences in the size and capacity of their businesses, their spheres of operation, and due to prevalent gender stereotypes.

It is useful at the outset to establish how micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are classified in Uzbekistan. Three primary national laws create the legal framework for entrepreneurship,<sup>318</sup> and enterprises are classified both by the size (number of employees) and type of activity. For a fuller overview of the SME classification system, see Appendix 2 to this assessment. Definitions exist for individual entrepreneurs/sole proprietors, micro enterprises and small enterprises but not for “women’s business” or “women’s entrepreneurship.” For the purposes of this assessment, “women’s micro and small enterprises” or “women’s businesses” will refer to women as individual entrepreneurs or enterprises established, owned and operated by women.

### **1. Relevant government policies and commitments**

Government commitments related to SME development have not been gender specific; rather a number of decrees and policies have been adopted that improve the conditions for starting and running a business generally and separate programs have focused on increasing women’s employment opportunities, in part through the development of micro and home-based businesses. Several policy directives have aimed to improve women’s access to credit.

<sup>315</sup> Mahalla (news portal), “Major portion of Uzbekistan’s GDP is Produced in the Private Sector,” [in Russian], 05 March 2012, <http://maxala.org/economika/4013-osnovnaya-dolya-vvp-uzbekistana-proizvoditsya-v-negosudarstvennom-sektore.html#.T4r3phx9nld>.

<sup>316</sup> Dono Abdurazakova, “Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan,” (presentation, UNECE Policy Seminar on Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia, Geneva, 19 September 2011).

<sup>317</sup> World Bank Group, *Running a Business in Uzbekistan, Enterprise Surveys Country Note Series*, 5.

<sup>318</sup> The Law on Private Enterprise, the Law on Entrepreneurship, and the Law on Guarantees and Freedoms for Entrepreneurial Activity.



Presidential decrees, resolutions and national programs to improve conditions for the operation of private businesses<sup>319</sup> generally recognize the major issues facing entrepreneurs and include measures to facilitate small business growth, such as the use of “single window” services for business registration, permits and customs procedures.<sup>320</sup> There is no indication that such legal acts take into consideration the gender-specific barriers that women face in doing business. For example, the 2011 national program Year of Support for Small Business and Private Enterprise focused on such issues as: improving connectivity to communication networks, electricity, gas, water and heat supplies; improving access to land for commercial purposes; reducing unnecessary regulations that may restrict activities of small businesses; and increasing access to commercial bank loans.<sup>321</sup> It does not appear that the program included gender analysis nor identified how the types of small businesses run by women could be particularly affected by the kinds of deficiencies outlined above. The program stimulated the creation of 22,800 SMEs (not including farms)<sup>322</sup>; however sex-disaggregated data on the enterprises were not available to this assessment.

Other separate national programs have been dedicated to improving employment opportunities for women with provisions on entrepreneurship. For example, the National Program on Women’s Employment and Regional Programs for Women’s Employment (2005-2007 and 2009-2010) aimed to increase jobs for women in every region, primarily through small business development and promotion of cottage industry. Programs under the Year of Rural Development and Improvement (2009) included business skills training for unemployed women.

In addition, special projects on women’s microcredit have been implemented, and the National Bank of Uzbekistan has issued several directives on women’s access to credit. Such schemes are separate from the kinds of policy aimed at SMEs generally. Women’s entrepreneurial activity in Uzbekistan does require specialized support at the moment, but it is important going forward to ensure that women in business have access to the same resources as men and that the considerations of “women’s SMEs” are integrated into general policy.

## **2. Gender issues related to small and medium enterprises and private sector development**

Development of the MSME sector can play a significant role in improving women’s economic independence. There is considerable interest and capacity among women to create their own businesses in Uzbekistan. A 2007 survey conducted by the Business Women’s Association of Kokand found that ten times more women wanted to be involved in business than the number of women currently engaged in commercial activities. The number of women expressing an interest in starting a business was five times greater than

<sup>319</sup> For example: *On Measures for Improving the System of Legal Protection of Business Entities* of 14 June 2005; *On Additional Measures Stimulating Development of Micro Firms and Small Enterprises* of 20 July 2005; *On Additional Measures to Establish a Favorable Business Environment for the Further Development of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* of 24 August 2011; *On Measures to Eliminate Bureaucratic Barriers and Further Enhance the Entrepreneurial Freedom* of 25 August 2011

<sup>320</sup> *On Measures to Eliminate Bureaucratic Barriers and Further Enhance the Entrepreneurial Freedom*, No. PP-1604 of 25 August 2011.

<sup>321</sup> *On the State Program Year of Support for Small Business and Private Enterprise*, Presidential Decree of 07 February 2011.

<sup>322</sup> Abdurazakova, “Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.”

the number of men.<sup>323</sup> For future programming in the MSME sector, it is important to consider two facets of supporting women in the private sector. First, greater attention should be given to addressing the gender-based constraints that women face in terms of initiating, managing and growing a business. An equally important issue is the extent to which the MSME sector provides employment opportunities for women, in terms of sufficient work places as well as the quality of such employment (equal pay for equal value work, decent work conditions, safe work places and opportunities for advancement).

**Limited quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data relevant to private enterprise.** Gender analysis in the area of micro, small and medium enterprise development is complicated by the fact that statistical data about women entrepreneurs are incomplete. National business registration is not sex-disaggregated, and so there is no official information on the number or types of businesses run by women. Furthermore, there is no consensus definition for what constitutes a “women’s business,” and specifically whether it includes private enterprises legally registered to female owners, enterprises managed by women or employing primarily women or whether it includes self-employed women engaged in various business activities, including farming.

Data about women’s MSME participation varies by source, and discrepancies in the number of women’s businesses are attributable to the use of different definitions and methodologies. According to estimates of the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan there were 21,000 female entrepreneurs in 2005.<sup>324</sup> Data from the Women’s Committee indicated there were close to 16,000 women entrepreneurs in 2008.<sup>325</sup> Due to lack of official statistics, some research has relied on proxy data. For example, in 2006 women represented 23.1% of Chamber of Commerce members,<sup>326</sup> suggesting that women are involved in under a quarter of all private enterprises. Recent information from the Business Women’s Association described the organization’s training program, in which more than 30,000 women have participated. From these participants, “around 75% have started their own business”<sup>327</sup>—equivalent to roughly 22,500 business ventures (not all of which are necessarily still in operation). Most information about women’s experience in entrepreneurship is based on surveys and samples of limited scope.

Qualitative and longitudinal information would be useful to assess the viability of women’s entrepreneurial activities, since the long-term prospects for women’s businesses created with the assistance of national and donor projects is not clear. Data compiled by the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan gives some indication of the general dynamic in terms of the successes and failures of business start-ups. As of July 2011, there were 522,300 legal entities registered as small businesses, of which only 488,100 were active.<sup>328</sup> In the first six months of 2011, 22,800 new small businesses were

<sup>323</sup> Alimdjanova, *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*, 9.

<sup>324</sup> Dildora Alimbekova, Chairperson of the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan, “The Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan: Tadbirkor Ayol,” [in Russian] (presentation, round table on “Gender and Economy,” International Conference on Strengthening Sub-regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia and the Future Role of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, Astana, 26 May 2005).

<sup>325</sup> Alimdjanova, *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*, 27.

<sup>326</sup> UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Achievements and Prospects for the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], (United Nations, 2009), 9.

<sup>327</sup> Gulnora Makhmudova, Chairperson of the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan, “Women in Business: Success in Work and Prosperity in the Home,” [in Russian], *Narodnoe Slovo*, 20 March 2012, [http://narodnoeslovo.uz/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=828:god-semiy&catid=4:economy&Itemid=10](http://narodnoeslovo.uz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=828:god-semiy&catid=4:economy&Itemid=10).

