

FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA



**The Sixth National Report on Progress made in the
implementation of the Beijing Declaration and
Platform for Action
(Beijing +30)
June 2024**

ACRONYMS.....	II
SECTION-ONE: HIGHLIGHTS	1
SECTION-TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS.....	3
2.1 Priority areas achievements, challenges, and Setbacks	3
2.1.1 Important Achievements	3
2.2 Actions to prevent discrimination of marginalized groups	12
2.3 Confluence of different crises affected the implementation of BPfA	15
2.4 Priorities for the next five years	16
SECTION-THREE: PROGRESSES ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN.....	18
3.1 Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work	19
3.2 Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services.....	25
3.3 Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotype	31
3.4 Participation, accountability, and gender – responsive institutions	40
3.5 Peaceful and inclusive societies.....	46
3.6 Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation.....	50
SECTION-FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES.....	53
4.1 National strategies and action plan for gender equality	53
4.2 Gender budgeting and investment in promotion of gender equality	53
4.3 Participation in implementation, monitoring of BPfA and preparation of the present national report	54
4.4 Timeline and action on implementation of CEDAW recommendation.....	55
SECTION-FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS	57
5.1 Progress and measures to strengthen national gender statistics	57
5.2 Gender specific indicators for mobilizing progress on the SDG	58
5.3 Data disaggregation routinely provided by major survey	59
SECTION-SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
REFERENCES	62

ACRONYMS

AGP	Agricultural Growth Program
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
AUTJP	African Union Transitional Justice Policy Framework
BDPfA	Beijing Declaration Platform for Action
CBHI	Community-Based Health Insurance
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and /girls
CETU	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EBA	Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority
ECCE	Early Childhood Care Education
EGAGS	Ethiopian Gender Asset Gap Survey
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
EIDC	Ethiopian Industrial Development Corporation
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
ESS	Ethiopian Statistical Service
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
EWDNA	Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
EWMA	Ethiopian Media Women Association
FENAPD	Federation of Ethiopian National Associations of People with Disabilities
FCA	Federal Cooperative Agency
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting
FHH	Female Headed Households
FLLC	First Level Land Certification
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GTA	Gender Transformative Approach
HABP	Household Asset Building Program
HEWs	Health Extension Workers
HIG	Humanitarian Implementation Guide
HoF	House of Federation
HoPR	House of People's Representatives
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IGM	Implementation Guide Manuals
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMS	Information Management System
IoT	Internet of Things
IPDC	Ethiopia's Industrial Parks Development Corporation
MHGAP	Mental Health Gap Action Plan
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services

MIT	Ministry of Information and Technology
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoTRI	Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MoWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NEBE	National Election Board of Ethiopia
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NNP	National Nutrition Program
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
OSCs	One-Stop Centers
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
PSSIP	Participatory Small Scale Irrigation Project
RCC	Refugee Central Committee
SC	Streeting Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SLLC	Second-Level Land Certification
SLMP	Sustainable Land Management Project
SNE	Special Need Education
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TB	Tuberculosis
TC	Technical Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPSNP	Urban Productive Safety Net Project
VRT	Violence Reporting Tool
WAD	Women Affairs Directorate
WMHH	Women and Male Headed Households

SECTION-ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

The sixth national comprehensive country review highlights Ethiopia's progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) from 2020 to 2024, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the BDPfA. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) led the coordination of the review process, supported by the National Steering Committee (NSC) consisting of State Ministers of relevant sector ministries and the Technical Committee (TC) comprising experts from various sectors.

Several consultations were held during the review process, involving federal and regional states, city administrations, civil society organizations, professional associations, national human rights institutions, and development partners. These consultations aimed to enhance the report's quality and ensure its ownership. The national level review process received significant publicity, starting with an inauguration of the process by MoWSA and validation in the presence of sector ministers, development partners, CSOs, media agencies, and stakeholders.

Ethiopia has encountered a sequence of interrelated challenges throughout the reporting period. The COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflict, political instability, and drought in specific areas have posed considerable difficulties. Nevertheless, Ethiopia has successfully attained favorable results in promoting gender equality by virtue of resolute leadership commitments, resilience, and efficient strategies to address crises.

The government has actively promoted a comprehensive approach to combat gender-based violence (GBV) through collaborative efforts such as the National GBV Coordinating Body, Shelter Coordination Network, Inter-ministerial task force to address crises related GBV, and GBV Areas of Responsibility (AoR). These efforts have led to significant achievements in tackling GBV, including expanding One-Stop Centers and GBV shelters, establishing temporary shelters in crisis-affected areas, creating women and girls friendly spaces, implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for survival-centered GBV services, addressing harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage, declaring several villages FGM/C and child Marriage -free, approving transitional justice policy, extending the coverage of the GBV hotlines, and offering free legal aid services.

Ethiopia has made significant strides in promoting women's leadership in high-level political positions, with 41.5% of women elected to parliament, exemplifying a commitment to gender-equitable leadership. Across various sectors, efforts to address gender disparities have resulted in an increase in women holding senior and middle-level positions, as evidenced by the MoWSA gender leveling assessment, where over 45 percent of women occupy such roles in the best performing sectors. The progress made in elevating women to influential positions serves as a positive example, inspiring others and breaking down gender barriers. Notwithstanding the commendable efforts of the Ethiopian government, challenges related to institutionalization and sustainability of these advancements persist.

Women employment opportunities improved. Women represented 41% of the total job opportunities created during the reporting period. Women benefited from 35% of the jobs created domestically and 98.6% of those created abroad.

Male-dominated fields like sport leadership, public transport, defense, and security are seeing more women entering. The Ministry of Transport recently hired over 460 female bus drivers, breaking traditional gender norms. Banks, the Document Authentication and Registration Office, and Ride transport companies have also opened branches and services staffed only by women, creating more job opportunities and breaking down gender barriers.

The gender gap in property ownership is gradually narrowing, with 84% of women and 86% of men owning dwellings in 2022 which is a significant change compared to 54.8% of men and 49.6% in 2016. In agricultural land 69% of women and 73.1% of men ownership, and 75.3% of women and 76.2% of men owning livestock. The most significant gender disparity is observed in financial assets, with a 32-percentage point difference, followed by other real estate at 8 percentage points

Women's access to resources and services has been steadily improving with the integration of gender perspectives across various sectors, leading to advancements in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social protection. Achievements include gender parity in education with a gender parity index of 1.01 for secondary school. Efforts are ongoing to improve gender parity indices for pre-primary (0.95), primary (0.91), and middle school (0.98). Health outcomes particularly contraceptive knowledge and usage among currently married women have also improved, with rates reaching 96% and 41% respectively. Additionally, the maternal mortality rate has declined to 267 per 100,000 live births in 2022.

The Ethiopian Government has acknowledged and addressed the needs of marginalized women and girls, including those in rural areas, women with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, adolescent girls, internally displaced and refugee women, and those in humanitarian settings.

During the reporting period, Ethiopia has drawn transformative good practices successfully incorporating gender into the education curriculum including the police university and within religious institutions. This has instilled values of gender equality in the younger generation, challenged social and religious norms and enhanced the capacity of police officers in preventing and responding to GBV and working towards eradicating intergenerational gender disparities.

The performance leveling tool which is developed by the MoWSA to assess the performance of sectors on GEWE is another good practice. The leveling exercise motivated sectors to advance gender equality and resulted in more sectors reaching gender sensitive and responsive status paving the way for horizontal accountability within the gender machinery.

During significant humanitarian crises in Ethiopia, the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce established to address the GBV prevention and response proved to be a transformative good practice ensuring high level of accountability and better services for women and girls affected by the humanitarian crisis.

The poly-crisis Ethiopia has experienced during the reporting period have caused setbacks in the progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, leading to increased GBV and disruptions in addressing these issues. The gender gap in the workforce has widened, resulting in a significant decline in female labor force participation from 77.8% in 2016 to 46.8% in 2023.

To turn gender equality commitments into action, assistance is needed in resource allocation, technical capacity building, technology support, and partnerships with gender-focused institutions. Adequate resourcing for government gender machineries, women-led organizations, and entities dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment is crucial. Support is also needed to enhance skills in gender advocacy, transformative strategies, and digital literacy.

SECTION-TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

2.1 Priority areas achievements, challenges, and Setbacks

2.1.1 Important Achievements

Ethiopia has demonstrated a strong political commitment in promoting gender equality and women's rights. Ethiopia has ratified various international agreements aimed at upholding gender equality and women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA), The Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). Gender equality commitments are also clearly outlined in the country's laws and policies stemming from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution.

The Ethiopian government acknowledges Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) as essential for social and economic progress, as explicitly stated in the country's Ten-Year Development Plan (2021-2030). Policies, plans, and programs have been implemented to advance GEWE, with legal and policy frameworks in place to prioritize actions and encourage collective efforts.

In line with the Ten-Year Development Plan and the BDPFA Ethiopia has placed emphasis on various key areas to advance gender equality. These include the eradication of GBV and harmful traditional practices (HTPs), the promotion of women's leadership roles, the enhancement of economic empowerment, the facilitation of access to resources and asset ownership, and the elimination of discriminatory practices. These efforts are aimed at ensuring women's rights, safety, involvement, and their ability to benefit from economic growth during the reporting period.

(1) Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls

The government has given significant focus to ending GBV in both development and humanitarian contexts. To effectively respond to the confluence of expanding humanitarian crises and strengthen conflict related GBV prevention and response mechanisms, the government has taken decisive actions during the reporting period. These actions include promoting a multisectoral GBV response, expanding One Stop Centers, and GBV survivor shelters, reintegration, and livelihood development of GBV survivors as priority measures. Furthermore, the government has prioritized harmful traditional practices such as child, early, and forced marriages, as well as FGM/C, as key areas requiring immediate action.

During the reporting period, the government has shown exceptional commitment to enforcing regulatory frameworks that prevent and address GBV. Efforts have been made actively advocating for the modification and implementation of new laws. Throughout this period, the government has collaborated with CSOs and UN Agencies to make significant progress in aligning national laws with international human rights standards. Notably, efforts have been made to influence the administrations of the Afar and Somali regional states to endorse the Family Law Bill aligned with the Federal Family Code for their respective regions. A comprehensive review of over 28 laws and policies from a gender perspective has been conducted, resulting in recommendations to amend existing laws and establish new ones. One notable achievement is the development of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy that integrated strong focus on GBV Prevention and Response actions, which aims to promote gender equality, women empowerment and address the gaps in the legal framework concerning violence against women and girls. The draft policy on GEWE once endorsed by the Council of Ministers is set to replace the 1993 National Policy on Ethiopian Women. Furthermore, the criminal procedure and evidence codes have been reviewed, the criminal procedure information management system (IMS) has been strengthened, and measures have been taken to improve the quality and accessibility of justice services, ensuring they are women friendly.

A study on the national cost of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women and girls has been carried out in specific regions, providing valuable input for evidence-based advocacy. The development of a sex offender registration system, which will soon be fully operational, is another accomplishment that will enhance the efficiency of the justice system.

In response to the conflict related GBV induced by the humanitarian crises the GoE has set up an Inter-Ministerial Task Force to oversee redress and accountability measures in response to human rights violations committed in the context of the conflict in northern Ethiopia. The task force adopted a comprehensive strategy and action plan for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Joint Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The task force has established four committees that focus on investigation and prosecution, refugees and IDP affairs, sexual and gender-based violence, and resource mobilization chaired, by Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and Ministry of Finance, respectively.

Women and girl friendly spaces have been set up in temporary GBV response shelters and centers hosting IDPs allowing them to access services safely. Efforts have also been made in reintegration of GBV survivors providing them livelihood development skill trainings and financial support to start business.

Improved mechanisms for the prevention of GBV are another significant accomplishment. Various awareness campaigns on preventing GBV have been conducted by the government, CSOs, and development partners. Diverse methods such as media campaigns, community discussions, dialogues with religious and community leaders, conversations in schools and hotlines providing information on GBV have been utilized to raise awareness on GBV and women's rights. The structures of MoWSA at regional, zonal, and district levels, along with Health Extension Workers (HEWs) and Women Development Groups (WDGs) at the community level, have been effectively utilized to integrate gender education that reaches the family level.

The capacity of service providers to offer survivor-centered services has been enhanced. In response to the exacerbated GBV caused by humanitarian crises, there has been an expansion of services and the opening of new One Stop Centers and shelters by government and CSOs supported by development partners. During the reporting period the coverage of One Stop Centers increased from 17% to 35%. Women's access to GBV, and justice information has been improved through the establishment of 4 national hotline services and as a result the coverage of hotline services improved from 33. 2% to 59% during the reporting period. The establishment of Shelter Network, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), GBV Areas of Responsibility (GBV- AOR), the GBV committees established by the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce for GBV have significantly contributed for effective GBV service delivery.

Ending FGM/C and Child marriage has been prioritized during the reporting period. The National Costed Roadmap to end child marriage and FGM/C is under implementation. Ethiopia has successfully implemented a Budget Tracking system to effectively execute the Road Map. This system ensures that the commitments outlined in the road map are translated into tangible actions. The Federal and Regional sectors have made significant efforts to evaluate their progress in ending FGM/C and Child Marriage through the utilization of budget tracking tools. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the commitment of these sectors to allocate funds towards the eradication of FGM/C and Child Marriage.

The National Alliance for ending FGM/C and child marriage composed of representatives from key sectors, CSOs, and development partners, has been establishing branches in regional states thereby expanding reach and has been coordinating efforts on the prevention of HTPs. Community Readiness Verification Tool has been developed by the MoWSA in collaboration with universities. An assessment utilizing the tool found that 4,671 villages have been declared FGM and child marriage free which is an impressive

achievement. With further focus towards strengthening coordination, the capacity of platforms including the GBV AoR and the national alliance and its branches have been strengthened.

However, despite the efforts outlined, restrictive social norms persist violating women's right and exposing them to GBV. Humanitarian crisis has also increased the vulnerability of women and girls to GBV. The demand for GBV services remains substantial and unmet which requires further coordination and expansion of services. The GoE will focus on transforming social norms and expanding access to services going forward with the aim of eliminating GBV.

(2) Political Participation and Representation

The Ethiopian government is taking steps to increase women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making. This includes nominating women to key government positions, demonstrating leadership commitments, addressing gender biases, enhancing leadership skills, creating a pool of women leaders, and advocating for their inclusion in key positions.

The Ethiopian government demonstrated strong leadership commitments to narrow the gender gap in leadership. Even though there are no legislated gender quotas in place to oversee electoral procedures and political organizations in Ethiopia, the ruling party decided to implement a voluntary gender quota of 30 percent for candidates in both national and local elections. Following the national elections in 2021, the representation of women in the House of Peoples' Representatives, rose to 41.5% from 38.8% in the 2015 election, showcasing significant progress towards gender-inclusive leadership.

In the 2021 elections, women voters accounted for 45%, signifying an increasing recognition and utilization of women's voting rights. This progress has been made possible through the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and educational initiatives organized by the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), also successively led by women, aimed at empowering women in the political sphere. The Ethiopian Electoral, Political Parties Registration and Election's Code of Conduct Proclamation (1162/2019) provides for increased financial support to political parties nominating women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in elections and the number of women and PWDs in their membership and leadership positions. Additionally, a toll-free hotline named "Stop Violence Against Women in Election" has been established to disseminate information and address incidents of violence against women in politics, effectively providing support and guidance.

Government institutions have also been directed to prioritize women's issues and mainstreaming of gender in policies, laws, and development programs through the Proclamation No. 1263/2021 that defines powers and duties of executive organs. The implementation of this measure has resulted in a noticeable rise in the number of women holding leadership and influential positions across various sectors. The gender leveling assessment conducted by the MoWSA indicates the increased participation of women in senior level positions. Notably, the Ministry of Industry (MoI) has achieved an impressive 43% representation of women in executive positions and middle management. The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) has also made significant progress with 41.6% women in middle management and 50% in lower management. Additionally, the Ministry of Mines (MoM) has achieved 75% female leadership at the team leader level and 45% at the middle management position.

The government has shown significant dedication to enhancing the capacity of women in leadership roles. A women's leadership pool was created during the reporting period, with over 15,000 women from various positions receiving training in leadership skills and being identified as potential female leaders. Significant efforts have been also made to eliminate the gender-based stereotyped on women leaders by appointing women leaders who can serve as role models for other women. Ethiopia is one of a handful of countries in Africa with a female head of state with Her Excellency Sahlework Zewdie, a seasoned diplomat serving as President since 2018. The President has championed gender equality initiatives including

transformative leadership trainings for women leaders and mentorship programmes for girls in universities. Decisions to assign 8 out of 22 (36.3%) women ministers and a female mayor for the capital Addis Ababa has effectively shattered the glass ceiling and eliminated the invisible barriers that hinder capable women from attaining leadership positions.

Although the Ethiopian government's measures and efforts to increase the number of women in public leadership roles are commendable, institutionalization and sustainability remain significant challenges. This is evident in the fact that, because of recent government reshuffles the 50% representation in the cabinet achieved in 2018 has been steadily declining with ministerial positions previously held by women being replaced by men and a man has been appointed as the Federal Supreme Court upon the resignation of the first female supreme court president.

At the regional level, the participation of women in government leadership positions remains limited, with figures ranging from 23% at the zonal level to 36% at the district level. Regions like Afar, Somali, and Benshangul Gumuz exhibit the lowest female representation in regional government, with rates as low as 7%, 11%, and 19%, respectively. On the other hand, the SNNPR region shows a slightly higher female representation at 31%, with Oromia and Amhara following closely at 30% and 26%, respectively, as of 2021.

(3) Women economic empowerment and asset ownership

Ethiopia has made significant progress in promoting women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. Substantial initiatives have been implemented to foster women's economic empowerment and reduce the gender gap in poverty. Noteworthy progress has been made in enhancing women's financial inclusion, expanding their participation in cooperative ventures, improving their business development and entrepreneurial skills, and enhancing their employability. These efforts have resulted in increased income and employment opportunities for women.

Women represented 41% of the total job opportunities created during the reporting period, of which 35% of the jobs created in the country and 98.8% of the jobs created abroad benefited women. Continuous business development support has been provided for women enhancing their business skills and empowering them to engage in income generating activities. During the reporting period over 2.3 million women have received business development support and were able to engage in various income generating activities.

There have been noticeable shifts in the gender divide within the workforce, with more opportunities opening for women to participate in traditionally male-dominated occupations including sport leadership, public transport and defense and security institutions. For instance, the Ministry of Transport has made significant strides in challenging long-standing norms by successfully recruiting over 460 female public bus drivers while previously the sector used to be primarily dominated by men. This achievement marks a groundbreaking step towards dismantling restrictive and discriminatory practices. In a similar vein, specific establishments such as banks, the Document Authentication and Registration Office and the Ride transport companies have set up specialized branches and services that exclusively employ female staff. This initiative plays a vital role in expanding job opportunities for women and breaking down the barriers that restrict women's participation in the workforce. The advent of digital technology has paved the way for job opportunities for women, leading to a notable increase in their involvement in e-commerce platforms. Women are now actively participating in online business as owners and are also making their mark as entrepreneurs and drivers in ride hailing services.

The industrial parks are another sector that provide women opportunities for economic empowerment by providing gainful employment particularly for young women entering the formal economy for the first

time. Women represent a large portion of the work force in industrial parks across the country. For instance, women represented 85% of the workers in Hawassa Industrial Park and 80% in the industrial parks in and around Addis Ababa.

The government has made increased investment in pro-poor sectors. This strategic allocation of public spending has played a crucial role in reducing poverty and advancing women's economic status. In particular, the agricultural sector has emerged as a key pro-poor sector, empowering women economically. Gender mainstreaming efforts in the agricultural sector have enabled women, both in male-headed and female-headed households, to benefit from the different farm and off farm income-generating activities. The sector has created job opportunities for over 2.7 million women during the reporting period which is a significant contribution for women's increased income and livelihood.

Additionally, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) has played a significant role in enhancing women's economic access. As of May 2022, the program has benefited a total of 4.1 million women, representing 51% of all beneficiaries. Interventions such as the PSNP Household Asset Building Program and credit provision for poor women's business development have paved the way for further advancements in women's economic empowerment. Urban PSNP program is another successful programme contributing to women's economic empowerment. The program is focused on addressing the needs of those vulnerable to food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and underemployment. Women account for 60% of the total target of urban PSNP beneficiaries. Moreover, PSNP programmes were designed in a gender responsive manner and contain gender provisions that take into consideration women's reproductive role and their time poverty. The programmes have incorporated flexible working hours in public activities including late arrival and early exit, childcare facility and cash transfer for pregnant and lactating women. These prescriptions have significantly contributed to women's active participation in and benefit from the programmes.

Women's participation and benefit in cooperatives is progressing. According to the latest report by the Federal Cooperative Agency (FCA), there are more than 92,755 cooperatives, boasting a total of 21,043,370 members, with women constituting 32% of the total membership. This marks a slight increase from the previous report, where women accounted for 21% of the cooperative membership. Despite women's lower participation rates compared to men, their involvement has led to improved access to finance, credit, agricultural inputs, marketing opportunities, and other essential resources. The government has integrated gender considerations into cooperative policies, enabling women to take part in leadership roles and membership, thereby enhancing their involvement. Moreover, the expansions of "women only" cooperatives by the government aims to create a conducive environment for increased female participation.

Women's access to microfinances notably improved. The microfinance sector tends to attract more female and rural clients, with women representing approximately 46.8% of clients in microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Ethiopia, and up to 80% in certain MFIs and access has significantly improved for women owned businesses. Microfinance institutions play a crucial role in meeting important financial needs, yet female entrepreneurs frequently encounter difficulties when trying to shift to commercial bank loans because of issues like large loan amounts, high interest rates, and strict collateral demands. Nevertheless, formal banks are now creating more opportunities for women by introducing specific provisions that enhance their access to formal credit like special window for women, loan services targeting women entrepreneurs and increased saving rates.

Moreover, in response to women's need for large credit from formal banks, the latest National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2021-25) outlines a comprehensive plan to address the gender gap in financial inclusion. This includes conducting research on women's specific financial needs and obstacles to inclusion, ensuring that at least 25% of senior management positions in financial institutions are held by

women, appointing at least one woman to the board of each institution, and developing policies to incentivize women's financial inclusion such as offering higher savings interest rates, establishing credit guarantee schemes for women, and providing wholesale funding dedicated to women's financing to address liquidity challenges faced by lending institutions.

Women's ownership of assets is on the rise due to the measures on women access to finance, employment, income, and implementation of pro-poor sectors gender sensitive policies. The Ethiopian Gender Asset Gap Survey 2022 reveals that women's asset ownership is increasing with men slightly more likely to be owners. When it comes to principal assets, 84% of women and 86% of men own dwellings which is significant achievement compared to 54.8% of men and 49.6% in 2016. The gender gap in land ownership is also gradually decreasing with 69% of women and 73.1% of men owning agricultural land, while 75.3% of women and 76.2% of men own livestock. In terms of financial assets, only 34% of owners are women, compared to 66% of men where significant gender gaps are observed. Despite the constitutional rights granted to both genders for land ownership, traditional practices still favor men, who often inherit larger and more productive plots.

Despite strong measures taken, the challenges posed by the two-year military conflict, COVID-19, social unrest, human rights violations, and the economic impact of the Ukraine crises, significant setbacks have been experienced in the nation's progress towards closing the gender gap in the workforce. As a result, the female labor force participation rate in the country saw a sharp decline in 2023 compared to previous years, including 2016 (77.8%), 2021 (56.8%), and 2023 (46.8%), as reported by the Labor Force Migration Survey.

(4) Women access to productive and social services

The government has implemented progressive initiatives that give priority to women's access to vital resources. In the healthcare sector, the government has been implementing fee waivers for the most vulnerable individuals, ensuring their access to essential health services. Services for communicable diseases like tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS, as well as immunization and maternal and neonatal healthcare, are provided free of charge. The fee waiver for childbirth in government facilities have been beneficial for women with financial constraints thereby contributing to decreasing maternal mortality. Although there are no specific targets set for women, the Health Extension Programme (HEP) structure focuses on reaching out to women through house-to-house health education visits, has resulted in more women benefiting from these provisions.

To achieve universal access to healthcare, measures are being implemented to expand health insurance coverage. This helped reduce the burden of out-of-pocket payments for health services, which currently account for 37% of total health expenditures. Accordingly, the community-based health insurance (CBHI) scheme is being implemented providing financial relief for economically disadvantaged women who face limited decision-making power and resources when it comes to financing their healthcare needs.

Improvement have been made on expansion of family planning information and services to a wider segment of the population. The government's substantial investments in strengthening the health system and creating a conducive policy environment have played a crucial role in improving access to health services and sexual and reproductive health programs. The national health extension program and the rapid expansion of primary health care services have been instrumental in increasing the availability and accessibility of essential services, particularly in rural areas.

Impressive outcomes have been achieved through the implementation of these policies and programs. The utilization of family planning has witnessed a significant rise, with the use of modern contraceptives among married women of reproductive age increasing from 6.6% in 2000 to 40.5% in 2019, as evidenced by the latest Ethiopian Mini-Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) 2019. Additionally, the total fertility

rate has decreased from 5.5 to 4.1 children per woman during the same period. Notably, there has been a decline in maternal mortality rates. Maternal mortality rate reduces to 267 of 100,000 live birth in 2022-World Bank.

In terms of antenatal care, the proportion of women receiving the recommended four or more antenatal care visits has increased from 12% in 2005 to 43% in 2019. Institutional deliveries have also shown an upward trend, increasing from 26% in 2016 to 48% in 2019. Conversely, there has been a significant decline in home deliveries, with rates decreasing from 73% in 2016 to 51% in 2019.

The level of knowledge regarding contraception has significantly improved, as evidenced by the latest Ethiopian Mini-Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) in 2019. It reveals that more than 96% of currently married women are aware of at least one modern method of contraceptives. Moreover, the use of modern contraceptives among currently married women has shown a consistent increase over the past 15 years, rising from 14% in 2005 to 41% in 2019.

Despite these impressive achievements, there remains a notable disparity between the current rates of reproductive health information and services, and the targets outlined in the country's Health Care Transformation Plan II, 2020/21-2024/25 for universal health coverage (UHC). Addressing the gender gap in accessing and utilizing sexual and reproductive health services needs strategic and gender transformative approach.

The progress in nutrition outcomes for women has been improving. The remarkable contributions of nutrition education and livelihood diversification for women are evident. The government's Targeted Supplementary Feeding program is an initiative that offers free services to reduce morbidity and mortality rates among malnourished children and lactating mothers, benefiting millions of individuals throughout the nation.

Significant progress has also been achieved in enhancing access to education for women and girls. A range of initiatives aimed at overcoming barriers to girls' education have been put in place by the government, CSOs, and development partners. Noteworthy interventions consist of financial grants and hostel services for girls facing challenges in pursuing their secondary education due to the lack of secondary schools in their communities. These efforts have resulted in substantial advancements, leading Ethiopia to attain gender parity in secondary education (1.01) according to the Ministry of Education (MoE). Efforts are ongoing to improve gender parity indices for pre-primary (0.95), primary (0.91), and middle school (0.98).

The education sector has made remarkable progress in promoting gender equality and challenging gender norms through the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the education curriculum. Specifically, the MoE has successfully integrated gender mainstreaming into the primary education curriculum and textbooks in two regions (Amhara and Oromia). This achievement has played a crucial role in fostering gender equitable norms among the younger generation. Additionally, the development of Gender Sensitive Pedagogy and capacity building for teachers in gender sensitive teaching and classroom management have been significant accomplishments during the reporting period. These initiatives are effectively transforming the restrictive norms within the education system and contributing to instilling positive norms. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has taken steps to ensure that all universities have a Gender Equality Policy in place. This policy aims to create a gender-inclusive environment within universities, promoting equal participation and benefits for female students and preventing GBV.

Additionally, the government's initiatives to improve water supply coverage have led to better access to water and sanitation for women, resulting in health benefits and reduced women's workload and their time poverty. As evidenced by the latest Ethiopian Mini-Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) in 2019 in Ethiopia, 87% of urban households have access to improved sources of drinking water, as compared with 61% of rural households.

In Ethiopia, the advancement of women's access to land is a significant area of progress. The government has recognized and protected women's land rights through various laws, including the federal rural land administration and land use proclamation No. 456/2005. To further address gender concerns, a thorough examination of land proclamation and management policy has been conducted. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has also taken steps to prioritize women's concerns in the land registration and certification process. As a result, over 89% of land certificates issued are jointly owned by men and women, enhancing tenure security.

Despite the advancements made in women's access to productive resources, there are still significant gender gaps that require more coordinated and strategic interventions to further close the gender gap in health, education, and land ownership.

(5) Changing Discriminatory Social Norms and Gender Stereotypes

Discriminatory social norms and stereotypes have been gradually changing. The GoE has made addressing discriminatory practices a top priority over the last five years. Throughout this period, considerable efforts have been dedicated to raising awareness about patriarchal and discriminatory customs, traditions, and norms, particularly those rooted in religion and culture. Widescale awareness raising programmes have been conducted over the past five years and different programmes on gender transformative norms have been implemented by CSOs and development partners to challenge restrictive and discriminatory norms in collaboration with government structures at all levels.

A gender transformative approach has been promoted to address the root causes of inequality and promote egalitarian relationships in alignment with the Ethiopian context. Among the notable positive practices fostering gender equality among the younger generation through the implementation of gender-sensitive educational curricula has been promising. At a national level, an analysis of the education curriculum and textbooks was conducted, focusing on gender disparities. This led to the initiation of policy dialogues aimed at addressing these gaps in the curriculum, teaching methods, and learning materials. Additionally, the curriculum development team received comprehensive training on gender mainstreaming, while also receiving technical support and undergoing gender reviews. As a result, curriculum and teaching materials that are sensitive to gender issues were developed. Engendering the school curriculum is therefore one exemplary approach to nurture gender egalitarian values in the young generation which is crucial to end the intergenerational gender inequality norms.

Efforts have been undertaken to challenge religious and social norms that hinder gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Throughout the reporting period, an initiative was launched to involve religious and community leaders in discussing the theological aspects of GBV to eliminate discriminatory social and religious norms that contribute to gender inequality. The MoWSA in partnership with UN Agencies and various CSOs and faith-based partners, has engaged leaders and scholars from four different religious groups (Orthodox, Muslim, Protestant and, Catholic) to develop a theological perspective on GBV. This endeavor has resulted in the recognition of GBV as a sin, leading to the inclusion of GBV education in the theological curriculum. Consequently, religious institutions have incorporated gender and GBV topics into their theology courses and issued directives to their religious structures and leaders to consider gender and GBV in their services.

Another initiative towards the transformation of social norms is the safe cities programme. During the reporting period, Ethiopia has implemented a successful approach called the "Safe City" to combat GBV in the society. This approach involves coordinating key actors in the city administration including the bureaus of women and social affairs, education, transport, justice, health, schools, faith-based organizations, faith leaders, public transport agencies, hotel and tourism, and CSOs which come together to address GBV. They have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to prevent and respond to GBV in

their respective areas of responsibility, and to coordinate their efforts. This multi-sectoral partnership serves as a platform for implementing different initiatives and promoting learning, ownership, and accountability with the aim of creating violence free cities in Ethiopia.

2.1.2 Challenges and setbacks

Over the last five years, Ethiopia has encountered a series of interrelated and compounded humanitarian crises, resulting in a significant rise in GBV and complicating service provisions for GBV prevention and response. The crisis has also impacted women's employment, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. These challenges have hindered the government's efforts to strengthen commitments made towards eradicating GBV and promoting women's economic empowerment. The subsequent obstacles pose significant constraints to the effective implementation of BDPfA and gender equality advances. Critical challenges during the reporting period include:

(1) Insufficient mandatory normative laws, regulations and enforcement for gender equality and women's empowerment

Notwithstanding progressive actions in revision and enactment of new laws and policies there has been gaps in mandatory regulatory frameworks to ensure gender equality including in institutionalizing gains in women's participation in leadership and decision making and eliminating all forms of GBV.

Inadequate enforcement of existing laws and policies on gender equality and women's empowerment, hindered progress towards achieving gender equality, ending GBV, and empowering all women and girls. This weak enforcement can be attributed to absence of gender sensitive law enforcement mechanisms and systems to fully enforce these laws as well as the limited knowledge on gender equality and women's rights and gaps in the implementation of gender sensitive and transformative approaches. Additionally, the male-dominated structure of law enforcement agencies further contributed to the limited enforcement of laws and policies related to gender and women's empowerment.

(2) Limited technical capacity for gender mainstreaming

Limited technical capacity poses a significant challenge to the progress of gender equality. The lack of expertise in gender-based analysis and mainstreaming in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of programs and projects particularly in the humanitarian sector remains a major gap within gender machineries and actors involved in horizontal coordination for mainstreaming gender. There is a substantial disparity in the implementation of institutional gender equality policies and mainstreaming strategies, with inconsistent efforts across organizations. The technical deficiencies in mainstreaming hinder those with established gender equality institutional policies from effectively translating policy commitments into actionable steps.

The implementation of institutional gender audit, gender policy, and mainstreaming strategy and action plan has not been fully integrated into government sectors, civil society organizations, and development actors due to insufficient technical capacity, despite the willingness of institutions to promote gender mainstreaming and institutional gender transformation.

(3) Under resourcing of the gender machineries

The gender machineries face a lack of resources, which presents a significant obstacle to promoting gender equality and implementing the BDPfA. Despite the MoWSA's extensive responsibility and mandate spanning the rights, representation and benefits of women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other vulnerable groups and coordination of mainstreaming across all ministries, it suffers from limited resources and financial deficits.

Women's right and women led organizations also face significant resource constraints, limiting their ability to advance gender equality and empower women and girls. Those working in GBV service provision are struggling to meet the overwhelming demand from GBV survivors during humanitarian crises. The lack of a separate budget code for GBV in the government budget, exacerbates the situation and undermines the need for state financing for GBV survivors. Despite government efforts to establish GBV one-stop centers and national shelters for GBV survivors, there remains a mismatch between service and demand.

(4) Discriminatory norms and limited capacity in Gender Transformative Approach (GTA)

The limitations in implementing context specific gender transformative approaches poses an additional obstacle to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. To advance gender equality, it is necessary to transform restrictive norms, gender-biased beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes. To address the underlying causes of gender inequality, transformative approaches are required, which involves mobilizing the community and influential individuals to dismantle these restrictive norms. Despite some efforts by the government and CSOs, Ethiopia has struggled to make significant progress in implementing transformative approaches due to limited capacity and entrenched norms and values.

A service mapping study conducted by MoWSA in collaboration with UN Agencies, which analyzed the programs of CSOs, and development partners aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, revealed that only 11% of the programs implemented a gender transformative approach. Therefore, there is a great need for a gender transformation approach for transforming restrictive norms and achieving gender equality.

(5) Insufficient gender-inclusive and adaptive humanitarian response strategies looking beyond protection

Existing gender inequalities are further exasperated during humanitarian crisis and emergencies, increasing the vulnerability of women and girls. To address the different impacts of crises on men, women, boys, and girls, and to promote positive changes in gender norms, humanitarian actors must analyze, plan, and respond to crises in a way that acknowledges the disproportionate impact.

Nevertheless, Ethiopia has encountered a significant obstacle in the form of an inadequate policy and strategy that is sensitive to gender and responsive to humanitarian crises. Additionally, the practice of gender-based analysis is severely limited. This absence has resulted in numerous challenges when it comes to effectively addressing the gender dynamics within the humanitarian context. Consequently, the focus of the humanitarian response has primarily been on protection and addressing gender-based violence, while overlooking the crucial role that women play in governance and the potential for new social and gender norms within the humanitarian setting.

(6) Weak systems of accountability for gender mainstreaming

The government has placed a strong emphasis on the inclusion of gender considerations in all sectors. Proclamation No. 1263/2021, which outlines the Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs, grants sector ministers, government agencies, and government development enterprises the responsibility to incorporate gender issues into their respective mandates. Furthermore, the responsibility of ensuring accountability for gender mainstreaming across all sectors has been entrusted to MoWSA. However, the lack of endorsed directives for accountability poses challenges in ensuring accountability and holding sectors accountable for gender mainstreaming. This has resulted in gaps in delivering gender mainstreaming planning and reporting to MoWSA by sector ministries.

2.2 Actions to prevent discrimination against marginalized groups

During the reporting period, intersectionality has been given the recognition it deserves. The development and humanitarian programmes have started to acknowledge the diversity of women and their unique requirements. The government has taken crucial steps to address discrimination and uphold the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls. These measures include gender and diversity analysis, integrating the concerns of marginalized communities into programme planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as supporting organizations that work with marginalized groups.