<sup>328</sup> Zulfiya Tukhtakhodjaeva, Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan, “Women and Business in Uzbekistan: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges in the Development of Female

registered, and in the same period 12,200 such enterprises were liquidated (only a quarter of which entered voluntary liquidation).<sup>329</sup> Sex-disaggregated data would also be especially useful for evaluating the contribution of women entrepreneurs to the economy.

**Differences in male and female entrepreneurship.** Despite insufficient sex-disaggregated data on the number of entrepreneurs and size of enterprises, it is clear that much of women's entrepreneurship differs from men's business enterprises.

The World Bank estimates that women's participation in the management of private enterprises in Uzbekistan is among the lowest in the Eastern European and Central Asian region. Only 11% of surveyed firms have a female top manager.<sup>330</sup> The rate of female participation in enterprise ownership and in the workforce is higher, however, and closer to regional averages. Close to 40% of firms have "some female participation in ownership," but, here, the World Bank survey aggregates small, medium and large firms. The fact that just under half of all firms in Uzbekistan are sole proprietorships suggests that most enterprises are small in scale.

Most female entrepreneurs are involved in small-scale production of consumer goods, retail trade or professional services (often in health and education).<sup>331</sup> The enterprises started by and operated by women generally take the form of informal cottage industry or home-based production. In rural regions, in particular, women's businesses are mainly small and microenterprises, and women engage in agricultural production (cotton, grain, fruit, vegetables, flowers, livestock and poultry), handicrafts and souvenir production, sewing and garment production, baking and sweet making.<sup>332</sup> Much of the development of this sector is attributable to official programs on women's employment that have promoted work that is compatible with women's domestic responsibilities. It is possible that women prefer smaller scale business ventures or, due to limited access to capital and finances, they have little choice. A survey of 100 businesswomen in the Samarkand region and Tashkent city found that almost two-thirds had founded businesses after 2000 and most were microenterprises, with fewer than ten employees (74% in Samarkand oblast and 52% in Tashkent).<sup>333</sup>

Microenterprises and home-based work represent a very important means of income generation for women and are a form of work that can be reconciled with the real constraints that women face, such as family obligations, limited time, mobility and skills in business management and discriminatory practices in the labor market. However, characterizing such work as a "business" or "enterprise" is also misleading. Many microenterprises are more representative of self-employment or sub-contracting schemes. Perhaps more importantly, while home-based work and microenterprises respond to the realities of women's lives in Uzbekistan, particularly women in rural regions, these businesses have limited potential for growth and expansion, create few jobs for the local

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Entrepreneurship," [in Russian] (presentation, UNECE Policy Seminar on Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia, Geneva, 19 September 2011).

<sup>329</sup> Tukhtakhodjaeva, "Women and Business in Uzbekistan."

<sup>330</sup> World Bank/International Finance Corporation, *Uzbekistan Country Profile 2008*, 13.

<sup>331</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, vi.

<sup>332</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 9.

<sup>333</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 21.

population and may not necessarily provide women with skills and business networks that could be applicable to future employment. There is also insufficient analysis of the extent to which such enterprises are profitable, whether they are responsive to market demands, how much income they bring to households and whether, ultimately, women are controlling decisions about how such income is used in the family.

Focusing on women's entrepreneurship at the micro level, without measures to assist women to expand their business in other sectors, also risks reinforcing stereotypes about what kind of work is "suitable" for women and thus perpetuating the impediments to women's employment that currently exist. As noted in the sections of this assessment on water supply and sanitation and energy, it is not clear whether programs to support women's self-employment also take into consideration the capacity of the basic infrastructure to support the expansion of home-based work into small and medium businesses, especially in rural areas.

**Women's businesses are less diverse in terms of economic activity.** In addition to the fact that women's businesses are characterized as small, or even microenterprises, they also occupy specific sectors, concentrating on trade, services and small-scale production. If agricultural work is also included, almost a third of women's enterprises are engaged in farming. The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan estimates that 36% of female entrepreneurs are in services, 32% in farming, 30% in trade and only 2% in industry or production.<sup>334</sup> When agricultural work is excluded, more than half of women entrepreneurs (50.5%) are working in home-based enterprises on handicrafts (spinning, carpet weaving, embroidery, making of national costumes) and food production.<sup>335</sup> A more detailed division shows the following areas in which women are most often running businesses: trade and services (60%); handicrafts (20%); consultancy services (auditing, legal services, tourist services etc., 10%); and other small industries (10%).<sup>336</sup> Of note, analysis of business opportunities for rural women identified the following as potential areas: processing/packaging of agricultural products, cattle farming, catering and managing cafeterias, and public transportation.<sup>337</sup>

Official data show that women represent 38% of individual entrepreneurs overall. Men represent the majority of individual entrepreneurs in every sector.

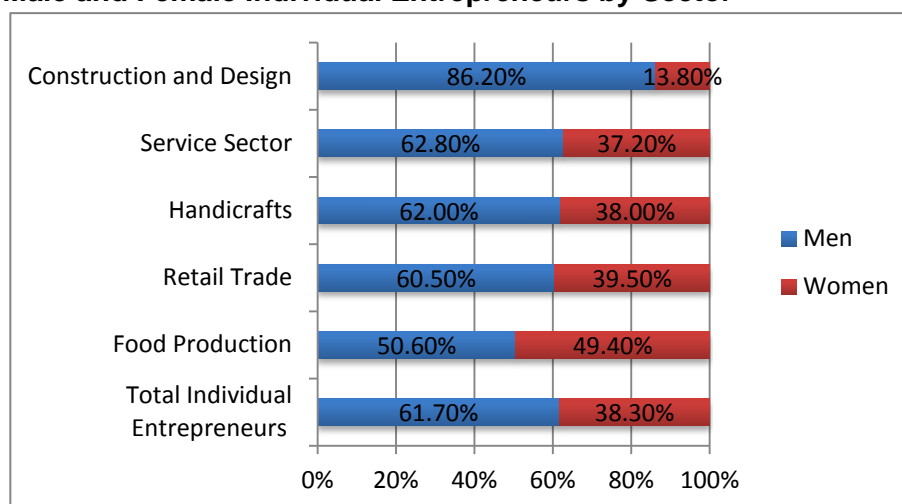
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<sup>334</sup> Dildora Alimbekova, "The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan."

<sup>335</sup> Alimdjanova, *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*, 27.

<sup>336</sup> Abdurazakova, "Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan."

<sup>337</sup> Institution Building Partnership Programme (IBPP)-Support of Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in Remote Districts of Uzbekistan project newsletter, "Women Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas: Opportunities, Constraints, Mitigation Measures," (European Commission, 2010), 3.

**Figure 5. Male and Female Individual Entrepreneurs by Sector**

Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010* [in Russian], (statistical collection, Tashkent 2012), (data for 2010), table 8.1, 191.

A study of male and female entrepreneurs engaged in trade found that men were starting businesses in this sector at a faster rate than women (an annual increase in employment for men of 8% as compared to 2% for women).<sup>338</sup> Profitability of male and female enterprises also differed, with annual income growth of 120% for men and 115.5% for women. Perhaps more significant than actual income, the same survey found that despite earning more, men spend less on the household than women; “women basically spend their entire income for family needs, while men [spend] 80% on average.”<sup>339</sup>

#### **Box 5. Women Entrepreneurs in Farming**

Women working in agriculture, including female entrepreneurs, represent an important economic resource. In many ways, the issues that women in agricultural businesses face are similar to those encountered by entrepreneurs in rural areas with small-scale enterprises. For instance, women farmers generally do not hold legal title to land and also lack access to other productive resources, such as credit and microfinance, equipment, technology and even water.

Female farmers are particularly in need of specialized training and education on such topics as the establishment of cooperatives and unions; legal literacy; specific types of management of leasehold farms, taxes, credits, legislation on development of farming; increasing agricultural knowledge; business management; insurance systems; business development, management and planning.

It is important that the needs and priorities of this segment of women entrepreneurs are taken into consideration, from the perspective of MSME development and in connection with agricultural reform projects, and farming planning and privatization schemes. ADB could promote the establishment of a permanent dialogue with women farmers to identify gender-specific problems connected with farming and to help overcome inequalities in the sector. One mechanism to encourage dialog could be the creation of a forum of women farmers, with joint representation of the Women’s Committee, local business women’s associations and structures that provide assistance to farmers (for example, farmer’s associations and

<sup>338</sup> International Global Network, Central Asia Division, *Gender Aspect of Central Asia Trade Policy in the Context of WTO Accession* (interregional report, 2008), 26.

<sup>339</sup> International Global Network, *Gender Aspect of Central Asia Trade Policy*, 26.

chambers of commerce). Such an expert group could serve as an informational and consultative body that would receive information about reform in the agriculture sector and, by taking gender into consideration, could improve rural business development and increase the status of women. Likewise, better links could be supported between female entrepreneurs, representatives of local administrations, branches of the Women's Committee, and agricultural institutes.

Differences in the size, characteristics and types of business that women operate suggests that business support services should be tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs relevant to the sectors in which they operate. Furthermore, efforts are needed to diversify the sectors in which women have businesses and to assist them to enter nontraditional and high-level industries. A European Commission project on supporting women's entrepreneurship in remote areas has explored the possibility of assisting women to form sectoral business clusters in order to take advantage of economies of scale.<sup>340</sup> The same project has introduced concepts of business incubators, an initiative that might help women to expand their businesses generally, or which could target women for specialized training and equipment to expand within a particular industry.

**Women's motivations for starting a business.** The profile of female entrepreneurs offers insights into their motivations for starting a business and their potential for success. A 2008 survey of 100 women with enterprises in the Samarkand region and Tashkent city offers a representative profile of female entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.<sup>341</sup> The majority of women started their business after age 40 (52.5% of respondents), stating that at this age they felt "psychologically ready," had fewer family responsibilities and their families were in need of additional resources. Interestingly, the large majority of women stated that they were motivated to become entrepreneurs for personal reasons and opportunity, rather than out of necessity. More than 73% of respondents stated that they saw opportunities in the market for profitable businesses. Over 72% said they wanted to work for themselves ("be their own boss"), while only 4.2% started a business after losing a job. Such findings are important since they suggest that female entrepreneurs are prepared, highly motivated and thus are well positioned to benefit from training and technical assistance projects.

In terms of previous work history, more than half of the respondents had careers in civil service before starting their own businesses. Interviewees clarified that public sector work was considered especially beneficial since it provided knowledge of how to work within bureaucratic systems and also "served as protection against abuses of power by regulatory agencies."<sup>342</sup> The next largest group of businesswomen had previously worked in other private enterprises where they gained knowledge of specific products and markets. A very small number of women (4% in Samarkand region and 10% in Tashkent) had taken over and invested in pre-existing companies.

Notably, the female entrepreneurs included in the survey employ a considerable number of women. Among the Samarkand-based firms, 60% of employees are women and in Tashkent businesses, the figure is 75%. Both groups show rates of female employment considerably higher than the World Bank calculated averages in small and medium firms (34% and 36% of employees, respectively). Only 5% of the total employees are family

<sup>340</sup> The Support of Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in Remote Districts of Uzbekistan project, carried out in the Surkhandarya and Djizak regions from 2009–2011.

<sup>341</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 21–23.

<sup>342</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 22.

members, and on average each female-owned enterprise created 17 jobs.<sup>343</sup> The high rate of female employment is undoubtedly linked to the fact that women's micro and small enterprises are clustered in spheres that are traditionally considered "female," but the fact remains that promoting women's entrepreneurship is an important tool to increase women's employment opportunities within the private sector.

Under a separate survey, female entrepreneurs in agricultural businesses expressed a specific interest in learning how to manage their enterprises and create associations, not only to improve their crops but also to create jobs for young people in the community who are at risk of migrating to find work elsewhere.<sup>344</sup> Such studies suggest that women who engage in small business ventures often have a particular interest in and motivation to employ members of the local population. Finally, during interviews with women entrepreneurs in the Samarkand region and Tashkent city, those who were over 55 noted that they were preparing to transfer their businesses to their children, very often to daughters who had already been working in the business. All those who took part in the survey emphasized the importance of supporting young women to enter business (especially in terms of training and access to specialized knowledge) in order to develop female entrepreneurship overall.

**Women face specific barriers in entrepreneurial activities.** Despite many positive characteristics shared by women engaged in micro and small businesses in terms of motivation and level of education, women still face considerable barriers to running and expanding their enterprises. Many of the constraints are felt by all starting entrepreneurs, but even these common issues can have a distinct impact on women. Other barriers are specifically related to women's lower economic status and the greater demands on women's time. Several studies have examined the kinds of difficulties that female entrepreneurs encounter, and the major obstacles can be summarized as follows:<sup>345</sup>

- **Unequal access to financial assets.** Women entrepreneurs have less access to start-up capital and to financial services, such as credit and loan programs, and to financial consulting services. Lack of financing is a major obstacle identified by women entrepreneurs.
- **Bureaucratic obstacles.** Both men and women in the MSME sector face constraints related to taxation, inspections and other required payments. By one estimate, reporting to tax authorities requires 49 person hours annually.<sup>346</sup> Time and capacity are both required to respond to bureaucratic requirements, and women face more severe time constraints due to domestic duties.

The specific lack of preschool facilities in both urban and rural areas means that women with young children are time poor in terms of running a business. Furthermore, because women more often run micro enterprises, they are less likely to have specialized staff or departments to deal with legal regulations and taxation.

<sup>343</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 22.

<sup>344</sup> Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*, 11.

<sup>345</sup> Sources: UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *Achievements and Prospects for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian], (United Nations, 2009); Abdurazakova, "Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan;" Dildora Alimbekova, "The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan;" Support of Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in Remote Districts of Uzbekistan project newsletter; Tukhtakhodjaeva, "Women and Business in Uzbekistan."

<sup>346</sup> Abdurazakova, "Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan."

- **Unequal access to human assets/knowledge and information.** Studies on women entrepreneurs highlight their lack of business skills and difficulties accessing business education—both formal education and training on business start-ups. According to a survey of 100 businesswomen, most had low levels of awareness of national mechanisms to support entrepreneurship. The majority receive information from their accountants (25.5% in Tashkent), business associations (22% in Samarkand), official publications (24.5% in Tashkent) and newspapers.<sup>347</sup> A not insignificant number (22%) receive information from other entrepreneurs, indicating that networking is an important means of information-sharing among businesswomen.