During the reporting period special attention has been dedicated to women and girls residing in rural and remote regions, as well as to Adolescent and Young Women (AYW), women with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, and women in humanitarian settings and in refugee contexts. The aim is to address the obstacles that hinder the involvement and advantages of these groups in development and humanitarian response initiatives.

(1) Women and girls in rural and hard to reach areas

The government's gender mainstreaming efforts in the pro-poor sector have specifically targeted the needs of women and girls in rural and remote areas, given the significant number of women residing in these areas. The Ministry of Agriculture's flagship programmes have established specific targets to increase rural women's participation, with the aim of enhancing their livelihoods. The cooperative promotion agency has placed a strong emphasis on women's involvement in cooperatives, through the agricultural cooperative promotion improving their access to finance through savings and credit, and even establishing "Women Only" farmers' cooperatives. In the health sector, efforts have been made to address women's limited access to health services and information, particularly through the Health Extension program reaching out to rural women with education and information. The fee waivers for maternal health have also resulted in significant strides enhancing health outcomes for rural women. Access to education for rural women has also increased. Expansion of infrastructure such as roads, water and sanitation facilities, and electricity have also beneficial for women reducing the burden of unpaid care work and improving their access to services.

(2) Adolescent and Young Women

The country has considered the various forms of discrimination faced by Adolescent and Young Women (AYW) in its development agenda. In response, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has formulated a national strategy document on adolescent and youth health to address the wide range of health and development challenges faced by adolescents and youth in Ethiopia. The main objective of this strategy is to enhance the overall health status of adolescents and youth in Ethiopia, while also promoting their full potential in national development. Additionally, it aims to integrate the health and rights issues of adolescents and youth into the country's growth and transformation agenda, aligning with the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescent's Health 2016-2030. The strategy has taken into consideration the needs of female adolescents and youth and made provisions to provide for these needs.

Adolescent and young women face educational challenges, especially those in rural areas. The government has acknowledged these challenges and is making efforts to guarantee equal access, retention, and completion of schooling. Various initiatives such as affirmative action, tutorial classes, safe school environments, and hostel services for girls in remote areas have been implemented to address the educational needs of adolescent and young women. While significant progress has been made, there is still much work to be done to fully ensure sexual and reproductive health, bodily autonomy, integrity, freedom from violence, empowerment, and economic independence for AYW.

Ethiopia must prioritize the implementation of policies that specifically address the challenges faced by adolescent girls, considering the various forms of discrimination they encounter due to their age and gender. As Ethiopia works on developing a new youth policy, it is crucial to advocate for a gender-sensitive approach that recognizes the unique vulnerabilities of female adolescents and youth.

(3) Women With Disabilities

Efforts have been made in Ethiopia to address the vulnerability of women with disabilities and ensure their active participation and benefit from development and humanitarian programs. Proclamation No. 568/2008 recognizes the rights of individuals with disabilities and prohibits discriminatory laws, practices, customs, attitudes, or situations that hinder equal opportunities. A national action plan has been implemented to promote inclusion in various sectors, and the Ethiopian Building Proclamation of 2009 mandates accessibility in public buildings. The Right to the Employment of Persons with Disability Proclamation No. 568/2008 has also been enforced. The government supports the establishment and improvement of organizations for individuals with disabilities, including Ethiopian Women with Disability National Association, which advocates for their inclusion in national programs.

Disability inclusion in sector offices is improving, with a greater understanding of individuals with disabilities and their incorporation into programs. The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education are actively working for the inclusion of women with disabilities in access to services. Braille materials and facilities which accommodate PWDs have been developed, and professionals receive sign language training. A manual has been created to guide healthcare providers in delivering inclusive services. Efforts to make GBV services accessible to women with disabilities have been implemented in selected One Stop Centers, although the coverage is low.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is actively engaged in developing legislation and regulations that are easily accessible to people with disabilities through various reading materials. Ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities necessitates the availability of legislation in diverse formats, including Braille, audio, and other formats. However, despite commendable efforts in promoting inclusivity for PWDs, it is crucial to address the intersectionality of disability and gender, particularly the unique vulnerabilities faced by women. Women with disabilities still encounter gender-based obstacles when attempting to equally access the rights guaranteed to PWDs.

(4) Women living with HIV/AIDS

Regarding women living with HIV/AIDS Ethiopia has made significant progress in controlling the epidemic and minimizing the impact on women and girls. The government has developed a new national strategic plan for HIV/AIDS for the period of 2021-2025. The previous strategic plan from 2015-2020 successfully addressed gender equality and equity by tackling gender-related barriers to HIV and sexual and reproductive health needs of both girls and boys, women, and men. Gender mainstreaming activities were implemented to improve service access for women and girls, as well as mobilize the community against HIV transmission. Additionally, economic interventions for women helped reduce HIV vulnerability among them. Despite these efforts and the gradual decline in the number of people living with HIV, there is still a feminization of HIV/AIDS, with rates 1.9 times more prevalent in women than in men. Moreover, there are limited mechanisms and indicators in place to track the meaningful participation of women, gender-responsive programming, and gender-responsive budget allocation.

(5) Women in humanitarian setting and refugee contexts

Ethiopia has made significant strides in implementing the elements of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in humanitarian settings and refugee context. The country has focused on the pillars of Prevention and Protection outlined in UNSCR 1325. To strengthen implementation of all pillars of the UNSCR 1325 Ethiopia is in the process of developing its first National Action Plan (NAP). Both formal and informal mechanisms have been put in place to prevent conflict and address issues of SGBV in these settings.

To address the GBV induced by the crises the MoWSA and bureaus of women and social affairs at the regional level have been proactively leading GBV AoR platforms and proactively engaged in the coordination and response to GBV in crisis settings. Additionally, efforts have been made to ensure the safety of women and girls through establishing women and girls' safe spaces in the humanitarian settings. Ethiopia has one of the most progressive laws protecting refugees under Proclamation 1110/2019. In addition to according the freedom of movement, employment rights and access to education and health services, the proclamation provides that refugee and asylum-seeker women enjoy the rights and protections enshrined under relevant laws to protect them from GBV.

Despite these efforts, the government acknowledges the gaps in the involvement of women. There remains a dearth of female representation in the governance of humanitarian response and Refugee Central Committees (RCC). These committees hold significant influence in decision-making processes and the dearth of female representation poses challenges in recognizing the specific needs and interests of women in the decisions.

Moreover, it is imperative to go beyond ensuring physical safety and tackle other vulnerabilities, including economic insecurity and gender power imbalances in humanitarian settings. To combat inequality and challenge societal norms in the humanitarian context, a gender transformative approach is necessary. This approach should also address the gender norms prevalent in the countries of origin, as these norms may hinder women from fully exercising their rights in refugee settings. In addition, it is crucial for the humanitarian response to go beyond mere protection and addressing GBV. It is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of gender and social inclusion and consider the role of women in the mechanisms of the humanitarian response to ensure the effectiveness of aid.

2.3 Confluence of different crises affected the implementation of BDPfA

The last five years have presented significant challenges for Ethiopia. The country has had to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic, which was made even more difficult by the outbreak of armed conflict in the Northern part of the country in November 2020. This conflict persisted for two years, worsening the existing crises in Ethiopia. In addition, the nation has faced ongoing conflicts and human rights violations in different parts of the country as well as natural disasters such as droughts and floods. Moreover, the conflict in Ukraine has contributed to rising costs of living, inflation, and debt issues. These factors have had a notable adverse impact on the implementation of the BDPfA and the promotion of gender equality.

The macroeconomic and fiscal policies underwent changes in response to these global and national crises. These changes had a notable impact on gender equality, particularly affecting women's employment and income. Women, who are heavily concentrated in sectors that were greatly affected by lockdowns and the overall crises, experienced significant job losses and income reductions.

The conflict and COVID-19 lockdown had weakened the protection system, resulting in a significant increase in gender-based violence (GBV) cases. The infrastructure for GBV service provisions was severely fragmented during the crises, exacerbating the issue and worsening the psychosocial and mental health

problems faced by GBV survivors. In response, the Ethiopian government has implemented various measures to mitigate the adverse effects of these crises on the advancement of the rights of women and girls, as well as gender equality in the country.

The convergence of multiple crises has had a significant adverse effect on education, with a particular impact on female education. Young girls have been forced into early marriages while schools remained closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and due to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government has shifted towards remote learning as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic although this is hindered by low access to internet and mobile services. Advocates have been pushing for a gender-sensitive approach to education during the lockdown, considering the specific challenges faced by women and girls, such as limited access to technology and increased unpaid care responsibilities. To combat the rise in domestic violence against women and girls confined at home with their abusers, women's rights organizations and the government have worked together to raise awareness through radio and television programs during the lockdown.

The government has formulated national COVID-19 response strategies and set up a national committee and action plan that prioritizes gender and women's concerns. In a similar vein, various sectors have implemented measures to address the exacerbated effects of COVID-19 on women and girls' poverty. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture responded to the crisis by creating a top-level committee, headed by the Minister and State Minister, to devise a comprehensive COVID-19 response strategy. Gender-responsive actions were taken across sector ministries to address the impact of the pandemic on women and girls, including the development and dissemination of tailored messages through various channels.

Conversely, the period has presented opportunities for Ethiopia to enhance its capacity and expertise in tackling GBV in humanitarian contexts. The intersection of various crises has spurred the government, CSOs, and development partners to act in response to the emergencies, leading to national initiatives aimed at addressing gender issues in humanitarian crises. This has underscored the importance of developing national policies, strategies, and plans tailored to addressing gender in humanitarian crises, prompting humanitarian actors to advocate for the implementation of distinct national laws, policies, and strategies focusing on gender in humanitarian crises.

2.4 Priorities for the next five years

The Ethiopian Government is dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, while also tackling emerging challenges in women's rights. In line with the objectives of the Ten-Year Development Plan (2021-2030) for gender equality and social inclusion, specific priorities have been outlined for the upcoming five years to strengthen gender equality, empower women, and overcome setbacks resulting from the overlapping crises.

(1) Ending Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Strengthening protection mechanisms

A comprehensive approach to GBV prevention and response will be advocated to ensure lasting progress in eradicating GBV. Prioritizing the enforcement of GBV laws, closing the gender gap in access to justice, and establishing women-friendly justice systems are critical objectives for the future. Standardizing responses for GBV survivors in development and humanitarian contexts remains crucial. Building the capacity of GBV service providers across sectors to promote survivors centered GBV services will continue. Strengthening partnerships with women's rights organizations, both local and international is a priority to enhance the collective efforts to combat GBV. Additionally, extending commitments to ending harmful practices such as FGM/C and child marriage is a top priority for the next five years. The increasing concerns of technology-facilitated GBV will be addressed through targeted policy interventions, heightened awareness campaigns, and effective prevention strategies.

(2) Increasing women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making

Ethiopia experienced a regression in gender parity in leadership since the gains achieved in 2018. The next five years will be a crucial period that demand significant investments to restore gender parity in all branches and at all levels of government as outlined in the Ten Years Development Plan. Prioritizing the implementation of laws and policies to protect women's rights, enhancing women's leadership skills, and tackling gender barriers and stereotypes in women's leadership will be essential in the upcoming five years. Working with political parties, human rights institutions and CSOs to increase women's participation as candidates and voters in the upcoming elections in 2026 while addressing GBV in election will be prioritized.

(3) Increasing women's economic independence

Promoting women's economic independence and asset ownership is a crucial aspect of achieving gender equality, and it will be a key priority for intervention in the next five years. The focus will be on addressing the gender gap in access to finance, business development, and women's participation in productive sectors. In addition, the development of women's employability skills and ensuring access to decent work will be imperative areas of focus for the next five years. A more gender transformative approach will be promoted to challenge and change the gender-based attitudes and beliefs that discriminate against women in employment. Efforts to recognize, reduce, redistribute, reward, and represent care work will be strengthened, with the aim of achieving a gender-balanced care economy.

(4) Gender transformative approach to eliminate discriminatory norms

The adoption of a gender transformative approach aligned to the Ethiopian context is crucial in addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality and combating discriminatory norms that hinder women and girls from enjoying equal rights. Efforts will be intensified by leveraging existing initiatives that target norm setters, such as social and religious leaders, to challenge discriminatory norms that restrict gender equality. Male engagement in promoting supportive masculine behaviors is essential for reshaping social norms. The manual developed by MoWSA for male engagement will play a significant role in promoting masculine behaviors that support gender equality.

(6) Gender equitable access to productive and social services

The next five-year implementation of the BDPFA will prioritize the reduction of the gender gap in accessing productive resources and social services. The key areas of focus will be overcoming gender barriers in accessing productive resources such as land, finance, agricultural extension services, and production inputs. Additionally, improving access to social services like education, health, water and sanitation, and infrastructure will also be crucial in narrowing the gender gap in accessing productive and social services over the next five years.

(7) Gender and digitalization

Enhancing women's access, skills, and utilization of technology to bridge the gender gap in digitalization is a crucial focus for the upcoming five years. This includes expanding access to infrastructure and digital literacy skills, supporting women and girls' entrepreneurship in the digital sector and enhancing girls' enrolment and graduation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Addressing gender bias in the media, such as unbalanced representation and portrayal of women and girls and gender barriers for women's fair representation and participation in media, will also be a top priority as we continue to advance gender-sensitive initiatives in the media sector.

(8) Sufficient gender-inclusive and adaptive humanitarian response strategies looking beyond protection measures

Ethiopia has recognized the significance of promoting gender mainstreaming in fragile and humanitarian situations over the previous five years. It is crucial to prioritize the development of effective gender-inclusive strategies and strengthen the ability to conduct gender-based analysis within humanitarian sectors in the next five years. The forthcoming five period will emphasize a comprehensive gender approach that extends beyond addressing GBV and protection concerns for an integrated humanitarian, peace, and development nexus. It will also incorporate efforts to overcome gender barriers in the participation of women and girls in decision-making processes related to humanitarian response programs.

SECTION-THREE: PROGRESSES ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

3.1 Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work

3.1.1 Measure taken to advance gender equality in the world of work.

Ethiopia has taken significant steps to promote gender equality in the workplace and protect women's rights by enforcing and implementing laws such as Labor Proclamation No. Proclamation No.1156/2019, which prohibits discrimination against female employees in the private sector, Proclamation No. 1064/2017 which has addressed sexual harassment in federal civil service, and Proclamation No.923/2016 (as amended by Proclamation 1246/2021) which protects Ethiopians working overseas.

Ethiopia has shown remarkable progress in enhancing women's access to financial services and employment opportunities to bridge the gender disparity in the workforce. The introduction of the new National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2021-2025) demonstrates the country's commitment to furthering these initiatives and leveraging emerging prospects. Through effective collaboration between government and the private sector, there has been a substantial surge in financial inclusion rates, escalating from 22% to an estimated 45% in 2020.

The government's objective is to extend financial inclusion even more by exploring innovative channels like mobile money. The recent strategy delineates a comprehensive roadmap to tackle the gender gap in financial inclusion, encompassing tailored research on women's specific financial requirements, enhancing female representation in top management roles and on financial institution boards, and enacting policies to encourage women's financial inclusion. These policies encompass offering elevated savings and interest rates, establishing credit guarantee programs for women, and allocating dedicated funding for women's financing to address liquidity challenges encountered by lending entities.

The government is actively working to reduce the gender gap in the workforce by enhancing women's employability skills through targeted Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This initiative aims to develop knowledgeable, capable, flexible, and creative workforce. TVET institutions play a crucial role in facilitating the transition of women from training programs to the workforce. Access to TVET for women is on the rise, as evidenced by the Ministry of Labor and Skills' 2023 report, which indicates a significant increase in the number of TVET institutions and students. The total enrollment in TVET has seen a substantial increase, with females making up 52.3% of the total enrollment.

Progressive measures were also taken to enhance the benefit of women in projects and programs aimed at job creation. Efforts were made to assist women's accessibility to flagship programs that are designed to improve their business abilities and increase their productivity and income through increased access to technologies. The implementation of the 2013–2025 Industrial Strategy Plan has created more job opportunities for women. The sector has recruited over 80% women work force in Addis Ababa Industrial Parks and 84% in Hawassa industrial park. These women were engaged in light manufacturing, specifically in the production of clothing, textiles, and footwear. Similarly, according to the Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) of Ethiopia over 100,000 residents were employed in industrial parks in the Dire Dawa Free Trade Zone, with women holding more than 75% of the total jobs as of 2023. This highlights the government's commitment to ensuring women fully benefit from these opportunities.

Another crucial step towards reducing the gender gap in the workforce in Ethiopia involves enhancing women's access to modern technologies, such as climate-smart technologies, agricultural extension, and infrastructure. The Ministry of Agriculture plays a vital role in promoting gender sensitive extension and advisory services and reached over 21 million female farmers during the reporting period with agricultural extension and advisory support to improve their pre-production and productivity.

The government is actively improving employment prospects for women and girls by facilitating the shift from informal to formal employment. The Ministry of Agriculture has implemented the Rural Job Opportunity Creation Strategy (RJOCS) to consolidate rural job creation initiatives. The strategy recognizes the importance of women and youth in rural job creation and promotes gender and youth-sensitive approaches. This has resulted in numerous job opportunities in the agricultural sector, benefiting over 2.7 million women and girls over the reporting period.

Continuous business development support has been provided for women enhancing their business skills and providing opportunities for income generating activities. During the reporting period 2,252,773 women have received business development support and are able to engage in various income generating activities. Women's employment increased, and they represented 41% of the total job opportunities created during the reporting period, of which 35% of the jobs created in the country and 98.8% of the jobs created abroad benefited women.

More doors have opened for women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields such as sport leadership, public transport, defense, and security institutions. A prime example of this progress can be seen in the Ministry of Transport, which has successfully challenged long-standing norms by recruiting over 460 female public bus drivers, a role that was previously dominated by men. This achievement is a groundbreaking step towards dismantling restrictive and discriminatory practices. Additionally, various establishments including banks, the Document Authentication and Registration Office, and ride transport companies have taken the initiative to establish specialized branches and services exclusively employing female staff. This endeavor plays a crucial role in expanding job opportunities for women and breaking down the barriers that hinder their participation in men dominated jobs.

The rise of digital technology has paved the way for job opportunities for women, resulting in a noticeable increase in their involvement in e-commerce platforms. Women are now actively engaging in online business ownership and are also making significant contributions as owners and drivers in ride transport applications. This shift highlights the empowerment of women in the digital era, as they embrace new avenues for economic participation and entrepreneurship. The integration of women into these sectors not only promotes gender equality but also brings diverse perspectives and talents to the forefront, enriching the workforce. As society continues to progress, it is crucial to recognize and support these advancements, ensuring equal opportunities for women in all areas of employment.

Despite the progressive measures narrowing the gender gap in employment, as a result of the ongoing challenges such as armed conflict, COVID-19, social unrest, and human rights violations, the nation's efforts to bridge the gender gap in the workforce have been hindered, leading to a significant decline in the national female labor force participation rate in 2023 compared to previous years 77.8% in 2016, 56.8% in 2021 and 46.8% in 2023. The overall employment rate in Ethiopia is 59.5%, with a disparity between male (69%) and female (50.2%) employment rates. The gender gap in job opportunities is evident, with women experiencing a higher decline in employment rates compared to men. Men still dominate managerial and professional positions, but there is a gradual increase in female representation. The gender gap in self-employment is also narrowing, with more men (54.4%) than women (43.2%) being self-employed. To address these issues, strong measures must be implemented to narrow the gender gap in labor force participation and transition women from the informal to the formal sector.

3.1.2 Measures to recognize, reduce and /or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work

The Government of Ethiopia has made significant strides in addressing the issue of unpaid care and domestic work through a series of proactive measures implemented over the past five years. These measures encompass a wide range of initiatives, including the expansion of childcare services, support for the elderly and individuals with disabilities, the introduction of maternity and paternity leave, investment

in infrastructure to alleviate the burden of unpaid care work, and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage men and boys to participate in domestic work.

The Ten Years Development Plan (2021–2030) envisions and strives to ensure that all public institutions are equipped with childcare facilities and provide suitable work environments for individuals with disabilities by 2030. The Federal Civil Servants’ Proclamation No. 1064/2017 aims to improve working conditions for civil servants, especially women. It ensures equal pay for equal work, provides workplace day care facilities, extends maternity leave to 120 days, and paternity leave to 10 days. The National Employment Policy and Strategy emphasizes the inclusion of individuals with disabilities and women in the labor market and income-generating activities. Initiatives such as day care services, labor-saving technologies, and advocacy campaigns have been launched to strengthen the care economy.

The government is implementing different initiatives to reduce the workload and time poverty of women by introducing labor and time saving technologies. Various ministries such as the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, the Ministry of Water and Energy, and the Ministry of Agriculture, along with CSOs and development actors, are collaborating to develop and promote technologies aimed at alleviating the burden of domestic responsibilities for rural women. During the reporting period the Ministry of Information and Technology identified over 40 technologies that have the potential to reduce women’s burden of unpaid care work and enhance the overall conditions of women and currently introduced Fruit processing, milk processing, energy-saving cooking stoves and will continue promoting additional technologies. Additionally, the government's school feeding program is helping to alleviate women's workload by freeing up mothers' time, enabling them to engage in economic generating activities and lessen their unpaid care work responsibilities.

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs introduced the Alternative Childcare and Support Directive No 976/2023, which replaced previous directives on foster care and adoption services. This updated directive now provides a comprehensive approach to childcare for vulnerable children. The implementation of the Child Day Care policy has also shown progress in supporting women and creating a better work environment. The number of day care facilities in government institutions increased from 75 to 223 during the reporting period, relieving the burden on women and enhancing their work performance.

However, despite these advancements and policy measures, the practice of child day care in government offices is not yet fully institutionalized mostly citing resource limitations. While these measures are crucial for ensuring women's employment and retention in the workforce, they should also be extended to the private sector where a significant gap still exists. Some employers may perceive hiring women of reproductive age as more costly due to the sole responsibility of providing maternity benefits. To address this issue, Ethiopia will look into adopting the recommended standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to either establish a mandatory social insurance programs or finance the benefits using public funds.

Efforts have also been made in Ethiopia to redistribute the care economy and challenge traditional gender roles. Awareness campaigns and initiatives have been launched to encourage male involvement in household responsibilities. However, women still bear the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, limiting their access to education, employment, and financial independence. The government is aware of the need to prioritize recognizing the care economy by enacting legislation and implementing measures to protect care providers. Although Ethiopia has signed ILO convention No. 189, it has not been ratified yet, leaving domestic workers vulnerable to exploitation without legal protections.

Efforts has been made to ensure the representation of the care economy. An advocacy manual on care economy followed by policy dialogue organized by MoWSA in collaboration with UN Agencies for

consideration of the right of care workers by decision makers was undertaken in the reporting period. In the coming period more work is needed on promoting social dialogue and strengthening the right to collective bargaining within the care sectors for the representation of the care workers. Similarly, the recognition and reward of the care economy in Ethiopia necessitates significant focus. There is still a limited amount of advocacy work aimed at urging policymakers to incorporate unpaid care work in the calculation of GDP. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider unpaid care and domestic work when allocating the national budget.

3.1.3 Measure to address the gender gap in the digital divide

Ethiopia made strides in the recently emerging area of closing “the gender digital divide” during the reporting year. Ethiopia produced "Digital Ethiopia 2025 -Digital Strategy for Ethiopia Inclusive Prosperity" in 2020. Through the Digital Ethiopia 2025-Digital Strategy, the Ethiopian government commits to actively embrace the fourth industrial revolution driven by technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), introducing new technologies to the youth, seizing opportunities for digital prosperity, and investing in research and innovation.

Gender concerns are now integrated into Ethiopia's ICT policies and programs, with a focus on innovation, technology development, and expanding access to mobile and internet services. The Science, Innovation, and Technology policy of 2020 also prioritizes inclusive development, specifically considering gender. The National ICT Policy and Strategy of 2016 emphasizes ICT infrastructure, human capital, and legal regulations, with a focus on youth, women, education, and entrepreneurship. The Digital Skills Country Action Plan for higher education and TVET in Ethiopia (2021-2030) includes a strong emphasis on gender, with a focus on technology access and digital skills. The plan's implementation strategy highlights the country's commitment to achieving gender equity in digital skills.

To achieve the goal of digitalization, the government has initiated the implementation of a variety of digital services. One of the standout and successful programs is digital agriculture, where the government and development partners have introduced tools to bridge the knowledge gap among farmers. To offer farmers access to information and advisory services on agricultural practices and market data, the Agriculture Transformation Institute established a hotline service and around six million women accounting 30% of users are utilizing the hotline.

The Ministry of Information and Technology (MiNT) is the primary government body responsible for advancing this sector, overseeing the implementation of the Science, Innovation and Technology Policy and Digital Ethiopia-2025 Strategy. MiNT has launched several initiatives, programs, and projects to enhance the sector and specifically promote women's empowerment in the digital sector, despite facing certain gaps and challenges. One of the key initiatives is the development of the draft Digital Inclusion Strategy, aimed at addressing the digital gender gap and the ministry has also conducted digital literacy training on various occasions both for women and men participants.

Ethio-telecom, the leading telecom provider in Ethiopia, has also taken commendable step towards increasing women's access to technology particularly access to mobile phones through their "Special Women's Device Offer." This initiative provides women with various mobile phone options and flexible repayment plans. Ethio-Telecom's digital loan services have also benefited women engaged in the informal sector and medium and small-scale enterprises.

The digital technology sector is increasing employment opportunities for women. The rise of ride-hailing, online shopping and delivery companies has opened avenues for women to participate in the economy. Additionally, the Ethiopian government has played a role in promoting digital payments in 2021, introducing the first National Digital Payment Strategy, which aims to raise awareness of digital financial

services among young people, women, and rural farmers. The strategy recognizes the challenges women face when using digital payments and emphasizes the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data to make informed decisions that promote inclusivity.

Despite the government's progressive efforts, Ethiopian women continue to face numerous challenges in realizing their potential in digital technology. In terms of fixed internet connection, women in Ethiopia still lag men, with only 14% having access compared to 20% of men in 2021. This disparity also extends to mobile phone ownership, with just 55% of Ethiopian women owning a mobile phone, while the figure for men is 76%.

The 2021 National Labour Force and Migration Survey had the objective of assessing digital literacy and the role of cell phones as a socio-demographic characteristic. The survey's findings unveiled a significant digital divide and gender disparity in computer and internet usage, and access to cell phones. Among the population aged 10 years and above, 90% lack computer skills, while only 10% possess this proficiency. When examining gender, the statistics show that 93% of women are unable to use a computer, in contrast to 86% of men at the national level. In terms of internet usage, 83% of the population aged 10 years and above do not have the ability to use the internet, while only 17% possess this capability. Interestingly, a higher percentage of males (87%) lack internet usage skills compared to females (80%).

Women face several obstacles that hinder their utilization of digital technologies to improve their lives and participate in the digital economy. These obstacles include limited access to technology-based devices, low levels of digital literacy and skills, and underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Gender disparity in digital skills persists, with women showing lower graduation rates from STEM programs compared to men. The percentage of female graduates from STEM programs in tertiary education stands at 17.3%, significantly lower than the 82.7% for men.

Ethiopia is currently undergoing significant reforms in its digital financial services sector. The government, led by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), is actively working towards digitalizing financial services and strengthening the infrastructure of financial markets. These reforms aim to promote innovation in the financial sector and utilize digital financial services to achieve financial inclusion and alleviate poverty. However, there is a gender disparity in the adoption of mobile money services, with women being less likely than men to own and utilize such services. The data shows that only 29.08% of women aged 15 and above have an account with a financial institution or mobile-money-service providers, compared to 40.94% of men.

There is also significant gender disparity in employment in the information and technology sector, as well as science and engineering. According to the National Labour Force and Migration Survey (2021), of the total 92,399 persons employed in the information and communication sector, women accounted only for 34%. Additionally, of the 42,673 people employed as physical and engineering science technicians, only 9% were women; further, of the 10,243 people employed as life science technicians and related associate professionals (excluding medical), only 12% are women.

In the coming period Ethiopia will prioritize the expansion of women's ownership of computers, mobile phones, and tablets and application skills. Additionally, efforts should be made to enhance the enrolment and graduation rates of women in STEM programs. Furthermore, it is crucial to continue implementing the digital payments strategy and provide training to women on the process and advantages of making digital payments. These initiatives aim to bridge the gender digital divide by ensuring equal access to digital technology and skills for women.

3.1.4 Macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affecting implementation of BDPfA

The implementation of the BDPfA in Ethiopia has faced challenges due to the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment. The fiscal policy measures due to the recent crises had even more significant negative impact on the implementation of BDPfA during the reporting period as well as disproportionately negative impact on women and girls. The COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the conflict in Northern Ethiopia that started in November 2020 and lasted for two years, drought and floods in different parts of the country, and the Ukraine crisis all severely shaken the macroeconomic and fiscal policy conditions throughout the reporting period. The economic ramifications of these shocks have negatively impacted Ethiopia's growth prospects and led to regressions in the country's developmental achievements.

While the war in Ukraine is negatively affecting the world economy by disrupting global trade in grain and energy and driving up prices, which has an adverse effect on Ethiopia, the war in Northern Ethiopia and conflict in other parts of the country have severely damaged productive capacities and social services in the affected regions and made macroeconomic management more difficult.

Therefore, it is notable that the economy of the country has undergone significant turmoil because of both global and national crises, leading to the shutdown of production, disruptions in the supply chain, and shocks in demand that have had widespread effects on various economic sectors. Employers have been compelled to downsize their workforce in many companies due to challenges in meeting payroll obligations, with women being disproportionately affected as they are predominantly employed in informal and manufacturing sectors that are in first line of shutdowns. Consequently, there has been a notable decrease in women's participation in the labor force during the specified period. Furthermore, the pandemic has placed a heavier burden of unpaid care work on women, a responsibility traditionally shouldered by women in Ethiopia, exacerbating the challenges faced by women due to their disadvantaged economic and social standing in society.

The macroeconomic and fiscal frameworks in Ethiopia requires gender responsive measures in addressing the gendered effects of fiscal measures. The tax system requires an overhaul to address the underlying gender bias, as it currently fails to acknowledge the differing economic circumstances of both genders. It is imperative that the income tax laws consider the various roles that men and women fulfill in the economy, resulting in fair income tax exemptions that benefit both genders equally. However, over the past few years there have been promising improvements addressing the implicit gender biases in the tax system in Ethiopia such as exempting washing machines from excise tax, removing taxes on local manufacture of menstrual hygiene products and cutting import taxes for these products from 30% to 10%. Consumption goods such as milk, bread, injera (flat-bread made from teff), unprocessed grains, wheat flour, and oil seeds are exempt from Value added tax (VAT). These measures have beneficial impact on the society as a whole and women in particular.

On the other hand, Ethiopia has achieved significant progress in integrating gender considerations into government expenditure, a crucial aspect of macroeconomic policy. Notably, gender-responsive budgeting has yielded positive outcomes. The financial administration Proclamation No.970/2016 played a pivotal role in amending the government budget process to include gender issues. However, there is still room for improvement in making the expenditure policy in Ethiopia more gender responsive. While the proclamation explicitly mentions the incorporation of gender issues during preparation of budgets, it falls short in addressing gender-related indicators or variables in the Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework (MEFF), which remains entirely gender-neutral. Additionally, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) should produce a gender budget statement and submit it to Parliament alongside the annual Federal Government draft budget which is yet to be implemented.

Advocacy efforts are on-going to urge policymakers to prioritize gender responsiveness in stimulus packages and fiscal policies. Throughout the reporting period, a national study was conducted on the Gender Responsiveness of Fiscal Policy and its associated legal framework with the support of UN Agencies. Subsequently, a policy brief was crafted, and a policy dialogue was arranged to sway decision makers towards adopting more gender-inclusive and responsive macroeconomic, fiscal, and monetary policies. Capacity building and South-South experience sharing for parliamentarians and experts of the MoF have also been undertaken. Ethiopia requires a more strategic approach and advocacy efforts to advance this agenda in the upcoming years and achieve a gender-responsive macroeconomic policy. Overall, it is crucial for Ethiopia to address the gender biases in its macroeconomic and fiscal policies to ensure a more equitable and inclusive economic environment.

3.2 Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services

3.2.1. Measures to reduce poverty among women and girls

During the reporting period, the government has implemented various initiatives to reduce the gender disparity in poverty. These initiatives encompass mainstreaming gender across sector programs, enhancing the employment opportunities for underprivileged women, expanding their access to land, finance, technology, and agricultural extension services, facilitating women's participation in entrepreneurship and market access, bolstering social protection schemes for women and girls, and reinforcing affordable legal aid services for impoverished women.

The agriculture sector is the prominent sector contributing to poverty reduction among women and girls. To close the gender gap, the Ministry of Agriculture created gender-inclusive agricultural policies and the Women's Affairs Directorate (WAD) have been implementing gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans to support women and youth empowerment in the agriculture sector. To advance women's livelihood, the ministry has included women-specific activities and sex-disaggregated aims in the sector's policies, programs, and initiatives. As a result, programs such as the Household Asset Building Program (HABP), Participatory Small Scale Irrigation Project (PSSIP), Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP), National Nutrition Program (NNP), Agricultural Growth Program (AGP), and Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) have gender components that have helped reduce poverty among women and girls.

Acknowledging the significance of pro-poor sectors in reducing the gender disparity in poverty, the government has been providing substantial funding to these sectors. The government budgetary allotment for the pro-poor sectors of education, health, water and energy, rural development, and road construction has demonstrated a rising trend over time. The federal budget has allotted on average 34% of its budget to these sectors despite slight declines over the past few years because of the recent, intensified humanitarian crisis and the rising demand for humanitarian assistance.

Cooperatives have provided chances for employment and income generation for women improving their livelihood. The participation of women in cooperative membership increased from 21% to 32% during the reporting period. Even while women participate in cooperatives at a lower rate than men do, this has nevertheless improved their situation by giving them more access to finance, credit, agricultural inputs, marketing opportunities, and other resources. The government has included gender considerations into the cooperative policy, which allows women to participate in cooperative leadership and membership, to increase women's engagement. In addition, the government has supported "women only" cooperatives to provide a welcoming environment for women to participate more.

Increasing women's access to land, housing, finance, technology, and agricultural extension services are additional measures by Ethiopian government to reduce the gender dynamics of poverty and lift women and girls out of poverty. Ethiopia enacted and has been implementing important laws that pave the way for women's income and asset ownership and reduce gender inequality induced poverty. Policy measures

prominent to this are the government measures on land administration which is another area that paved the way to reducing poverty among women and girls enabling them to own assets. The 1997 Federal Rural Land Administration Law has provisions on equal rights of women to land. The Federal Government and Regional States have enacted Land Use and Administration Laws that considered the issue of gender.

The government land registration program, with significant gender considerations, has led to an improvement in women's land ownership. As of 2022, a total of 0.66 million households have received second-level land certification. Out of these, 0.46 million households were male-headed (MHH) and 0.2 million households were female-headed (FHH). Remarkably, almost 90% of the land certificates included women's names as either individual or joint owners. This certification has ensured joint ownership, enabling women to safeguard their land rights. However, there is still a need for further intervention to address social norms that limit women's decision-making power over their land, even after certification.

Women's asset ownership has increased because pro-poor sector policies, and the Ethiopian Gender Asset Gap Survey 2022 shows women asset ownership is increasing with men slightly dominating. In principal asset ownership about 84% of women and 86% of men own dwellings. Consistent with the fact that Ethiopia is an agrarian economy, 69% of women and 73.1% of men own agricultural land while 75.3% of women and 76.2% of men own livestock. Comparatively speaking, the share of women financial asset owners from total financial asset owners is lower as 34% compared to a 66% share of men.

Enhancing the involvement of women in entrepreneurship and facilitating their access to markets and financial resources is a crucial step taken by the government to reduce the gender disparity in poverty and promote the economic empowerment of women. The promotion of women's entrepreneurship and the growth of women-led businesses have shown promising advancements in recent years. Government initiatives focusing on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have opened avenues for women to pursue self-employment. Recognizing the significant obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs, such as limited market access, business acumen, and financial resources, the government, along with civil society organizations and development partners, implemented various programs to enhance the capacity of women-led enterprises and during the reporting over 2.3 million women have received business development capacity building trainings.

Bolstering social protection schemes for women and girls is another promising measure closing the gender gap in poverty. Ethiopia has developed a Social Protection Policy which is adequately integrated women's concerns and actions to reduce their vulnerability to poverty. This policy aims to protect poor and vulnerable individuals, households, and communities from the adverse effects of shocks and destitution; increase the scope of social insurance; increase access to equitable and quality health, education and social welfare services to build human capital thus breaking the inter-generational transmission of poverty; guarantee a minimum level of employment for the long term unemployed and underemployed; enhance the social status and progressively realize the social and economic rights of the excluded and marginalized; and ensure the different levels of society are taking appropriate responsibility for the implementation of social protect.