A survey of women in farming enterprises found that the majority had considerable professional knowledge and had received higher education in agricultural technology, but despite this background, most reported they were not informed about agricultural sector reform, knew little about their rights and obligations relating to credit and lacked technical knowledge on such topics as pest control and how to run a business.<sup>348</sup>

Women are in need of specialized training on a number of topics, such as business planning, expanding a business beyond the micro level, evaluating markets and the regulatory framework in Uzbekistan. Women in rural areas are particularly isolated from information and networks and are often unaware of changes in legislation. In rural areas, “educational seminars, trainings and forums are held infrequently.”<sup>349</sup>

- **Unequal access to physical assets/technical resources.** Several studies have found that women in the MSME sector require assistance to help them access new technology. Related to financial constraints and limited access to information, women entrepreneurs are often unable to make use of new equipment or materials. A survey of women entrepreneurs in farming found that of 35 women, only five owned their own machinery and others made use of machine tractor fleets or hired from private owners.<sup>350</sup> The women farmers noted that while they are considerably lower in cost, the machine tractor fleets are in poor repair and lack spare parts. Subsequent breakdowns lead to delays that result in lower crop yield.
- **Traditional cultural perceptions and stereotypes.** Gender norms play different roles in limiting women’s participation in the MSME sector. The gender division of labor means that women must balance entrepreneurship activities with unpaid care work, which consumes a considerable amount of time and personal resources. Additionally, stereotypes and cultural taboos about business, especially large-scale business not being a “feminine” sphere of work, mean that women encounter bias and negative attitudes that men generally do not.
- **Gender neutrality in SME policy making and “invisibility” of women entrepreneurs.** Legal regulations of the business environment are gender neutral, and government and donor programs on MSME development have tended to focus on women in limited and separate pilot projects. “Policies and programmes focus on men because they form a larger portion of the formal [SME] sector.”<sup>351</sup> Women’s

<sup>347</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 9.

<sup>348</sup> Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*, 11.

<sup>349</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 11.

<sup>350</sup> Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*, 8.

<sup>351</sup> Abdurazakova, “Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.”



MSMEs are smaller in number and in scale making them less visible to policy-makers. As a result there are no special incentives or positive measures for women in the areas of taxation, financial services, business registration etc.<sup>352</sup>

The disparate impact of gender-neutral laws and regulations on women in the MSME sector has not been analyzed in detail but there is some suggestion that women entrepreneurs, by the nature of their enterprises, may be affected in substantially different ways. For instance, a focus group participant in an ADB-supported survey noted that there are regulatory complications to operating a home-based business from a rented flat rather than from a privately owned house due to the requirement that the property be registered as a business premises. As a result, very few people in the surveyed regions run businesses from city apartments.<sup>353</sup> Because home-based work has been especially promoted among women, this regulation may have an unintended and negative consequence for women in urban areas.

**Women entrepreneurs have limited access to commercial loans but have greater access to microcredit.** Access to finance is critical in the MSME sector and, as noted above, this problem is especially acute for women who lack both start-up capital and collateral for loans. State support and development of female entrepreneurship is at an early stage, and women do not have the resources that would allow them to expand their operations to the SME level. Official data about the proportion of women among borrowers were calculated in 2002 and have not been up-dated since. At that time, only 15% of microcredit loans were made to women.<sup>354</sup> Based on the expansion of credit options since 2002, through credit unions for example, it is likely that the number of women who have received loans has increased, but it is not clear to what extent the proportion of women among total borrows has improved.

Although the landscape has changed since the early 2000s in terms of options for obtaining credit, the institutional barriers that limit women's access to financial services have changed very little. As noted by the Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan, "most women cannot provide guarantees to the bank because joint (family) property is registered in men's names [and] high interest rates limit the pool of entrepreneurs who are interested in obtaining loans. Inflation is an equally important factor that worries women who do not want to put their businesses at risk."<sup>355</sup>

Several distinct barriers that make access to credit an especially acute problem for women entrepreneurs have been identified:

- **Unequal access to collateral.** Men and women have equal rights to receive credit against real estate and make use other forms of financial borrowing. In practice, women are disadvantaged in terms of access to start-up capital and lack collateral for loans because they do not own income-generating resources. Historically, women were not well positioned during the process of privatization of state enterprises, and consequently they did not gain ownership or land lease rights of firms and farms.

At the household level, the Family Code regulates the ownership rights of spouses and guarantees equal rights to own, use and dispose of joint property. Women have

<sup>352</sup> Tukhtakhodjaeva, "Women and Business in Uzbekistan."

<sup>353</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 106.

<sup>354</sup> Alimbekova, "The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan."

<sup>355</sup> Alimbekova, "The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan."

the right to inherit property equally with men. In reality, however, tradition and culture play a significant role. The wife is generally considered to be “given” to the husband’s household, and thus land and other property is registered in the names of male household members (i.e. the husband, father, brother or son). An ADB-supported survey conducted in three regions of Uzbekistan found that in 77% of households in urban areas, the house or apartment where the family lives is officially registered to a male family member, and in rural areas this figure is 85%.<sup>356</sup> A focus group conducted by ADB with women entrepreneurs—all of whom are members of the National Association of Business Women with Disabilities—revealed that most of the women do not have physical assets in their own names.<sup>357</sup> The few that have legal ownership of property and equipment are unwilling to risk such assets as collateral for bank loans out of fear of losing them if their businesses fail.<sup>358</sup>

Farmers face particular difficulties in accessing loans “because banks do not consider properties in rural areas as liquid, although dekhan, peasants’ farms, and lease farms would in principle qualify as collateral.”<sup>359</sup> Women’s lack of title to such farms means that they would face further complications in obtaining loans. Among banks and credit unions, loans for agricultural purposes represent a small portion of total portfolios.<sup>360</sup>

- **Interest rates and repayment terms.** Because women’s businesses tend to be very small in scale, operate in the informal sector, and may take the form of home-based or irregular (seasonal) work, high interest rates and loan repayment may be especially burdensome. According to a May 2012 assessment, interest rates on SME loans range from 20% to 24% per annum.<sup>361</sup> Women focus group participants expressed the opinion that such interest rates are high, recommending that rates be lowered for clients with good repayment records.<sup>362</sup> The same women also explained that monthly repayments can be difficult since they generally cannot predict the income from their types of businesses.<sup>363</sup>

Women entrepreneurs in farming also face difficulties obtaining financial assistance due to high interest rates. Of female entrepreneurs participating in a survey, only 10% had obtained credit from banks; none had applied to credit unions due to the high interest rates; and most would instead rely on loans or financial assistance from family members.<sup>364</sup>

- **Loan application procedures.** A 2008 survey of female entrepreneurs in two regions found that women are investing in their businesses mainly because they want to keep pace with market conditions and customer needs (64.9% of respondents in Samarkand viloyat and 88% of respondents in Tashkent).<sup>365</sup> However, these entrepreneurs rarely applied for credit, and identified the loan

<sup>356</sup> Pineda, *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*, 20.

<sup>357</sup> Nina Nayar and Dildora Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Project*, Preliminary Report, ADB Uzbekistan (Frankfurt: Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, 2012), 9.

<sup>358</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 9.

<sup>359</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Uzbekistan Country Report*, Gender and Land Rights database, accessed from <http://www.fao.org/gender/landrights/home/en/>.

<sup>360</sup> Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*, 13.

<sup>361</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 9.

<sup>362</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 9.

<sup>363</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 9.

<sup>364</sup> Alimdjanova, *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*, 10.

<sup>365</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 25.

application procedure (as well as collateral) to be particular stumbling blocks for micro and small businesses. It would be useful to further identify the specific difficulties women encounter in applying for loans, which could include the time and cost of drawing up and notarizing documents or the need to travel to urban centers.