The PSNP initiative stands out as a significant social protection program that plays a key role in alleviating extreme poverty among women and girls (further details provided in section 3.2.2 below). A crucial element of the PSNP in ensuring sustainable poverty reduction among women and girls is its focus on enhancing assets, human capital, and income-generating capabilities through various promotive measures. These measures include providing employment opportunities, direct cash transfers, household asset development, small-scale social cash transfers such as non-contributory pensions, disability grants, cash assistance to extremely impoverished families with children, and low-interest loans targeted at impoverished women and households capable of engaging in economic activities.

Women who have had their rights to land and property ownership violated have been able to access affordable and free legal aid services, which are essential measures in reducing their poverty levels. The national initiatives aimed at providing free legal aid, spearheaded by the Ministry of Justice, law schools, women's rights organizations have made significant strides in enhancing the availability of accessible and cost-free legal assistance for disadvantaged women and girls. Support has been offered to women in making decisions regarding land use, surpassing mere documentation. The national drive to offer free legal aid to women has enabled them to present their cases in courts and uphold their rights concerning land use and tangible benefits beyond mere documentation. It is imperative to concentrate on strategic interventions that can reshape social norms, ensuring that women can fully enjoy the advantages of land ownership beyond mere documentation, thereby transforming social norms and establishing legal systems that are responsive to gender issues.

3.2.2 Access to social protection for women and girls

The Ethiopian National Social Protection Policy and National Strategy prioritize creating an inclusive social protection system that considers gender and specific vulnerabilities. The Productive Safety Net program (PSNP) covers eight million households and includes interventions like public works projects, cash transfers and risk financing. The Urban Productive Safety Net Project, launched in 2016, benefits over 600,000 households in 11 cities. An urban destitute component was added in 2019 to support vulnerable urban populations, including street children.

The participation of women in the PSNP programs stands at 51% and 60% in rural and urban PSNP program respectively. The PSNP program has well integrated gender aspects with a focus on women's empowerment. The design of the program was informed by the finding of a gender analysis and gender mainstreaming has been integrated in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM) giving due focus for gender responsive and transformative programs. The gender provisions have considered women's reproductive role, workload, and asset gap and in response provided exemptions for pregnant and lactating women and caretakers of malnourished children from public works, flexible hours and light work for women, set up community day care facilities, and introduced water and sanitation and hygiene interventions that eased women's time and labor burden. It also provides linkage to other social services including utilization of health and nutrition related services. The gender mainstreaming training for the PSNP implementers also improved the implementation of gender provisions and the implementers in most parts of the country have been capacitated to undertake joint registration of wife and husband in the PSNP support provisions passbook.

The participation of women in the PSNP program has also paved the way for their empowerment and securing their livelihoods. They received training on improved agricultural practices, business, and entrepreneurship skills, and accessed credit to engage in income generation through agricultural and livestock activities. They are further supported with inputs and advisory support to start home gardening for household nutrition, which have all contributed to reducing poverty among women. In general, the government's strong commitments in mainstreaming gender in the PSNP program enabled women to improve their economic insecurity, improved health, nutrition, asset ownership which is crucial move improving women's poverty.

The Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) program currently being implemented nationwide is another social protection initiative in Ethiopia. It offers choices for health finance to the underprivileged and unorganized sector. The CBHI, a subsidized health financing option offered to low resource rural and urban settings on voluntary basis with participants making annual payments into a pool of community funds for health services, is a game-changing for women and girls' access to health giving them freedom

over health care decisions without financial constraints and the need to seek approval of male members of the households using the insurance card.

Based on the five main pillars of the National Social Protection Policy, the government seeks to efficiently connect the PSNP, UPSNP, and the CBHI to offer integrated social protection measures to the most vulnerable individuals. The community-based health insurance is crucial security for women who have limited access and spending decision on health expenditures due to gender power difference in marriage. As the decision on spending in most cases has been the sole role of the men, the Health Extension Workers (HEWs) mobilized the households for community-based health insurances played crucial role influencing the household decision for health insurance premium.

3.2.3 Health outcomes for women and girls

Ethiopia has taken various steps to improve women's health outcomes and reduce gender disparities in healthcare. These include improving access and utilization of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), offering specialized services for women and girls, addressing mental health during humanitarian crises, raising awareness, providing training for healthcare professionals, and reaching marginalized groups.

The level of knowledge regarding contraception has significantly improved, as evidenced by the latest available national data, the Ethiopian Mini-Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) in 2019. It reveals that more than 96% of currently married women are aware of at least one modern method of contraceptives. Moreover, the use of modern contraceptives among currently married women has shown a consistent increase over the past 15 years, rising from 14% in 2005 to 41% in 2019.

The total fertility rate has decreased from 5.5 to 4.1 children per woman during the same period. Maternal mortality rates have declined, and under-5 mortality has been reduced by 52%. Infant mortality has decreased by 39%, and neonatal mortality has decreased by 15%. The proportion of women receiving four or more antenatal care visits has increased from 12% in 2005 to 43% in 2019. Institutional deliveries have increased from 26% in 2016 to 48% in 2019, while home deliveries have decreased from 73% to 51% in the same period. Additionally, the maternal mortality rate has declined to 267 per 100,000 live births in 2022.

Significant strides have been taken in addressing women's mental health during humanitarian crises. The conflict and crises in the country have severely disrupted social services, including health, and there has been a high incidence of GBV. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the demand for mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) has been substantial, with 3,250,268 individuals in need of MHPSS and 738,697 individuals in need of specialized mental health care for severe mental disorders in the crisis affected regions. Despite the lack of sex disaggregated quantitative data, the qualitative data indicated that over 70% of those in need of MHPSS are women and girls.

To cater to the mental and psychosocial health needs of the affected population, the Ministry of Health, with the assistance of UN Agencies, formulated and put into action a strategic plan that considered the needs especially vulnerable of groups including women and girls. This endeavor yielded notable successes, with all crises affected regions observing an increase in the utilization of mental health services, with a higher proportion being women and girls according to qualitative data from the regions. Although qualitative evidence has shown that mental health support has successfully reached and benefited more women, there is still a need to collect data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability. Additionally, it is important to create tailored strategies and manuals that specifically focus on the intersection of gender, women's diversity, and mental health.

The government's health programs have been advancing gender-sensitive public awareness by utilizing health extension workers and various health campaigns. Equally noteworthy efforts have been made by

CSOs and development partners conducting comprehensive gender-sensitive community awareness programs on SRH, SGBV, family planning, obstetric fistula, and non-communicable disease such as breast and cervical cancers. Such programs, which target both men and women, have had significant impact on addressing gender barriers in health access and household decision-making regarding health financing.

3.2.4 Education outcomes and skills for women and girls

Ethiopia has made significant progress in closing the gender gap in education through various measures such as improving access, retention, and completion rates for women and girls in formal and informal education, including TVET. Other initiatives include revising curricula, providing gender equality training for educators, creating safe learning environments, and expanding opportunities in STEM and digital literacy. These efforts aim to enhance women's educational opportunities and promote gender equality in education.

The measures taken have enabled Ethiopia to achieve notable education outcomes for women and girls at different levels. As per the Ministry of Education annual education statistics for 2023 the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for primary, middle and secondary level school reached 0.91, 0.98 and 1.01 respectively. The participation of women in adult education has also reached 43.7 % of the total 4,151,321 participants in 2023. The female school completion rate for grade 6 and 8 is 70 and 61 percent respectively while the figure for male students is 73 and 61.

The government has also focused on improving the educational outcomes of marginalized groups including student with special needs and refugee students. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) rate of special needs education for females reached 3.1%, 10. % and 3.7% for pre-primary, primary and secondary education while the figure for males is 3.8%, 13% and 4.3% and despite the slight increase for male students the female percentage has been increasing.

The education outcome for refugee women and girls is progressively increasing and as of 2023 a total of 71,411 refugee students were enrolled in different levels of general education and women account for 42.4% slightly increasing from the previous years. The GER for refugees in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for 2023 is 38.4% and the GPI for the level is 0.96. The GER for primary education is 54% with a GPI of 0.81 and in middle school GER is 40.9% with a GPI of 0.59. In secondary education, however, GER is lower with 14.6% and GPI is 0.35 with slight increment from last year. The Net Enrollment Rate (NER) is 40.3% in primary, 16.8% in middle school and 3.6% in secondary education.

Addressing girls' education barriers includes overcoming distance barriers and harmful traditional practices like child marriage, abduction, and FGM/C. The government, development partners CSOs have taken strong measures in this regard. The girls' hostel service by the government and different CSOs working on girls' education has contributed to the achievement of gender parity at secondary education with a GPI of 1.01 as of 2023. The investments made by the health program in water and sanitation and the provisions of sanitary pads through government and CSO support has made great contributions reducing girls' absenteeism from school during their menstrual period. However, most girls in rural areas still face difficulties to enroll in secondary education due to limited availability of schools in their locality and the low economic status of their families which makes it difficult to relocate to nearby towns where secondary schools are available. While the government is working on expanding the reach of secondary schools including hostel schools, gaps are still evident.

The involvement of women in teaching is increasing, with women making up 66.9% of enrollment in diploma programs, 41.3% in degree programs, and 40.8% in special needs education training. However, women's participation in school administrations is low, prompting the government to act. In 2023, only 6.7% of primary school leadership positions and 8% of secondary school leadership positions were held by women. To address this disparity, the government has implemented the Gender Strategy in Education

and Training, aiming to eliminate gender barriers and ensure equal participation. The government provides capacity building programs for school principals and teachers, with a focus on empowering female educators.

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with MoWSA and with the assistance of UN Agencies, has successfully prioritized gender integration in the education system by incorporating gender mainstreaming into the new education curriculum and textbook materials. A thorough gender analysis of education curriculum and textbooks in the Amhara and Oromia regions has guided the development of the new curriculum. Capacity building support has been provided to textbook developers to ensure the creation of gender-sensitive curriculum, textbooks, and teachers' guides. Moreover, the MoE has developed a training manual on gender-responsive pedagogy for primary school teachers, both pre-service and in-service, to enhance their understanding of gender issues in education. These efforts have greatly contributed to the advancement of gender-sensitive teaching and learning practices. The Ministry has enhanced girls' education strategies to specifically target and overcome barriers that hinder girls' education, thus promoting their equal participation in the educational system. All universities have implemented a gender equality policy to tackle gender-related obstacles faced by female students and to prevent and address gender-based violence. However, further strategies are needed to fully implement the Gender Strategy developed by the MOE, particularly in ensuring that gender equality statements are explicitly included in school strategic plans, annual plans, and lesson plans.

The government has taken significant steps to create a safe, harassment-free, and inclusive educational environments for women and girls to reduce the gender gap in education and enhance the safety of female students in schools. The Gender Equality and Girls Education Strategy has prioritized addressing sexual harassment and other forms of violence in educational institutions. To combat the high rates of school related GBV, a Code of Conduct on Prevention of GBV in Schools has been enforced in all regions. Additionally, a Violence Reporting Tool (VRT) was created to collect data on incidents of violence in schools. The MOE has also developed guidelines to prevent and respond to sexual violence in schools and their surrounding environments. In its efforts to address the needs marginalized groups, MoE has been implementing action plans for School related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) for Refugee and Host Community Schools. The action plan has identified the risk areas and set strategies and action to address the risk areas.

3.2.5 Economic recovery from COVID-19 to close gender gap in poverty that the pandemic exacerbated

The government has taken measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender disparities in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health. The government prevented job losses in manufacturing, construction, and service sectors by paying the salaries for jobs that are at risk through an 11 billion Ethiopian (ETB) support package which was accompanied by a 36 billion ETB stimulus package to support large enterprises, self-employment, and SMSEs. There was also an increase of 19.5 billion ETB in food and WASH program spending. As women are concentrated in the jobs that were at high risk of cut-backs during the COVID-19 pandemic like manufacturing, construction, service sector and SMEs, the measures taken had significant positive impact on women and in reducing the gender poverty gap exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 lockdown had a significant adverse impact on education, particularly for women and girls. Many of them were forced to stay at home with potential abusers, exposing them to domestic violence. This dire situation led to a sharp increase in GBV and a rise in child marriages. Recognizing the urgency of

the issue, the government and like-minded civil society organizations (CSOs) focused on advocating for girls' education and their return to school.

The government and CSOs demonstrated gender sensitivity in their implementation of COVID-19 social protection measures. Various interventions in social protection, health, food security, water, and education during the pandemic were designed with consideration for women's specific needs. For example, efforts were made to address the challenges faced by internally displaced women and children living in communal shelters by providing emergency shelter and essential items. However, certain proposed initiatives, such as remote learning through radio and TV broadcasts, and the distribution of self-learning materials, failed to account for the additional caregiving responsibilities of girls and women and their limited access to technologies. This oversight made it challenging for them to participate in virtual learning sessions.

3.3 Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotype

3.3.1 Gender based violence prioritized for action and strategies to prevent

The Government of Ethiopia has made it a top priority to combat GBV. The efforts of the government have been focused on addressing various forms of GBV in both development and humanitarian contexts. Considering the rise in GBV cases during the COVID-19 lockdown and humanitarian crises, several measures have been implemented. These include enhancing GBV response mechanisms by expanding One-Stop-Centers, GBV safe houses, and temporary shelters in IDP centers. Furthermore, coordination mechanisms have been strengthened through the GBV Areas of Responsibility and the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce. The government has also placed significant emphasis on eradicating harmful traditional practices such as child, early, and forced marriage and FGM/C during the reporting period. A five-year strategy on the Prevention and Response to Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) has been launched under the leadership of the National Coordinating Body the prevention and response to VAWC, co-chaired by the MoJ and MoWSA and bringing together stakeholders in government, civil society and development partners.

Gender based violence in conflict settings

In conflict-affected areas, the government has made a high-level commitment to address GBV by establishing the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce. This taskforce includes various committee structures responsible for investigation and prosecution, refugee and IDP affairs, sexual and gender-based violence, and resource mobilization. The Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and Ministry of Finance chair these committees, respectively. The Ministry of Finance has therefore developed a Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Prevention and Response Action Plan for Response, Recovery, and Resilience for Conflict-Affected Communities, which run from 2022 to 2027. The goal is to improve access to multi-sectoral response services for GBV survivors, with a budget allocation of USD 70 million.

During the reporting period, the MoWSA at the Federal Level and the Bureaus of Women and Social Affairs at the regional level took the lead in coordinating the GBV-AORs. This proactive coordination involved the participation of counterparts from the Federal and Regional governments, CSOs, UN Agencies, academia, and other stakeholders. As a result of this coordination, essential services such as health, legal support, psychosocial assistance, emergency dignity kits, and livelihood recovery were effectively provided to survivors of GBV. The coordination has enabled over 2.69 million women and girls to receive essential GBV response services in 2023.

The GBV-AOR has successfully overseen the implementation of a set of minimum standards for addressing GBV in emergency situations. This has resulted in the establishment of women and girls' friendly services within temporary GBV response shelters and among IDP centers. In conflict-affected areas, designated "Women Safe Spaces" have been created to ensure that women and girls feel secure when accessing services and engaging in discussions with other women about their urgent concerns. These initiatives have not only enhanced women's empowerment and psychological well-being but also facilitated their healing process. Additionally, efforts have been made to reintegrate GBV survivors by providing them with livelihood development, skill training and financial support to start their own businesses.

Remarkable efforts made by various actors in government, CSOs, and UN Agencies increase access to violence prevention and protection services for conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women. The response mechanisms were comprehensive and considered the diversity of people affected by crises. The GBV protection, prevention and response need in Ethiopia is increasing and the national protection response dashboard for Ethiopia as of August 2023 reported that people in need reached 10.4 million. Of which the protection clusters targeted 4.9million and reached 3.1 million, 65% of those targeted (15% boys, 22% girls, 21% men, 37% women and 5% elderly) and 35,298 people with disabilities are reached. Targets are reached covering IDPs in camps 180, 412 (44%), Host community 84,641 (44.2%), IDP out site 62, 445 (5.3%), IDP returnees 16,068 (6.3%) and service providers 248 (0.2%).

The government in collaboration with CSOs and UN Agencies improved the capacity for survivor centered GBV response. During the reporting period, One Stop service centers providing medical, psycho-social, and legal services for survivors expanded and a total of 78 On Stop Centers have been strengthened. Temporary GBV survival shelters have been opened in the conflict affected areas and IDP centers during the crises with survivors accessing comprehensive GBV services. Safe-houses for survivors of GBV also expanded providing critical rehabilitation services. Throughout the reporting period, the government successfully completed and put into effect the GBV response Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to guarantee the provision of crucial survival-focused services. Additionally, the GBV Safe House Coordination Network took proactive steps to enhance GBV survival services, foster collaboration, and create synergy by setting up transitional shelters in areas affected by crises.

The enhancement of access to GBV and justice information has been achieved by setting up 4 national hotline services, leading to an increase in hotline coverage from 33.2% to 59%. The government, CSOs, and development partners have organized numerous awareness campaigns to prevent GBV. These campaigns have utilized a variety of methods including media campaigns, community discussions, dialogues with religious and community leaders, as well as conversations in schools to promote awareness on GBV and women's rights.

Advocacy efforts to end GBV were carried out during the reporting period. The MoWSA, in partnership with UN Agencies, conducted Economic Cost of Violence Against Women Studies to gain a deeper insight into the economic repercussions of GBV, providing crucial evidence for advocacy. Additionally, various women-led organizations, in collaboration with the MoWSA, have organized advocacy campaigns to combat GBV. Moreover, Ethiopia has shown significant progress by establishing the National Sex Offender Registration system, which will become operational in the upcoming reporting period. This registration system will play a vital role in police investigations and has the potential to effectively deter sexual crimes and recidivism.

Domestic Violence

In the past five years, the government has placed significant emphasis on addressing the issue of domestic violence. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts were made to ensure women's access to justice. The Chief Justice of Ethiopia at the time of the pandemic came out to declare that Federal Courts would

prioritize domestic violence cases resulting from stay-at-home orders. Federal courts highlighted domestic violence charges as urgent cases to be addressed promptly.

Given the rise in domestic violence cases during the COVID-19 pandemic, where women were forced to stay at home, a collaborative approach was taken by the government, CSOs, and development partners to effectively tackle this issue. Through raising awareness and enhancing women's access to justice, substantial advancements have been achieved. To address the surge in domestic violence incidents, campaigns were launched via various media platforms, both public and private, to educate the public on women's rights and GBV. Information regarding gender-based violence (GBV) and legal matters was also disseminated through the GBV hotline. Survivors were offered free legal assistance to help them seek protection and justice, with government entities, CSOs, and universities establishing free legal aid centers in different regions.

Various actors have made endeavors to incorporate the protection of sexual exploitation and abuse into the COVID-19 response mechanisms. The GBV-AOR has anticipated that women and girls are more vulnerable and encounter additional and overlapping protection issues. They have advocated for the enhancement of referral mechanisms between health facilities and GBV actors, while also emphasizing the importance of continuing GBV services such as case management, referral, and individual psychosocial support.

Trafficking in women and girls

Trafficking in women and girls has also received significant attention by the GoE in the reporting period. The government stepped up its enforcement of anti-trafficking laws including Ethiopia's Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 1246/2021 that provides protection employees aboard and the Proclamation No.1178/2020 on Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons which has criminalized labor and sex trafficking and provides for the rehabilitation of survivors of trafficking and bringing perpetrators to justice. The Proclamation has imposed stricter punishment for human trafficking and smuggling including sex and labor trafficking,

Additionally, as stated in the Witness and Whistleblowers Protection Proclamation (No. 699/2010), the 2020 anti-trafficking proclamation offered protections to victims who took part in investigations and prosecutions. These protections included immunity from prosecution for crimes committed only as a direct result of being trafficked. The government reportedly increased protections for victims of crime, including human trafficking, and made sure the measures complied with international standards by working with an international organization. The government, in partnership with international organizations, drafted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the prosecution of human trafficking and migrant smuggling cases to complement the 2020 anti-trafficking proclamation which is one of the new developments that occurred during the reporting period.

The government worked to create awareness on the new SOPs and gave front-line staff and stakeholders frequent trainings on how to use them to improve the capacity for the prevention and protection. Increased measures were taken by high-level structures to stop human trafficking. At the highest level, the deputy prime minister chairs the National Council, which is tasked with developing strategies and policies to stop human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The Ministry of Justice leads the technical-level national partnership coalition, which is made up of representatives from relevant government ministries, media outlets, religious institutions, and CSOs. The coalition remained the government's main hub for coordinating matters pertaining to migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

According to the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report of Ethiopia, the federal government committed 1.36 billion ETB to putting anti-trafficking and anti-migrant smuggling pledges into practice during the 2022–2023 fiscal year while the regional governments allocated budget for their respective regions. The initiative has

been benefiting vulnerable women and girls considering that Ethiopia has considerable large number of women and girls' migrants subject to human trafficking.

However, Ethiopia needs to put in place more gender sensitive and responsive trafficking and migration laws and policies that address the intersection of trafficking and gender promoting an intersectional approach. Moreover, despite the considerable efforts and initiatives made in prevention and protection of human trafficking since the Proclamation 1178/2020, the government of Ethiopia is committed to ramping up efforts to fully comply with the minimum standards of Human Trafficking Victims Protection Act's for the elimination of human trafficking.

Gender based violence in work and public places

During the reporting period, Ethiopia has taken significant measures to address gender-based violence by tackling sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. One notable addition in the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No. 1156/2019 is the inclusion of sexual harassment and sexual violence as grounds for terminating employment contracts without notice for both employers and employees. This demonstrates the importance given to addressing such acts by the GoE. Furthermore, the law mandates that employers act upon receiving reports of sexual harassment or sexual violence in the workplace. Victims of sexual harassment or sexual violence are entitled to severance pay and compensation as stipulated by the law. This provision ensures that victims are not only protected but also provided with the necessary support and resources. Ethiopia's commitment to addressing GBV in the workplace is evident through these progressive prescriptions. The government through the MoE has also been taking significant measures to address GBV in schools as detailed in section 3.2.4 above.

Despite the significant progress made in preventing violence in public places, there are still significant gaps in the protection of women across all public spaces and institutions in Ethiopia. This is primarily due to a limited understanding of harassment, which is often unjustifiably construed as non-violence. Additionally, women are expected to tolerate such behavior, and there is weak enforcement of laws regarding sexual harassment.

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP)- FGM/C and Child Marriage

Throughout the reporting period, FGM/C and child marriage, the most prevalent forms of HTPs, received the necessary focus through the implementation of a National Costed Road Map aimed at ending child marriage and FGM/C by 2025, as well as through local level prevention efforts involving multiple stakeholders. An outstanding achievement during the reporting period was the declaration of over 4,671 villages as FGM/C and child marriage free. The National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C covering 2020-2025, includes a detailed plan with strategies, interventions, targets, and milestones to eliminate these practices. The cost of implementing the plan is estimated at \$94 million USD, and the government is committed to eradicating these practices by 2025. The roadmap applies in all circumstances including humanitarian and emergency contexts.

The significance of raising awareness on legal frameworks is emphasized in the national costed roadmap. It highlights the essential role of education, schools, and related individuals/institutions, as well as the strategic engagement of local and religious leaders as catalysts for change. Additionally, the involvement of key stakeholders such as mothers and traditional practitioners is recognized. The roadmap also provides comprehensive guidelines for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, reporting, and communication. To eradicate child marriage and FGM/C by 2025, the National Roadmap adopts a collaborative approach involving multiple sectors including education, health, justice, and others. This approach is coordinated by the MoWSA in partnership with various organizations.

Significant progress has been achieved in the coordination of efforts to address child marriage and FGM/C. The National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM brings together important stakeholders from various sectors including line ministries, civil society, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, and UN agencies. The Alliance, through its Secretariat at MoWSA, plays a crucial role in coordinating national initiatives by bringing together actors involved in data and research, organizing national events like the annual National Girls' Summit, and supporting the implementation of the national costed roadmap.

Health extension workers (HEWs) are also involved, in disseminating information related to FGM/C and educating women at the grassroots level. Healthcare workers serving at health care facilities (clinics, health centers, and hospitals) have been engaged in teaching about the health consequences of FGM/C and child marriage. School teachers also play an important role in establishing HTP clubs and informing girls about their negative implications. The school clubs have furthermore had a reverberating effect on other members of the community, mainly the parents of those girls who gained FGM/C and child marriage-related knowledge from the school clubs.

The community verification tool, created by the MoWSA and bureau of women and social Affairs in collaboration with universities, evaluates the community practices aimed at ending FGM/C and child marriage. The assessment conducted through the community verification tool found that over 4,671 villages are declared FGM/C and child marriage free. On-going initiatives are being implemented to further standardize the assessment and measurement tool in partnership with universities.

To effectively enforce the commitments to eradicate FGM/C and child marriage, a budget tracking tool has been implemented. The implementation of the tracking tool at the federal and regional level has been instrumental in ensuring the accountability of sectors in allocating funds for the implementation of these commitments. By doing so, it aims to achieve the national goal of putting an end to the practices of FGM/C and child marriage.

Efforts to generate evidence for advocacy have been given due attention, with key initiatives focusing on analyzing trends and patterns in districts and regions with high prevalence rates, conducting research on the drivers of child marriage and FGM/C, and documenting successful practices. This evidence plays a vital role in shaping program strategies and identifying target districts and regions for intervention. Additionally, relevant indicators related to interventions to end child marriage and FGM/C have been incorporated into the checklist used by parliamentarians for monitoring purposes.

The national effort in ending child marriage has been affected by the confluence of crises during the reporting period. COVID-19, war and drought led to dramatic increases in child marriage as human made and climate-induced emergencies have pushed vulnerable families into desperation. Though there has been a significant decline in child marriage and FGM/C over the past 16 years, the prevalence is still high in some region, and Ethiopia need additional efforts and accelerated programs to eliminate child marriage and FGM/C by 2030.

Strategies used to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence

The government, CSOs, and development partners have been working tirelessly to put an end to gender-based violence. They have taken steps to fortify law enforcement and the national action plan, improve women's access to justice, enhance the ability of GBV service providers to offer survival-centered services, enhance GBV prevention mechanisms, and improve perception and attitudes on gender.

During the reporting period one of the strategies taken by the government is **fortifying law enforcement** to advance progress in ending gender-based violence. Progress have been made in enforcing existing laws and introducing new laws to strengthen the efforts in ending gender-based violence. The MoWSA, in

partnership with the Ministry of Justice, UN Agencies, and other civil society organizations, made significant efforts to align national laws with international human rights norms. MoWSA in partnership with UN Against, CSOs and Ethiopian Human Right Commission further strengthened lobbying efforts to influence the administrations of the Afar and Somali regional states that are yet to endorse family laws aligned with the Federal Family Code. The development of the draft Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy with strong provision of GBV Prevention and Response, the review of criminal procedure and evidence codes, the fortification of the criminal procedure information management system (IMS), and the enhancement of the caliber and availability of women-friendly justice services were among the other noteworthy policy enforcement to end GBV during the reporting period.

The government has also prioritized ***improving women's access to justice*** as a key strategy during the reporting period in its efforts end GBV. To enhance the capacity of investigators and prosecutors to prevent and respond to GBV, training programs have been implemented by MoWSA and MoJ in collaboration with UN Agencies to improve the efficiency of investigation and prosecution services in dealing with cases of GBV as well as protecting the rights of survivors in the criminal justice process. One notable measure during the reporting period was the collaboration between the MoWSA and stakeholders to incorporate gender-sensitive training into the curriculum of the Ethiopian Police University. This initiative is aimed at ensuring the training of police officers who are sensitive to gender issues in the country.

An assessment on GBV cases investigated and prosecuted in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations during the reporting period provided valuable insights for stakeholders involved in criminal justice system and in GBV prevention and response. This assessment has contributed to the development of effective strategies to address GBV. Additionally, significant efforts have been made to address the gender barriers faced by women and girls in accessing justice. These efforts include enhancing women's and girls' legal literacy and building the capacity of legal service providers. During the reporting period free legal aid centres have been established and strengthened in different regions, which provide legal education and free legal aid services for women and girls.

Enhancing survivor centered GBV services is one of the strategies implemented during the reporting period to assure essential services to GBV survivors. This is a significant step considering the enormous need but limited institutions offering essential services. Significant efforts were exerted to strengthen the GBV service in One-Stop-Centres (OSCs) including in humanitarian settings.

The Ethiopian Network of Women Shelters (ENWS) has been diligently working to ensure that there is a coordinated and standardized provision of services for survivors of GBV in the country through shelter and safe-house services. These safe houses offer a secure environment for women and girls who have experienced violence and abuse, ensuring their safety and facilitating their rehabilitation through the provision of food, shelter, psycho-social, legal, education and economic rehabilitation services. Across the nation, there are 16 safe houses that provide rehabilitation programs as well as life and job-related skills training for survivors of violence.

Enhancing the GBV prevention measures is another crucial strategy undertaken by the government to put an end to GBV. This entails enhancing attitudes and beliefs toward gender equality and women and girl's empowerment. Government and CSOs have been implementing mass awareness raising campaigns to improve gender-based attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs through community mobilization, radio programs, community dialogues, and other means. During the reporting period, the MoWSA, in partnership with UN Agencies, and other faith-based organizations, actively collaborated with religious leaders on GBV prevention. Scholars from to the four major religious denominations (Orthodox, Muslim,

Protestant and Catholic) have created a theological viewpoint on GBV. This is an impressive start towards gender reform that challenges restrictive norms.

Working with men and women, boys and girls for improved and gender equitable decision making is another critical strategy used to improve women meaningful participation in household and community resources decisions. Government and likeminded organization on women's right and women lead organization have implemented several initiatives and programs to improve the gender power differences in decision making aiming that gender equitable decisions to reduce the incidence of GBV. Community and household level intervention strategies have then been introduced and implemented.

Promoting gender egalitarian values in primary and secondary schools through gender sensitive curriculum, teaching and learning material and introducing GBV prevention and reporting mechanisms in school settings are strategies used to prevent GBV schools. In particular, the efforts that Ethiopia has made in engendering the school curriculum is an exemplary transformative approach to nurture gender egalitarian values in the young generation which crucial to end the intergenerational inheritance of gender discriminatory norms.

3.3.2 Technology facilitated gender-based violence

Ethiopia has in recent years begun taking measures against technology facilitated gender-based violence, one of the emerging forms of GBV through introducing and strengthening legislation and regulatory provisions and implementing awareness raising initiatives targeting the public.

Ethiopia's ratification of the "Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression" Proclamation of 2020 is one of the major developments during the reporting period aimed at addressing two of the nation's most important problems: hate speech and misinformation. The Proclamation explicitly outlines all forms of hate speech, disinformation, and associated legal penalties.

Actors involved in the prevention and response to GBV have acknowledged that technology has exacerbated violence against women, including those in high positions and careers. Online gender-based violence, such as insults, harassment, and dissemination of pornography has taken on a digital form. Women in Ethiopia are targeted by anonymous individuals, and distance is no longer a barrier to online harassment. Despite the rise in technology-facilitated online GBV, there is a concerning normalization of such behavior against women in Ethiopia. This issue has not received the necessary attention it deserves. The government is committed to enhance the capacity of government actors to develop explicit policies and legislation on technology-facilitated GBV, as well as raise awareness on protection and prevention measures.

Gender biased portrayal of women and girls and gender bias in the media in general is becoming a critical concern in Ethiopia. The government is taking progressive action to particularly strengthen and enforce legal reforms to compact gender bias in the media, enforcing binding regulation for the media including for advertisements and enhancing the gender competency of media professionals through gender capacity building and encouraging the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced, and adverse image of women and girls in the media.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA), a government entity tasked with regulating the media and advertising sector with the mission of promoting a pluralistic and responsible media and advertising sector through enabling regulation, capacity building and partnership has been monitoring media content and inspecting broadcasters' activities in accordance with the national advertisement proclamation No. 755/2004, which mandates media monitoring. Gender is a significant area in inspections, and the EBA has an editorial policy that takes gender sensitivity into account. The EBA has also created a gender integration guideline and disseminated it to various media outlets across the country, translated into different

languages to enhance local uptake. Through the EBA's monitoring, media organizations which have broadcast discriminatory content, including insensitive jokes on rape, have received stern warnings.

EMA has been implementing the gender sensitive reporting manual developed during the previous reporting period which continues to be in use. The guideline and training provided for media personnel have been improving media production contents in advertisement and entertainments. Previously, women models were portrayed advertising household items and products such as detergent, cooking utensils, catering businesses etc. that limit their engagement to domestic settings thereby continuing the traditional gendered division of roles. This has improved in recent times because of the manual and series of trainings provided for media personnel, promoting a more gender balance portrayal in advertisements.

There has been progress in reducing gender prejudice and discrimination against women who work in the media. Women's participation in journalism, advertising, newscasts, talk shows and entertainment has improved. Despite men still holding most positions of power, women are becoming more involved in the ownership and control of the media.

Despite notable progress, there is still biased representation and portray in the media and entertainment. Women are frequently confined to roles and shown in stereotypical manners, which only serve to reinforce gender biases and sustain current disparities in society. It is imperative for Ethiopia to implement stringent measures mandating that every media outlet incorporates a gender division dedicated to promoting fair and equal depictions of both men and women in digital and print media.

3.3.3 Measures to resource women's organization working in GBV prevention and response

The government has been creating a conducive environment for the operation of organizations working on GBV prevention and response. In Ethiopia, community-based informal structures, development partners, and CSOs play a significant role in GBV response and prevention. These organizations have been providing vital prevention interventions, coordinating GBV response services, and offering free legal aid and shelter to survivors of GBV. They have been performing a very important function, especially in humanitarian situations when the framework of service supply becomes brittle. This has been especially evident considering the recent humanitarian emergencies. The MoWSA, MoJ, MoH, MoE and other relevant government sectors have been closely collaborating with these CSOs and development partners working on GBV prevention and response. The government has acknowledged these organizations' valuable contribution to closing the gap in prevention and service delivery.

Considering the enormous gap these organizations fill in country's efforts to prevent and respond to GBV, the government has been working to create an atmosphere that is conducive to their efficient operation. Following the revised CSO law (Proclamation 1113/2019) which has opened up the space for civil society including those working on women's rights, the government has been taking additional measures including establishing a supportive work environment, offering technical assistance to standardize the preventive and response efforts, and establishing connections with possible resources. When signatory entities sign project operational agreements, one of the top priorities for the organizations working on GBV prevention and response is to facilitate communication. Another important measure taken to foster a conducive atmosphere is to collaborate in field operation logistics.

The government has been urging donors and funding organizations to allocate additional resources for women's rights organizations working on GBV prevention and response. The efforts of the government to provide technical support to organizations working on GBV is also progressive. The MoWSA in collaboration with the UN Agencies has supported the designing of GBV service Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which is a crucial support enabling the standardization of the work of CSOs engaged in providing services to GBV survivors.

More steps are needed to support these organizations so they can reach their full potential, even with the government's progressive efforts to support groups working on GBV prevention and solutions. Most CSOs providing shelter services to survivors of GBV use rental properties with large payments leading to serious financial difficulties and issues of sustainability. Efforts will be made going forward in addressing these gaps including through the establishment of government established centers and the provision of land and other financial support to CSOs. Ethiopia's government is also committed to taking decisive action to ensure that public funding for GBV prevention and response is allocated through a national budget code, which is currently absent but provides opportunity to support GBV prevention and response-focused women's organizations.

3.3.4 Measures on GBV and Intersectionality

The Ethiopian government has acknowledged diversity of women and the special vulnerability of marginalized groups to GBV. These groups are women and girls in rural and remote areas, Adolescent and Young Women (AYW), women with disabilities, women with HIV/AIDS and women humanitarian settings and refugee camps. The government have taken special tailored measures to address violence against these marginalized groups of women.

An intersectional approach has been promoted and over the past five years, there has been an increase in the number of initiatives specifically designed to combat violence against marginalized groups. In Ethiopia, women make up half of the country's population, with approximately 40% residing in rural areas. Despite ongoing progress, rural women often lack independent access to essential resources, such as land, in comparison to their urban counterparts. This limited access to resources and decision-making power heightens their susceptibility to gender-based violence.

Gender mainstreaming efforts within various sector programs, particularly those targeting the economically disadvantaged, along with the presence of gender machineries at the community level of government structures, are key strategies in preventing GBV among rural women. Governments and various CSOs and community-based organizations have implemented diverse strategies to prevent GBV in rural areas.

Different studies on adolescent bodily integrity and freedom from violence evidenced the special vulnerability of adolescent girls with most having experienced at least one form of age- or gender-based violence. Among the adolescent girls and youth, those with disabilities, living with HIV/AIDS and in humanitarian setting face multiple forms of discrimination that severely increases their vulnerability of GBV and requires an intersectional approach.