- **Limited information and knowledge of financial services.** In general, women engaged in SME “lack awareness about banks and banking products and services.”<sup>366</sup> Women’s lack of knowledge about financial services may be particularly acute in rural regions. Of businesswomen participating in the above-mentioned survey, only 40% of those in the Samarkand sample had ever applied for credit as compared to 54% of those in Tashkent. Among those who had applied for credit in Tashkent, most (78%) were successful, but only 38.2% of those in the Samarkand region obtained loans.<sup>367</sup> The difference in the numbers of businesswomen applying for credit was attributed to the fact that “[w]omen in rural areas lack the knowledge and skills to apply for loans through banks or funds, and so it is much easier for them to borrow through credit unions, family members or friends.”<sup>368</sup>
- **Psychological and cultural barriers.** In addition to the institutional issues outlined above, studies have suggested that cultural attitudes about women in business and women’s lack of confidence in themselves and the banking system limit their access to loans. ADB-led focus groups found that most women engaged in small business who had not applied for loans expressed a lack of trust in banks.<sup>369</sup> This sentiment, when combined with their uncertainty of banking procedures, discouraged them from taking perceived risks in order to grow their businesses. A survey of 100 businesswomen found that in addition to a lack of awareness of micro-lending and technical support for enterprises, they “did not have sufficient confidence in the organizations and agencies that provide business support.”<sup>370</sup> In fact, “often a single failure to obtain credit stopped the women from re-applying for loans instead of them learning from the bitter experience and trying again.”<sup>371</sup>

Due to culture and tradition, even businesswomen may not be able to exercise sole control over assets and decisions about financing. Women may need to seek the permission of a spouse or other family member in order to make key business decisions, a scenario that would unlikely apply to male entrepreneurs. As an ADB assessment noted, “[w]omen are not always comfortable informing their mother-in-laws [*sic*] that they are borrowing from banks creating problems for the loan officers who have to visit the home and business premises for monitoring.”<sup>372</sup>

Due to these limitations, when women entrepreneurs do receive business loans, it is most often through targeted microlending programs. Credit unions were the primary lending agency that women used, but the establishment of the joint-stock commercial bank Mikrocreditbank, under the Law on Microfinance (2006) facilitated greater opportunities for small businesses, especially for women entrepreneurs, to access banking services.

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<sup>366</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 11.

<sup>367</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 24.

<sup>368</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 24.

<sup>369</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 9.

<sup>370</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 9.

<sup>371</sup> UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, 9.

<sup>372</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 13.

### Box 6. Role of Credit Unions in Women's Entrepreneurship

The development of microfinance in Uzbekistan is in part a result of the introduction of credit unions in 2002. When the Law on Credit Unions was adopted, women's NGOs became particularly active in such organizations. As of June 2011, there were 123 active credit unions in Uzbekistan, and 33 national credit unions were established by female entrepreneurs.

From 2005 to 2011, total deposits in credit unions grew from \$4.9 million to about \$150 million, and total loans outstanding increased from about \$6.0 million to about \$177 million. By mid 2011, there were 244,678 credit union members, 46% of whom were female entrepreneurs. More women than men (60%) deposited their savings in credit unions for education, household renovations and family events (weddings). As of January 2011, 46% of all credit union loans were to women.

In July 2011, under instruction from the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, credit unions ceased to accept deposits or extend new loans. Licenses to some credit unions have been revoked in reaction to alleged corrupt practices (double accounting or ponzi-type schemes). Other potential reasons for revoking licenses include a legal and regulatory framework that has not kept pace with the rapid development of credit unions since 2002 and concerns over financial stability, as credit expansion had been rapid and lending rates are high.

The development and growth of credit unions has been a success in the area of women's entrepreneurship. Credit unions were an attractive option for female borrowers since they responded to the types of issues that made women ineligible for bank loans. They attracted clients below the \$10,000 segment and offered "easy access to loans, with simplified procedures, quick approval and disbursement in cash and foreign currency, without collateral."<sup>373</sup> The longterm impact of the restrictions and closures of credit unions on women's economic opportunities is not yet clear.

Sources: ADB, *Financial Sector Assessment for Country Partnership Strategy: Uzbekistan 2012–2016*, Draft (2012); Nina Nayar and Dildora Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Project*, Preliminary Report, ADB Uzbekistan (Frankfurt: Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, 2012).

At a business forum of bankers and entrepreneurs organized by the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan in early 2012, plans were announced to allocate 123.7 billion soum in support of women's entrepreneurship and 2.3 billion soum to recent graduates for business projects. Under the national Year of the Family program for 2012, business partnerships between commercial banks and entrepreneurs will be strengthened, "with a focus on developing family and women's businesses, crafts and other business directions."<sup>374</sup>

The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan plays an advocacy role in assisting female entrepreneurs who have been denied credit by banks. The association "may consider the specific case, examine the business plan and other information about the applicant. If all the arguments are in favor of the specific project, the association can approach the bank and facilitate the issuance of credit. In this regard, the association cooperates with Mikrocreditbank and other major commercial banks."<sup>375</sup>

<sup>373</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 3.

<sup>374</sup> Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "Tashkent Hosts Business Forum of Entrepreneurs and Bankers," [in Russian], February 2012, <http://cbu.uz/ru/press.php?date=2012-02-07%2011%3A56%3A34>.

<sup>375</sup> Makhmudova, "Women in Business: Success in Work and Prosperity in the Home."

The Sabr Center for Social and Economic Development is an example of an NGO that provides microfinance and support for women's micro enterprises in Samarkand viloyat. Since initiating its microfinance program in 2001, the Sabr Center has made 12,373 loans, totaling over €1.3 million, with an average loan of €188. The portfolio consists of 66.7% female borrowers.<sup>376</sup> In addition to providing access to credit, the center offers consultations and support groups as well as training and educational programs. Data as of 2010 indicated that most entrepreneurs receiving microcredit were in trade (58%), followed by small production (20%), animal husbandry (18%) and services (4%). On average women living in rural areas from low-income families, increased their income by 65% after receiving microfinance under the Sabr program.<sup>377</sup>

Special programs to provide women farmers with financial assistance also seem to exist, such as the Fund for the Support of Social Initiatives, working with the *Mekhr Nuri* Fund and the Women's Assembly Public Association, which provided microcredit to over 70 women in seven regions, averaging 500,000 soum as "start-up capital for further development of farming."<sup>378</sup> In a second stage, an additional 70 women farmers received microcredit of 3–5 million soum each.

Women who have received loans are generally perceived as good customers by banks "as they are responsible, disciplined and regular with their repayments."<sup>379</sup> However, only a minority of banks are aware of the specialized needs of women engaged in micro enterprises or engage in direct marketing to attract women as customers.<sup>380</sup>

**Women have limited access to finance relevant to housing.** The regulatory framework for housing finance improved since 2005 after the passage of a presidential decree on developing a Mortgage Lending Support Fund<sup>381</sup> and the Law on Mortgage Financing.<sup>382</sup> Uzbekistan was experiencing steady and significant increases in real estate prices before the international financial crisis of 2009. Development of housing finance has not been equally beneficial to women and men, and women face limited opportunities to obtain finance for house reconstruction and improvement. Women are a minority of beneficiaries of rural housing programs, and from 2009–2010, of all loan applications processed and approved by the *Qishloq Qurlish* Bank, only 22% of applicants were women.<sup>383</sup> Of these, one-fifth were single women. Women also represented 37% of co-borrowers for approved loans. In 2011, only 15% of approved loan applicants were women, the majority of whom (80%) live in their relatives' house.

The reasons for women's limited access to housing finance are virtually the same as those that limit their ability to obtain loans for entrepreneurial activities. Women are much more likely to lack a regular source of income and cannot provide the required collateral for loans. As noted above, land and other property is rarely registered in women's names, even in the case of marital property that is legally considered to be jointly owned. The

<sup>376</sup> Mavlyuda Shirinova, Director of the Sabr Socio-Economic Development Center, "The Experience of the Sabr Center in Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas" [in Russian] (presentation, UNECE Policy Seminar on Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia, Geneva, 19 September 2011).