The integration of AGYW concerns into various programs is a crucial approach implemented in Ethiopia to reduce the vulnerability of GBV among AGYW. This has been effectively demonstrated in the Health Programs, HIV/AIDS programs, and other initiatives. Additionally, a school-based interventions have been developed to enhance the school system's capacity in preventing GBV and establishing effective reporting pathways specifically for AGYW.

In Ethiopia, 30.8% and 57.7% of women with disabilities have experienced physical and sexual violence respectively and their special vulnerability to GBV has been considered in development and humanitarian response programs. The government, CSOs and development partners have been promoting an inclusion approach as address the GBV against women with disabilities. Ethiopian has created conducive environment for organizations of persons with disabilities including the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) which has been collaborating with the government to address the special vulnerability of women with disabilities to GBV.

The intersection of women with HIV/AIDS and gender has been addressed through mainstreaming approach across the sector programs. The government has developed a national HIV strategic plan which has addressed gender equality and equity through responding to gender related barriers to HIV and SRH services for women and men and girls and boys. In all regions there are trained health care providers capable of providing comprehensive HIV/AIDS service for GBV victims, including HIV testing, treatment of Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), emergency family planning and post exposure prophylaxis.

The government, CSOs and development partners have been taking swift and flexible strategies that recognize the special vulnerability of women and girls during humanitarian crises. The government has made high level commitments to address the special vulnerability of women and girls in crises settings. The Inter-Ministrial Task Force is one of the notable commitments made at high level giving critical attention for prosecution of GBV, concerns of IDP and refugees, and resource mobilization of the response. The GBV-AOR coordinated by the MoWSA and bureaus of women and social affairs at the regional level is another crucial platform that reached the women and girls in crisis setting.

Despite efforts on action taken to address gender-based violence against marginalized groups the practice of undertaking gender based, and vulnerability analysis is very limited. Therefore, the practice of undertaking gender-based analysis needs to be strengthened to inform project and program designing to address the special vulnerability of marginalized groups of women and girls.

3.4 Participation, accountability, and gender – responsive institutions

3.4.1 Measures to promote women’s participation in leadership, and decision-making.

The Ethiopian government has set motivated targets for women's leadership in its Ten-Year Development Plan aiming to establish Ethiopia as the hub of female leaders in Africa by producing 10,000 capable female leaders. Additionally, the government aims to increase the representation of women in decision-making roles within the legislative, executive, and judicial branches to 50 percent. The Ethiopian government has implemented various measures to promote women's representation and participation in leadership and decision-making to meet the set targets in the development plan. Key actions taken include addressing gender-based stereotypes surrounding women in leadership roles, capacity building on leadership and creating women leadership pool, and promoting the inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making positions. These initiatives serve as the primary strategies to narrow the gender gap in leadership and decision-making.

The government has made significant efforts to eliminate the gender-based stereotypes against women leaders through the appointment of women to key positions who can serve as role models for other women. Specifically, the decision to assign women to ministerial positions, mayor of the capital city and most notably the appointment of a female president has effectively shattered the glass ceiling and eliminated the invisible barriers that hinder capable women from attaining leadership positions.

leadership commitments are another strategy for increasing women’s participation and representation. The Prosperity Party which has attained majority following the 2021 elections introduced a voluntary party quota that reserves 30% of the candidacies on the party list for women to improve women’s representation and political participation. This measure has contributed to the country achieving 41.5% representation of women in the parliament during the reporting period.

Ethiopia has persistently promoted the involvement of women in politics. During the latest election, a significant number of 17,091,128 women were registered to vote, representing 45% of the total registered voters. This indicates a growing recognition and exercise of women's voting rights. Such progress has been made possible through various initiatives aimed at enhancing awareness of women's political roles. One of these initiatives includes efforts to raise awareness about violence against women during elections

through the hotline "Stop Violence Against Women in Election," which offers information and facilitates the reporting of cases of electoral violence against women voters, candidates, politicians, and election observers.

The government's efforts in creating conducive environment for the participation of marginalized women in the leadership have been progressive. In the context of the 2021 elections, marginalized groups received increased attention, particularly in relation to the inclusion of women and persons with disabilities (PWDs). The inclusion of women and PWDs as candidates and an increased number of women and PWDs as members and leaders within the party structure is incentive through additional financial support as per the electoral law which also provides for women's participation in electoral body structures. The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) took significant steps to ensure participation and representation for these marginalized groups, including providing training to non-governmental organizations, media outlets, and election officials on the importance of including gender considerations and PWDs. Additionally, they developed materials on election laws in an accessible format and supported political parties in their efforts to include PWDs. Despite these advancements, there were several challenges that needed to be addressed, such as inaccessibility of polling stations, a limited number of candidates with disabilities, and the lack of self-confidence among PWDs, which hindered their participation in politics. Nevertheless, the inclusive measures implemented resulted in the participation of 960 women with disabilities in events aimed at encouraging them to exercise their right to vote.

Although the Ethiopian government's efforts to increase the number of women in public leadership roles are commendable, institutionalization and sustainability remain significant challenges. This is evident in the fact that, because of the recent government reform, there is a trend of women in high leadership roles, including ministerial level positions, being replaced by men, posing a threat to the achieved gender parity in leadership. In addition, there was a significant disparity in women's leadership throughout all governmental branches, including the regional and lower administration levels.

Women currently hold 36.3% of ministerial posts at the federal level. However, female representation in leadership roles within the government remains low across all branches (executive, legislative, judiciary) at the regional level, with women holding 23% of such positions. At the Woreda level, the percentage slightly increases to 36%, while at the Zone level, it stands at 25%. The regions of Afar, Somali, and Benshangul Gumuz have the lowest female representation in regional government, with 7%, 11%, and 19% respectively.

On the other hand, women representation in senior managerial positions in sector ministries has shown progress. As per Proclamation No. 1263/2021 that defines Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs to government institutions are now mandated to prioritize women's issues in policies, laws, and development programs. This proactive approach has led to a noticeable increase in the number of women occupying leadership and decision-making positions within different sectors. In line with this proclamation, the MoWSA has introduced the Performance Leveling tool. This tool is used to evaluate the performance of sector ministries on indicators of gender equality and women's empowerment categorizing sectors as Gender Blind, Gender Sensitive, Gender Responsive, and Gender Transformative. The Gender Leveling framework focuses on key areas such as prerequisites for gender mainstreaming, the gender mainstreaming process, gender advocacy, and women's empowerment. Increasing women's leadership and decision-making is one of the criteria under women empowerment.

Through these efforts, the Ethiopian Government is striving to create a more inclusive and gender-equal leadership landscape. The MoWSA gender leveling result indicated that sector ministries have increased the participation of women in leadership. For instance, the Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration achieved women 41.6% in middle management level and 50% in lower management. The Ministry of Industry has 43% women in executive positions and middle management which is very impressive.

Similarly, the Ministry of Mines achieved 75% of female leadership at team leader level and 45% at middle level management position.

The MoWSA has been actively working towards creating a pool of women leaders by enhancing the skills and capabilities of middle and lower-level women leaders and those aspiring to leadership positions. To achieve this, a comprehensive curriculum and training manual on Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality and Women's Political Empowerment has been developed and is currently being utilized to provide capacity-building training for women leaders and aspirants at both federal and regional levels through the gender machinery. Additionally, a dedicated training center has been established in selected universities to support the Transformative Leadership for Gender Equality Training initiative.

During the reporting period, a significant milestone was achieved with the training of 15,000 women on leadership, thereby contributing to the expansion of the women leadership pool. Furthermore, efforts have been made to challenge and transform societal and gender norms that hinder women's leadership. The MoWSA has been actively involved in revising the national guideline for male engagement and has organized dialogues to address the barriers faced by women in leadership positions. These initiatives aim to change negative perceptions and promote greater participation and representation of women in public and political life. Despite the setback from the gender parity achieved in 2018 in women's leadership, Ethiopia is still in good progress in gender equitable leadership compared to other countries in the sub-Saharan region.

3.4.2 Women access to expression and participation in media and ICT

During the reporting period, efforts have been made to address the gender gap in media, focusing on gender equitable participation in decision-making, balanced content presentation, and expression. The government in collaboration with CSOs and the Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA) have been exerting efforts to narrow the gender gap in media and improve women's access to expression and participation in decision making in media.

Efforts have been made by the government to combat the underrepresentation of women in the media, negative stereotypes, limited coverage of women's issues, restricted access to information and media platforms, as well as the lack of women in decision-making roles within the media sector. Currently, EMWA boasts a membership of over 200 individuals from various media and communication backgrounds, including private and government media, NGOs, international organizations, communication agencies, and professional women media practitioners nationwide.

A gender experts directory that serves as a valuable resource for the media has been created. This directory aims to amplify the voices of women, challenge stereotypes, and bridge the gender gap in the media. By promoting gender diversity and representation, it enables people to access information from a wide range of sources that are relevant to their experiences. This directory is specifically designed for journalists and media practitioners, providing them with a tool to include women as sources in their programs. Additionally, it plays a crucial role in shifting societal attitudes that limit women to certain areas of expertise. In a broader context, this directory helps reshape the portrayal of women in the media, replacing inaccurate and limiting depictions with more constructive and empowering imagery. The directory and its accompanying website database feature 18 categories, encompassing authoritative voices in fields such as agriculture, engineering, art, literature, ICT, business, disability, gender, health, food science, tourism, and more. It serves as a national "women only" directory of expertise, readily accessible to journalists seeking reliable news sources.

Aiming to change the media landscape in Ethiopia that is heavily dominated by men, the Ethiopian Media Women Association and Human Right Defenders have formed a platform for female journalists to increase women's participation in the media. The platform has enabled women media professionals to deliberate

on gendered participation in media production, transition of women from soft news to hard news and contents in media news and shows.

There has been a noticeable rise in the level of female participation in the media industry compared to previous years, although there is still a long way to go in achieving gender parity. Large public media agencies, such as Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), employ a total of 385 journalists, with 111 (29%) being women. Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) has 279 journalists, out of which 100 (36%) are women. Regional media outlets like Amhara Mass Media Agency (AMMA) and South Radio and Television Agency (SRTA) have employed 240 (37% female) and 115 (28% female) journalists respectively. The private media employs a relatively smaller number of journalists. For instance, Sheger 102.1, a popular private broadcast media, has employed 20 radio journalists, with 30% being female. When it comes to print news, the percentage of women journalists employed is notably lower. The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) employs 118 journalists across its newspaper titles in different languages and only 18% of them are women and Media and Communication Center (MCC) employed 27 journalists of which women are only 11%.

The participation of women in senior positions in the media needs strategic attention of the government to address the barriers to the equal representation of women. The current share of women in the most popular media outlets in Ethiopia including FBC, EBC, AMMA, SRTA and EPA, MCC accounts 18% out of the 143 senior positions. The editorial decision-making positions total 733 from the same popular media agencies with women accounting for 28% only.

The gendered role in media broadcasting is another area needs attention. There still gendered division of responsibilities where women are overrepresented in soft skill positions. In FBC and EBC, of the total 136 journalists working on hard news, women account only 25% while on the contrary among 111 journalists working on soft skill positions in the same media organizations, women account for 63%.

The representation of gender and women's issues in Ethiopian media has experienced a significant shift in recent years. Numerous programs focused on women's empowerment and gender equality have been broadcasted through various media platforms. Organizations advocating for gender equality have collaborated with media agencies to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Despite the efforts made in the media sector to promote a gender-inclusive content, the mainstream media still falls short in addressing the needs of various segments of society. This is particularly evident in the inadequate coverage of women's issues, rural women, farmers, people with disabilities, and children.

The Ethiopian government is focusing on the ICT sector to establish a digital economy. With over half of TVET participants being women, one of the government's strategies to enhance women's ICT access is by incorporating ICT into TVET. The objective of TVET's ICT curriculum is to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of information technology, encompassing database management, network administration, and software development. Gender consideration in innovation and technology is increasing becoming a focus for government, CSOs and development partners working on gender and women's right.

3.4.3 Gender machinery exclusively dedicated to promotion of gender equality

As per the Proclamation No. 1263/2021 that defines the Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) is mandated as the national women's machinery in the government structure exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and has full cabinet representation with Bureaus of Women and Social Affairs at Regional, Zonal and Woreda Levels. This Proclamation has also mandated the MoWSA to hold sectors accountable for gender mainstreaming within their mandates. This has enabled the Ministry to have a more focused mandate for coordination of gender mainstreaming initiatives.

The gender vertical coordination is ensured through the structure of MoWSA at federal, regional, zonal and woreda level. The MoWSA has also created a forum where government and non-government organizations at national level exchange experiences, undertake studies focusing on the problems of women and devise strategies for the practical solutions to problems jointly.

The gender sectoral forum is created to ensure horizontal coordination among government organs. At the federal and regional level, government ministries, bureaus and agencies have gender directorates with powers and duties to address women and social affairs in their respective sectors in the development and implementation of policies, laws and development programs and projects. The mainstreaming of gender issues in the respective sectors of the executive branch provides a strong basis for ensuring accountability in the of mainstreaming gender. The women's machineries in sectors and regions have working relationships with the MoWSA. The women's affairs departments and bureaus share their quarterly and annual progress reports while the ministry provides capacity building support and standard setting. The annual forum of the sector is an opportunity to share experiences and map out future directions for gender initiatives.

In establishing the gender machinery, the government promotes "Twin Track" approach (mainstreaming and stand-alone intervention). By establishing gender directorate at each sector ministry office promotes a mainstreaming approach while the MoWSA and its structures at different levels are exclusively dedicated to implementing standalone programmes on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The gender machineries receive budget allocations from the government annually. Nevertheless, due to the significant challenges in advancing gender equality and empowering women and the wide-encompassing mandate of the structures, the gender machineries are currently under resourced. Strong measures and commitment are required to adequately resource them and ensure their full capacity is utilized in advancing gender equality.

3.4.4 Mechanisms for gender mainstreaming

The Ethiopian government has effectively put in place gender mainstreaming procedures. According to Proclamation No. 1263/2021 that defines Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs, all government agencies must address women's issues in laws, policies, development initiatives, and programs that strengthen the systems of accountability for gender. Prominent methods for mainstreaming gender include inter-ministerial coordination, sector-specific gender mainstreaming plans, gender audits, collaboration with women's organizations, and gender focal points in executive organs.

One mechanism for inter-sectoral coordination on gender is the creation of a gender directorates/units/focal points in each ministry and sector bureaus at the regional level. The units plan and implement gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans that direct the integration of gender into their sector's planning and execution and oversee the action's execution. There has been progress in this area, and most sector offices have implemented their gender mainstreaming strategy and action plans. The Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture are better performing in this regard according to the assessment of MoWSA on the performance leveling tool.

In its coordination mandate, the MoWSA has been monitoring and evaluating the gender mainstreaming practices of sector ministries. The Ministry has implemented the performance leveling tool, which assesses the gender-related work of each sector minister and levels the sector as Gender Blind, Gender Sensitive, Gender Responsive, or Gender Transformative. The performance leveling tool emphasizes key areas including laws and policies, plans and implementation, availability of gender disaggregated data, representation of women in leadership and decision-making and standalone programmes benefiting

women and girls. In the latest assessment conducted in 2022-2023, the MoWSA evaluated 21 sector ministers, with 4 offices being categorized as gender sensitive and the remaining as gender responsive. Despite the progress made in mainstreaming, there is a need for strategic and concrete efforts to achieve gender transformation across all sectors and levels.

Gender audits provide valuable insights on the status of gender mainstreaming within institutions and in the reporting period several organizations including the House of Federation (the upper house of parliament), the Ethiopian Media Authority, Ethiopian Broadcast Media Houses, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, have undertaken gender audits. The Gender Audits have enabled the institutions to identify areas for improvements and develop gender action plans to address the gaps.

The collaboration between the National government and similar organizations on gender mainstreaming has shown progress following the revision of CSO legislation that previously limited their participation in gender equality and women's rights issues. The government has partnered with women's rights organizations and other entities focusing on women and gender equality in the country to enhance gender mainstreaming efforts in various programs. Gender mainstreaming has been a key consideration for the government when evaluating projects and programs of CSOs and development partners. Additionally, collaboration on gender advocacy, capacity building, and conducting various research projects on women and gender have been key areas of cooperation between the government and women's rights organizations.

3.4.5 Measures of human right organization to address violation of women's right and promote gender equality

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is an autonomous body at the federal level, established in accordance with the Federal Constitution with branches in regional states. It operates as an institution for the promotion and safeguarding of human rights, reporting directly to the House of Peoples' Representatives (HoPR). Its establishment is outlined in Article 55/14 of the FDRE Constitution and Proclamation No. 210/2000, which has been amended by Proclamation No. 1224/2020.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has been diligently engaged in promoting awareness on women's rights and reporting violations of these rights. The EHRC has a dedicated commissioner for women's rights. The Commission has been actively advocating for women's rights and their involvement in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Additionally, it has been organizing various initiatives such as capacity building programs, dialogues, and consultations on women's rights and GBV in times of humanitarian crises. The Commission has also made efforts to ensure the inclusion of women with disabilities and elderly women in empowerment programs and awareness-raising activities at different levels. Furthermore, the Commission has highlighted the heightened vulnerability of women to GBV in refugee camps, internally displaced populations, and among migrants.

Throughout the reporting period, the Commission has played a significant role in incorporating the viewpoints of individuals whose rights have been violated in transitional justice processes. In collaboration with the OHCHR, EHRC have conducted national dialogues and consultations in various regions including Afar, Amhara, Harari, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray, as well as Dire Dawa city administration. These discussions involved survivors of violence, families of internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, traditional and religious leaders, and grassroots civil society organizations, with a focus on rights and peacebuilding. The primary objective was to gather the perspectives and aspirations of diverse Ethiopians on transitional justice, ensuring that their voices, rooted in real-life experiences, are considered in decision-making processes, including in the formulation of the recently endorsed transitional justice policy.

The Commission has made significant progress in reporting on violations of women's and vulnerable groups' rights, informing the HoPR about the status of women's rights in humanitarian crises. It has emphasized the importance of holding accountable those responsible for severe human rights violations, including GBV committed in conflict settings. The Commission has also highlighted the need for reconstruction, rehabilitation, and meaningful involvement of women in conflict-affected areas. Ongoing concerns about women's and children's rights, such as the increase in cases of abduction, require urgent attention. Throughout the reporting period, the Commission has identified gaps in women's and children's rights, provided recommendations, monitored the human rights situation of street children, and offered suggestions for improvement. The commission has also issued a separate report on the situation of women and children's rights in 2023.