<sup>377</sup> Sabr Socio-Economic Development Center, *Analytical Report for 2009* [in Russian], (Samarkand, 2010), 5.

<sup>378</sup> Government of Uzbekistan, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan*, fourth periodic report (Tashkent, 2008), 116.

<sup>379</sup> Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*, 5.

<sup>380</sup> See generally: Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise*.

<sup>381</sup> No. 69 of 06 May 2005.

<sup>382</sup> Enacted 04 October 2006.

<sup>383</sup> Social and Poverty Reduction Strategy, Housing Program Tranche 1, approved in 2011.

Rural Housing Program also exacerbates this problem by issuing certificates to the house and land plot under the name of the registered borrow, who are primarily male. Women who are actually co-owners are not included in the registration and thus remain 'invisible' for legal purposes.

The gender action plan for the ADB Housing for Integrated Rural Development Investment Program includes activities to improve the loan selection process and criteria in order to reach qualifying women and to increase their access to new housing. Additionally, improvements are to be made to the *Qishloq Qurlish* Bank database that should support a more comprehensive gender analysis of housing finance.

### 3. Overview of gender action plans in ADB private sector development projects

| Start year | Project Title<br>Loan Number   | Gender Classification | Main activities under GAP  |
|------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| 2011       | Housing for Integrated Rural Development Investment Program<br>L2775 | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of quotas for women in target groups for housing loans.</li> <li>• Target women with information about housing finance.</li> <li>• Protect women's property rights.</li> <li>• Improve gender sensitivity of rural development planning processes through training programs.</li> <li>• Improve women's access to opportunities to develop micro and small enterprises and to finance for such activities.</li> <li>• Identify women's target groups eligible for housing loans based on the selection criteria and score/points system.</li> <li>• Promote gender-sensitive credit appraisal, loan signing, and property/land registration.</li> </ul> |
| 2010       | Second Small and Microfinance Development Project<br>L2634           | EGM                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish sex-disaggregated base-line data.</li> <li>• Strengthen capacity of participating banks to conduct gender analysis and mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Provide gender-sensitive training for women in business.</li> <li>• Increase female entrepreneurs' access to credit.</li> <li>• Increase number of microfinance loan accounts opened for female sub-borrowers.</li> <li>• Increase number of female microcredit loan officers trained in microcredit appraisal.</li> <li>• Develop new women-friendly financial products and banking procedures.</li> </ul>  |

### 4. Entry points for gender mainstreaming of ADB initiatives

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to relevant to micro, small and medium-sized enterprise and private sector development and suggested key questions to consider.

**Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation.** Also, consult best practices for developing

projects that aim to improve the economic status of women and to increase opportunities for women's employment.

- ✓ Review national programs that address women's issues, particularly programs on women's access to economic resources. What are the entry points relevant to private sector development? Do such national programs provide support for women owners or managers of SMEs, as well as in home-based and microenterprises? Are there measures to increase women's employment in the private sector?
- ✓ Consider how goals on women or gender equality are integrated into national programs on SME support or microfinance? How can issues affecting women in businesses be integrated into general private sector development projects, in addition to specific activities that target women as a distinct group? How can ADB projects draw connections between policies oriented towards women and more general programs in financial sector development?
- ✓ Has ADB engaged with the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality in consultations and project planning?

**Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring and in the collection of endline data in order to show the gender impacts of private sector development projects.**

- ✓ Is there consensus on how "women's business" or "female entrepreneurs" are defined in the local context? For example, will projects target women who are sole proprietors of businesses, joint owners or managers? Will specialized finance options be available to women interested in developing a business themselves or also to men and women with businesses that primarily employ women?
- ✓ Are data available about the number of women who own or manage businesses, which is further disaggregated by other indicators? Is there support for the development of a methodology and creation of a database on women entrepreneurs that would include such information as size, age and location of business, sphere of activity, number of male/female employees etc.
- ✓ What indicators and assessment methodologies are used to measure the effect of improvements to financial services on women's entrepreneurship? (for example, is sex-disaggregated data being collected on such indicators as number of start-up businesses, number of active businesses, longevity of businesses, number of businesses liquidated or declaring bankruptcy)?
- ✓ Are targets set for increasing women's access to credit, housing loans or microcredit related to assessments of women's current representation among bank clients? Are targets realistic given project time frames? How will women's ability to access improved financial services and expand and improve their businesses be measured?

- ✓ What assessment methodologies are used to measure the longer-term impact on the ability of women to access a variety of financial services, beyond the life of the project? For example, are banks undertaking outreach to female clients? Have loan application procedures and requirements or interest rates been modified?

**Support business advisory services and training programs that respond to the distinct needs of female entrepreneurs.**

- ✓ Do mainstream MSME advisory services have the capacity to respond to the needs of women entrepreneurs, in terms of information about women's business and also identification of the specific obstacles women face.
- ✓ Are support and advisory services tailored to the different needs of women at the start-up level, in micro-business or running small and medium business? Are the needs of more established businesswomen, for instance how to access new markets and export strategies and logistics (*see section on transport, above*), also being met?
- ✓ Are there free or affordable business advisory services for women that are offered independently of loan application processes?
- ✓ Do training programs for female entrepreneurs address a range of topics, including but not limited to business and financial planning, vocational skills, specialized technologies, and also address psychological barriers? In parallel, what interventions can be used to counter widely-held stereotypes about women in business, property rights and financial decision-making?
- ✓ Are training and educational programs accessible to businesswomen in rural areas? Do they address knowledge gaps and the specific constraints faced by rural enterprises?
- ✓ Have specific programs been developed to support women entrepreneurs in agriculture in terms of training, technical assistance and access to credit?

**Increase women's opportunities to expand micro and small-scale businesses and to enter new sectors.**

- ✓ To what extent are women's enterprises limited by sector? And what are the implications of this limitation? For example, are there female-owned businesses in high-growth sectors? Where are they represented along value chains?
- ✓ Are women represented as business owners or managers in sectors that are addressed in other parts of the ADB portfolio, such as transport, WSS and infrastructure development? Can activities be included in such projects to promote women's entrepreneurship in these nontraditional sectors?
- ✓ What are the reasons for women's underrepresentation in nontraditional fields of business, such as construction and industry? How can women entrepreneurs be assisted to enter higher-revenue industries?
- ✓ What mechanisms could be used to assist women to network with other entrepreneurs, learn about innovations, expand their businesses, reach



new markets, etc. (for example, women's cooperatives, associations, business clusters and incubators)?

- ✓ Have plans been put into place to assist women entrepreneurs in transitioning from microcredit to other loan/financial instruments? Are banks and financial institutions taking steps to ensure equal access to women, through outreach, specialized financial products or by other means?
- ✓ What is the impact of the closure of credit unions on women entrepreneurs? Have any alternative mechanisms been established to fill this gap?
- ✓ What measures could be taken to overcome structural barriers to women in business, such as time constraints related to domestic duties, stereotypes and the lack of visibility of women entrepreneurs?
- ✓ What measures are being taken to ensure that women have equal title to and control over resources (such as land, property and equipment) that can be used for securing loans? Measures could include simplified regulations that would allow lending institutions to accept other forms or collateral, initiatives to raise women's awareness about their equal right to own and inherit land and property and education for men about the importance of protecting the rights of female family members (wives, daughters etc.).

#### **Improve links between women's home-based employment and entrepreneurship opportunities**

- ✓ Is there support for women working in home-based production (contract or piece work) to transition to individual or micro entrepreneurship?
- ✓ What are the barriers to expansion faced by home-based enterprises? Are they included within the general understanding of "small businesses" and can they benefit from SME services? If not, are services through other channels adequate to enable these enterprises to move from the level of "subsistence" to a "business" level?

#### **Expand employment opportunities for women in SMEs and improve conditions of women's employment in the private sector.**

- ✓ What training opportunities are available to help women enter "nontraditional" professions in the private sphere?
- ✓ What steps have been taken to reduce gender gaps in employment and in earnings?
- ✓ What steps are being taken to monitor the extent to which private sector enterprises follow domestic labor law and nondiscrimination, for example, in hiring, promotion, maternity/parental leave, equal pay, etc.? Are there any initiatives to promote "family-friendly" working environments that could be supported and replicated?

**Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in the planning and implementation of private sector development projects.** Evaluate the extent to which gender neutral activities in MSME-

support projects may be insufficient to address the significant barriers to women's entrepreneurship.

- ✓ What gender-sensitive information, and sex-disaggregated data, on women owned and managed business is needed for future project planning and should be collected at the national level? Who is responsible for such data collection and what institutional mechanism is required?
- ✓ Have existing financial products been improved to allow greater access by women, taking into account such issues as women's lack of collateral, unfamiliarity with banking procedures, distrust of banks and bureaucratic hurdles? Have new application procedures, financial products and services been developed that meet the needs of female entrepreneurs?
- ✓ What are the long-term implications of microcredit programs, or other "women-targeted" financial services, in terms of possibly limiting women's access to larger loans from mainstream banking institutions?
- ✓ Do managers and planners in banking institutions have the skills to formulate and analyse questions about the gender aspects of entrepreneurship and the implications for project design? Are market research and consumer satisfaction surveys, disaggregated by sex, used to assess whether existing banking services are meeting the needs of women?
- ✓ To what extent do mainstream business associations represent the interests and concerns of women business owners?
- ✓ To what extent is the Women's Committee integrated into general policy discussions on development of the MSME sector?
- ✓ What role do business women's associations, and other NGOs, play in advocating on behalf of their members for policy change that will improve the business climate for women?

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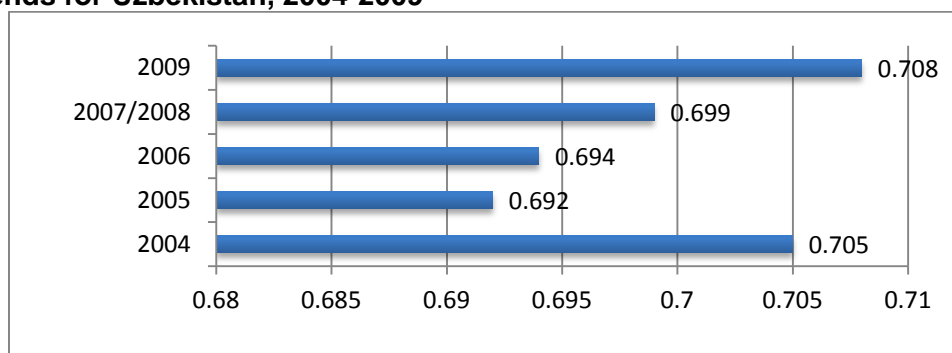
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## APPENDIX 1. Additional Notes on Gender and Development Indicators for Uzbekistan

### Gender-related Development Index (GDI)

- Developed by the UNDP, the GDI was replaced by the Gender Inequality Index (GII) in 2010. However, GI scores are not yet available for Uzbekistan.
- Countries received a value from 1.00 (representing maximum achievement with perfect equality) to zero.

### GDI Trends for Uzbekistan, 2004-2009



Source: United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report* for years 2004-2009.

### Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

- Developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2009 to capture information about “discriminatory social institutions, such as early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices, violence against women, son preference, restricted access to public space and restricted access to land and credit.”
- The SIGI consists of 14 variables grouped by sub-index: (1) Discriminatory Family Code; (2) Restricted Physical Integrity; (3) Son Bias; (4) Restricted Resources and Entitlements; and (5) Restricted Civil Liberties.
- Countries are assigned values on a scale in which zero represents a situation of equality and 1.00 indicates that women experience discrimination.

### Social Institutions and Gender Index Values by Subcategory for Uzbekistan, 2012

| Subcategory                           | Value    |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Discriminatory Family Code;           | 0.4045   |
| Restricted Physical Integrity         | 0.904    |
| Son Bias                              | 0.571642 |
| Restricted Resources and Entitlements | 0.3473   |
| Restricted Civil Liberties            | 0.3086   |
| SIGI Value 2012                       | 0.304442 |

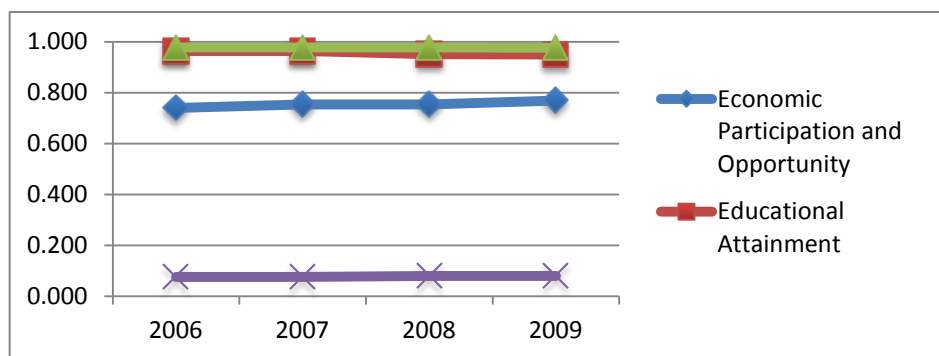
Source: OECD, Social Institutions & Gender Index 2012, Country Profiles: Uzbekistan, <http://www.genderindex.org/country/uzbekistan>.



## Global Gender Gap Index

- Developed by the World Economic Forum to measure the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and to track national progress over time.
- The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities in four categories: (1) economic participation and opportunity; (2) educational attainment; (3) health and survival; and (4) political empowerment.
- Educational attainment measures the literacy rate and enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Health and survival includes the sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy. Economic participation and opportunity measures labor force participation, wage equality and the number of senior officials, managers and professional and technical workers. Political empowerment measures women in parliament, ministerial positions and as head of state.
- Countries are given a score on a scale in which 1.00 is the highest (full equality) and zero the lowest.

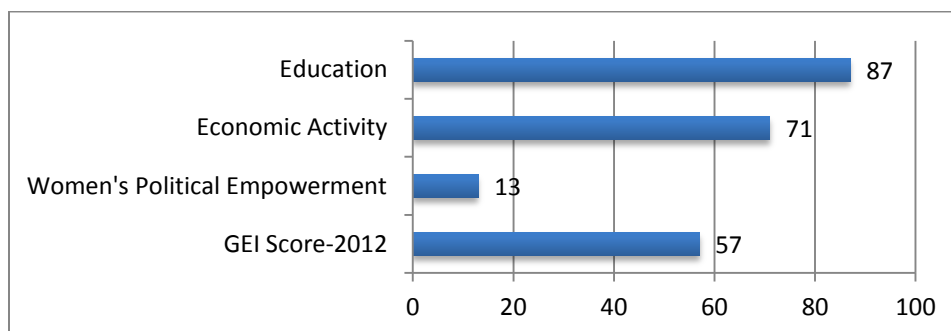
### Yearly Comparison of Global Gender Gap Index Scores by Subcategory



Source: Ricardo Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, *Global Gender Gap Report 2009* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2009).

## Gender Equity Index (GEI)

- Developed by Social Watch in 2007 to measure gaps between men and women in three dimensions: (1) education; (2) the economy; and (3) political empowerment.
- Education measures gender gaps in enrolment and literacy rates. Economic participation measures gaps in wage and employment. Political empowerment measures gaps in highly qualified jobs, parliament and senior executive positions.
- Countries are assigned a value in each of the three areas from zero, a situation of complete inequality, to 100, perfect equality). The GEI is an average of the three dimensions.

**Gender Equity Index (GEI) Scores for Uzbekistan, 2012**

Source: Social Watch, Measuring Inequity: the 2012 Gender Equity Index,  
<http://www.socialwatch.org/node/14367>.

## APPENDIX 2. Common Terminology and Definitions for Private Enterprises

*As defined by the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guarantees and Freedoms for Entrepreneurial Activity.*

The following types of businesses are considered **small enterprises**:

**Individual entrepreneurs/ sole proprietors.** Natural persons who are engaged in business activities without forming a legal entity, without hiring employees and based on property owned by the entrepreneur or common (family) property. Individual businesses include family businesses and some farming activities. Individual entrepreneurs are limited to businesses within a list of 74 approved fields (including retail trade, crafts and a range of personal services such as repair work, cleaning, hairdressing, tutoring, catering, veterinary services, home food production etc.).<sup>384</sup>

**Micro firms.** Organizations that can be classified in three groups (1) businesses with an average of no more than 20 employees annually in manufacturing; or (2) businesses with an average of no more than ten employees in services and other non-manufacturing activities; or (3) with no more than five employees in wholesale, retail and catering.

**Small businesses.** Organizations that can be classified in three groups (1) businesses with an average of no more than 100 employees in the following sectors: food processing and light industries, metal and wood processing, equipment building and production of construction materials; or (2) businesses with an average of no more than 50 employees in the following sectors: machine building, metallurgy, fuel and chemical industries, agricultural processing, construction and other industrial and manufacturing fields; or (3) businesses with an average of 25 employees in the following sectors: science, transport, communications, services (excluding insurance companies), trade and catering and other non-manufacturing activities.

*Note: the State Committee for the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics also uses this definition of small enterprises to include “small businesses, micro-firms and individual entrepreneurs.”*

**Medium and large businesses** are not defined in the above-mentioned laws, but the Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States offers the following classification.

In accordance with national legislation MSMEs are defined as follows:

- Individual Entrepreneurs
- Micro Firms (0-10 employees)
- Small Enterprises (10-40 employees)
- Medium Enterprises (40-100 employees)

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<sup>384</sup> As regulated by Ministerial Decree on Approving the List of Activities that Can be Undertaken by Individual Entrepreneurs Without Establishing a Legal Entity of 07 January 2011.

### APPENDIX 3. Definitions of Gender and Development Terms

This Country Gender Assessment uses several terms relevant to gender and development. Some development organizations and international financial institutions have their own definitions of these terms, but ADB generally relies on commonly accepted meanings. Where possible, the list below includes definitions from ADB policy documents. Because meanings change over time, vary by organization, and are also dependent on context, the definitions are illustrative and are not intended to be definitive.

**Domestic violence** (also called “intimate partner violence”) refers to behavior in an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors.<sup>385</sup>

**Empowerment** describes both the process and the outcome of people—women and men—taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognized), increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. Empowerment implies an expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. In most cases the empowerment of women requires transformation of the [gender] division of labor and of society.<sup>386</sup>

**Gender** refers to the sociologically and culturally based distinction between men and women. One's gender is therefore most often composed of those roles and attributes that are not purely “natural” or biologically determined, but are rather dictated by norms and traditions. Because gender is not biologically given, the attributes of both male and female gender can (and do) change over time and across cultures.<sup>387</sup>

**Gender analysis** is a key strategy of ADB's gender mainstreaming approach that involves systematically assessing the impact of a project on men and women, and on the economic and social relationship between them.<sup>388</sup>

**Gender-based violence (GBV)** was first defined by the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women as an alternative term for “violence against women” to refer to any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.<sup>389</sup> Over time, the definition has evolved to refer to any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will; that has a negative impact on the physical or psychological health, development, and identity of the person; and that is the result of gendered power inequities that exploit distinctions between males and females, among males, and among females. Although not exclusive to women and girls, GBV principally affects them across all cultures. Violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or sociocultural.<sup>390</sup>

<sup>385</sup> World Health Organization, Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women, Fact Sheet No. 239, 2011, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/index.html>.

<sup>386</sup> Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Glossary of Gender-Related Terms* (2009), 6–7, <http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/publications/glossary-on-gender>.

<sup>387</sup> UNDP, *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Toolkit* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Bratislava, 2007), 125.

<sup>388</sup> ADB, *Gender and Development*, (policy paper, Manila, 2003), 39.

<sup>389</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, Resolution A/RES/48/104, Article 1, 1993, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>.

<sup>390</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Matters: Manual on Gender-Based Violence Affecting Young People* (Budapest, 2007), 43, <http://eycb.coe.int/gendermatters/contents.html>.

**Gender and Development (GAD)** is an approach that concentrates on the unequal relations between men and women due to “uneven playing fields.” The term “gender” as an analytical tool arose, therefore, from an increasing awareness of inequalities due to institutional structures. It focuses not only on women as an isolated and homogeneous group, but on the roles and needs of both men and women. Given that women are usually in [a] disadvantaged position as compared with men, promotion of gender equality implies an explicit attention to women’s needs, interests, and perspectives. The objective, then, is the advancement of the status of women in society, with gender equality as the ultimate goal.<sup>391</sup> ADB describes the gender and development approach as one that sees gender as a crosscutting issue with relevance for and influencing all economic, social, and political processes.<sup>392</sup>

**Gender discrimination** refers to any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms that prevent a person from enjoying full human rights.<sup>393</sup>

**Gender equality** is a desired result of gender equity and refers to equal opportunities and outcomes for men and women.<sup>394</sup>

**Gender equity** is a process for achieving the goal or outcome of gender equality. ADB included gender equity as one of the five drivers of change in its long-term strategic framework, Strategy 2020.<sup>395</sup>

**Gender mainstreaming.** Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programs, and projects in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.<sup>396</sup>

**Gender sensitivity** is a key strategy of ADB’s gender mainstreaming approach that involves observing how ADB operations affect women and men, and taking into account women’s needs and perspectives in planning its operations.<sup>397</sup>

**National machinery** (for the advancement of women) is the central policy-coordinating structure inside the government, whose main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.<sup>398</sup>

**Sex** refers to the biological characteristics that distinguish human beings as female or male.

<sup>391</sup> European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, *Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EC Development Cooperation*, “Section 3: Glossary of Gender and Development Terms” (Brussels, 2004), 2.

<sup>392</sup> ADB, *Gender and Development*, (policy paper, Manila, 2003), 28.

<sup>393</sup> OSCE, *Glossary on Gender-Related Terms* (2006), 2.

<sup>394</sup> ADB, *Country Gender Assessment: Bangladesh* (Manila, 2010), vii.

<sup>395</sup> ADB, *Country Gender Assessment: Bangladesh* (Manila, 2010), vii.

<sup>396</sup> ADB, *Country Gender Assessment: Bangladesh* (Manila, 2010), vii.

<sup>397</sup> ADB, *Gender and Development*, (policy paper, Manila, 2003), 39.

<sup>398</sup> Platform for Action, The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995.