3.5 Peaceful and inclusive societies

3.5.1 Measures to build and sustain peace, and implement the women, peace, and security agenda

Ethiopia has officially embraced United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security by commencing the development of the country's first National Action Plan (NAP) in 2022. The Ministry of Peace, which was established in October 2018, has been restructured with the primary objective of promoting "peace, democracy, and development" while emphasizing the significance of maintaining law and order, as well as fostering political unity among the diverse populations of the country.

The government has taken proactive measures to cultivate and safeguard peace, establish a harmonious and inclusive society for sustainable progress, and implement the agenda for women, peace, and security (WPS). Noteworthy initiatives include the drafting of a National Action Plan on WPS, the integration of commitments regarding women, peace, and security into key national and inter-ministerial policies, planning, and monitoring mechanisms and raising awareness about the WPS agenda.

During the reporting period, Ethiopia introduced three innovative knowledge resources on WPS focusing on an overall context analysis, an assessment of the legal and policy environment and institutional mapping. These products offer a unique and evidence-based analysis of the existing situation, legal and policy deficiencies, and possibilities for advancing the WPS agenda. Additionally, they provide insights for the formulation of the NAP UNSCR 1325 in Ethiopia.

3.5.2 Participation, representation, and leadership of women in peace-building and conflict resolution

The government has implemented various strategies to enhance the involvement and representation of women in leadership roles pertaining to conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action, and crisis response. Noteworthy initiatives undertaken during the reporting period include advocating and facilitating women's active engagement in peace processes; ensuring equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response endeavors, particularly at decision-making levels; and adopting gender-responsive approaches in humanitarian action and crisis responses.

Ethiopia has a range of legal and policy frameworks in place to promote women's participation in various spheres, including social, economic, cultural, and political domains. These frameworks also address the issue of WPS. Some of the key frameworks include the FDRE Constitution, the Development and Change Package and Strategy for Ethiopian Women, the Criminal Justice Policy of 2011, the Defense Force Proclamation No.1100/2019, the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission Establishment Proclamation No. 720/2011, the Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy, the National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission Establishment Council of Ministers Regulation No. 363/2015, and the new Civil Society Proclamation No. 1113/2019.

Women are legally entitled to be involved in decision-making processes at all levels, contribute to government policies and programs, and engage in grassroots peace-building initiatives. Therefore, it is evident that Ethiopia's legal and policy framework effectively addresses the 'participation' aspect of UNSCR 1325.

In relation to the 'protection' pillar, the legal framework in Ethiopia establishes law enforcement agencies and security forces, along with mechanisms for risk management. These mechanisms place a special emphasis on safeguarding vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls. Additionally, the legal system includes policies and institutional structures to protect human rights, specifically addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). This includes a comprehensive system for reporting and prosecuting cases of sexual and gender-based violence. With regard to relief and recovery, the existing laws and policies in Ethiopia promote equal access for women to humanitarian and development assistance. Furthermore, these laws and policies prioritize vulnerable groups, such as women, in all relief and recovery efforts.

The involvement of women in peace building at both national and local levels is promising, but it requires more strategic interventions and concrete actions. Local governments, civil society organizations, and development partners focusing on WPS have been advocating for the inclusion of women in local peace building and conflict prevention committees, including early warning committees. Additionally, efforts have been made to enhance the effectiveness and transformative impact of these committees by providing gender trainings.

At the national level, various initiatives have been undertaken to raise awareness about the important role of women in peace building and conflict resolution. A high-level national consultation was organized to engage diverse women in discussions about policy options for transitional justice. The Ministry of Justice, MoWSA in partnership with UN Agencies and other civil society organizations facilitated this consultation to ensure that women from different backgrounds have a meaningful voice in the development of an inclusive and gender-sensitive transitional justice policy in Ethiopia.

On 13 January 2022, the Ethiopian Government announced the formation of the National Dialogue Commission (NDC). The commission aims to facilitate consultations among different segments of society to identify the root causes of national issues. It also strives to implement an effective dialogue process led by a competent and impartial body, ensuring inclusivity. Shortly afterwards, the coalition for women's voice in the national dialogue was established on 16 March 2022 representing 22 CSOs working for the advancement of women's rights in Ethiopia. The coalition has been advocating for the equitable representation of women in the national dialogues and providing capacity building for women at different levels on pertinent issues.

During the reporting period, there has been a significant rise in the involvement of women in peace conferences, conflict resolutions, and peace consultations. The Ministry of Peace has taken the initiative to arrange various trainings, consultations, and conferences on peace building and conflict resolution. It is remarkable that over 23.3 million women have actively participated in these events, highlighting the importance of women's voices in peace building and conflict resolution. Additionally, the Ministry has taken steps to enhance peace clubs in 21 universities, with a particular focus on encouraging female students to participate. These efforts demonstrate a commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity in peace-related initiatives. The Ministry of Peace has also taken significant steps to enhance gender-sensitive peace building practices. To promote the active involvement of women in peace and conflict resolution at various levels, the ministry has devised Women Peace Building strategies. These strategies aim to strengthen the role of women in fostering peace and ensuring their meaningful participation in the resolution of conflicts.

Despite some progress, the participation of women in the security sector remains low. While women are not excluded from working in security roles such as police, national defense, security administration, and peacekeeping missions, their representation is still significantly low. Current workforce data as of April 2023 from key security sector institutions, including administration and security police, justice, and peace institutes, indicate that women's participation stands at only 15%. Moreover, women's representation in senior leadership positions within these institutions is merely 21%.

The Cessation of Hostilities (Pretoria) Agreement between Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) effectively putting an end to the two-year conflict in the Northern part of the county is a significant event which has instilled hope among women, girls, and children who have been disproportionately affected by the ongoing crises. The peace agreement considers the specific needs of women and girls, particularly in addressing the humanitarian needs of IDPs. It acknowledges that women and girls make up 53% of the displaced population as of July 2021. Additionally, the agreement strongly condemns sexual and gender-based violence, as well as violence against women, children, and the elderly. Under the article on the protection of civilians, it emphasizes the importance of safeguarding individuals from such atrocities. Furthermore, the article on Transitional measures outlines the implementation of a comprehensive justice policy that prioritizes accountability and redress for victims. It recognizes the urgent need to address cases of sexual and gender-based violence as a crucial aspect of the agreement.

A major drawback during the negotiations leading to the peace agreement, however, was the lack of women's participation. On the government's side, there was only one female negotiator, and none on the TPLF side. Additionally, out of the three-person AU-led mediation team, there was only one female mediator. This signals ongoing exclusion of women from the negotiation processes and the presence of persistent barriers preventing their direct participation. It is worth noting that the agreement mentions the establishment of a team of African Experts to oversee the implementation but fails to specifically address the inclusion of women in this team.

The government notes the need to implement distinct laws that explicitly acknowledge the rights of women in conflict situations to adequately address the "protection" and "relief and recovery" aspects of UNSCR 1352. By doing so, Ethiopian women will have the opportunity to actively engage in every phase of peace negotiations without facing any form of discrimination. Furthermore, this legal framework will provide a solid foundation for women to assert their rights in cases of discrimination.

3.5.3 Measures to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of rights in situations of crisis

The government has implemented significant measures to improve accountability for breaches of international humanitarian law and the human rights of women and girls in conflict situations. These actions involve enhancing the capacity of institutions such as the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms, providing better access to violence prevention and protection for women affected by conflict, refugees, or displaced persons, and combating trafficking of women and children.

In response to the crises during the reporting period, Ethiopia has strengthened institutional capacities including within the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable during conflict and crises response. The signing of the Pretoria Agreement between the Federal Government and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) under article 10(3), envisions that the Ethiopian government will implement "a comprehensive national transitional justice policy aimed at accountability, ascertaining the truth, redress for victims, reconciliation, and healing, consistent with the Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the African Union Transitional Justice Policy Framework." The agreement further states that the transitional justice policy shall be developed with inputs from all

stakeholders and civil society groups through public consultations and formal national policymaking processes.

Against this backdrop, the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice established the Transitional Justice Working Group of Experts in November 2022, marking the official beginning of the country's transitional justice (TJ) process. The Ministry of Justice with the inputs of the working groups and inputs from stakeholders at all levels including women and girls and survivors of violence drafted the transitional justice policy which is the first in the country's history and approved during the reporting period. The policy aims to address current and past violations and grievances and aspires to steer the country toward lasting peace and democracy. Efforts have been made to ensure a gender-sensitive and gender transformative transitional justice process that puts into account the specific concerns, needs and priorities of women and girls as well as a meaningful and active participation of women and girls' survivors of conflict related sexual violence at all stages of the transitional justice process in a safe environment.

3.5.4 Measures to eliminate discrimination against and violation of the right of girls

Ethiopia has been taking various measures to address discrimination and violations of the rights of girls, particularly adolescent girls and youth. These measures aim to improve girls' access to quality healthcare, education, skills development, and training. Additionally, efforts are geared towards challenging discriminatory social norms and practices and raise awareness about the needs and potential of girls. The government has also implemented policies and programs to reduce and eliminate child, early and forced marriages and FGM/C.

Adolescents and youth make up a significant portion, 33% (girls account for 49.5%), of Ethiopia's population. Ethiopia has created a favorable policy environment for youth development. The government has established a dedicated section led by a state minister within the MoWSA and enacted various policies, laws, strategies, frameworks, and guidelines, to strategically guide youth development efforts in the country. The government is drafting the new youth policy, which recognize the youth as agents of change and aimed to ensure their ownership and involvement in the country's development initiatives and various actors are advocating for a gender sensitive youth policy that considers the special vulnerability of girls.

The Ministry of Health has recognized the importance of adolescents and youth and has implemented multiple national strategies for their well-being. A new strategy for 2021-2025 is currently being implemented in alignment with the health sector transformation plan. This strategy aims to address various health issues affecting young people, including nutrition, substance abuse, mental health, and GBV. It also focuses on reaching vulnerable groups such as those living with HIV/AIDS and disabilities. Additionally, a gender strategic plan has been created to ensure that the needs of girls are met in youth programs.

Considerable progress has been made in improving the development and education outcomes of girls through national commitments to end FGM/C and child marriage. The National Costed Roadmap, a crucial advancement during the reporting period, has played a significant role in this effort. Various actors have been actively working to raise awareness about the importance of girls' development and to combat discriminatory social norms and practices. Effective strategies such as radio programs in different languages, school-based interventions, community-based conversations, and dialogues with religious and norm setters have been utilized to increase awareness on the needs and potential of girls.

Efforts have been implemented through the health extension program to cater to the health needs of youth in general and girls in particular. The health extension workers have been advocating for regular medical check-ups at the local health post and conduct household visits to educate families on health

issues such as family planning, youth reproductive health, and child marriage. The government's goal of eradicating child marriage and FGM/C by 2025 includes incorporating education on HTP into the health extension program, which is expected to play a crucial role in achieving this objective. Research shows that households visited by health extension workers in Ethiopia have a 70% lower likelihood of child marriage, a 75% lower likelihood of early pregnancy, and a 63% higher likelihood of school enrollment.

Ethiopia has made remarkable efforts in the Education sector to advance the girls child education and narrow the gender gap. Various actors have been working in girls' agency and empowerment providing life skills education, ending school related gender-based violence through implementation of existing school code of conduct and strengthen GBV referral linkage, promoting a gender sensitive WASH in school improving the menstrual -hygiene management program,

Specific focus for pastoralist girls has been provided through extending alternative basic education centers a flexible schooling systems to cater to a full primary and lower secondary program so that girls have improved access. The hostel program set up by government, CSOs and development partners is crucial support for girls to join secondary schools and decrease girls' dropout rates after completing primary school due to limited availability of secondary schools in their local areas and family's disadvantaged economic status to support their girls attend secondary schools in other location far from their areas.

3.6 Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation

3.6.1 Integration of gender perspectives into environmental and climate change adaptation and mitigation

Efforts have been made by the government of Ethiopia to include gender perspectives in environmental and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Important steps taken include integrating gender viewpoints and concerns into environmental policies, encouraging women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance, increasing women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources, and improving women's access to sustainable time-saving infrastructure, clean water, energy, and climate-resilient agricultural technology.

The government mandates that all executive bodies must incorporate gender issues into their policies, strategies, programs, projects, and actions. In affirming this commitment, gender equality integration various environmental and climate change policies, strategies, and laws, such as the Ethiopian Environment Policy, Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, Nationally Determined Contributions, and the National Adaptation Plan of Ethiopia (NAP-ETH) has been prioritized.

Ethiopian has developed the Long-Term Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) for the period of 2020-2050. The strategy has been designed to be gender-sensitive and responsive, considering gender and social inclusion as key concerns. The LT-LEDS acknowledges the important roles that women, youth, and vulnerable communities play in climate action, especially in adaptation efforts related to agriculture, food production, and natural resource management, as well as in mitigation activities such as energy and waste management. Special attention has been given to addressing gender and social inclusion considerations during the implementation of the measures outlined in the LT-LEDS, as this is crucial for maximizing the co-benefits of the strategy and ensuring that it contributes to the country's national and international commitments on gender equality, including the attainment of the SDGs (SDG 1 on poverty eradication and SDG 5 on gender equality) and the empowerment of youth and women.

The Ministry of Agriculture has incorporated gender and social inclusion into natural resource management programs. The Climate Action through Landscape Management (CALM) has emphasized

women's participation and ensured that at least 30% of leadership positions in Watershed Users Associations are held by women. To enhance participatory watershed management, the existing water management guidelines were revised in 2020. These updated guidelines promote greater involvement of gender and social inclusion, with a specific focus on women who play a crucial role in natural resource management. Additionally, gender has been considered in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices to enhance climate change resilience and improve local livelihoods.

The Resilient Landscapes and Livelihoods Projects (RLLP) implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture aims to enhance climate resilience, land productivity, and carbon storage, while also increasing access to diverse livelihood activities and strengthening the adaptive capacity of rural smallholders. Gender mainstreaming is a key component of the RLLP, with approximately 68,400 women land users and 15,800 female-headed households benefiting from SLM practices by 2023. Both the CALM and RLLP projects focus on providing land tenure to smallholder women farmers in watersheds through Second Level Landholding Certification (SLLC). Currently, 78% of registered landholdings in the CALM Program are held by women, either individually or jointly with their husbands. In the RLLP, around 511,800 women have received SLLCs either individually or jointly.

The Ethiopia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC) has conducted a targeted gender analysis to inform adaptation decision making, recognizing the importance of integrating gender considerations in the National Adaptation Plan of Ethiopia. This plan is a crucial component of Ethiopia's response to climate change within the framework of the Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy. By implementing the NAP-Ethiopia, Ethiopia is contributing to the goals of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The gender analysis identified critical aspects for a gender-responsive national action plan, including addressing social norms and personal security issues that increase vulnerability to climate change, tackling gender imbalances in resource access and control, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for both women and men, integrating gender considerations into governance systems and structures of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), promoting gender-responsive technology, involving gender actors in the NAP-Ethiopia process, enhancing gender capacity within institutions involved in the NAP, allocating resources in a gender-responsive manner, focusing on gender-responsive adaptation research, and implementing gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

3.6.2 Integration of gender perspective in Disaster Redaction Policy and Program

The government has recognized the unequal impact of climate change on women and men and has taken steps to minimize the gender-specific effects of climate change. Key actions include enhancing women's involvement and leadership in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and environmental policies, programs, and projects, focusing on supporting research and raising awareness about the heightened vulnerability of women and girls to the effects of climate change, environmental deterioration, and disasters. Lastly, initiatives are in place to ensure that women affected by disasters have access to essential services such as relief aid, disaster insurance, and compensation.

The integration of gender into disaster risk reduction efforts is a key focus within the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) working groups led by the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) and MoWSA. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and protection concerns are given due attention and are effectively managed. Nevertheless, it is crucial to expand the scope of gender considerations beyond GBV protection to ensure that the broader needs and capabilities and contribution of women and girls for climate response are not overlooked, thus enhancing the overall effectiveness of humanitarian responses.

Different actors in the country, including the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, as well as non-governmental organizations and other key stakeholders, have undertaken Gender and

Climate related capacity building trainings and awareness raising activities. These initiatives aim to address the gaps identified in mainstreaming gender issues in policies, programs, projects, and actions. Middle level managers and practitioners from regions and federal sector institutions have received trainings on gender consideration in environmental and climate change development plans. Additionally, articles focusing on gender and climate change issues have been produced and published to raise awareness and build capacity. Furthermore, a Television Program highlighting the benefits and challenges faced by women and men in relation to adaptation actions is produced and disseminated through the public television station, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation.

The advancement of women's involvement, particularly those impacted by disasters, in disaster risk reduction, climate, and environmental resilience policies, programs, and projects is making strides. Multiple stakeholders have taken initiatives to establish a quota for women's representation in local early warning committees and disaster risk management structures. Additionally, they have conducted training sessions on gender sensitivity in climate and environmental protection governance to ensure the inclusivity of these structures.

Ethiopia's government is making strides in promoting gender equality in the environment and climate change sector. The appointment of the first female deputy Commissioner is a significant achievement, and more women are now holding middle-level leadership positions in climate and environment protection structures. Women are also being involved in climate change governance at the local level, particularly in early warning systems and disaster risk management. Their representation is being considered in various committee structures focused on natural resource management and climate change.

The government of Ethiopia has made a conscious effort to promote gender balance in the UNFCCC process by including women in the Ethiopian delegation to the Conference of Parties (COP). However, challenges such as limited funds for travel and attendance, have led to gender imbalance and inconsistency in women's representation. The presence of invisible barriers like the glass ceiling, rooted in discriminatory social and cultural norms, further complicates the issue.

To promote the involvement of women and implement disaster reduction programs that are sensitive and responsive to gender issues, it is crucial to prioritize continuous capacity building and awareness-raising efforts. These measures are necessary to effectively tackle the challenges at hand and bring about a change in attitudes. Additionally, it is essential to allocate sufficient financial resources and expertise to enhance the knowledge of leaders and practitioners in relation to gender and climate change. Furthermore, conducting research on the gendered impacts of climate change is of utmost importance as it enables informed decision-making. It is imperative for all government institutions to analyze data based on gender and refine monitoring and evaluation methods to effectively track progress.

SECTION-FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

4.1 National strategies and action plan for gender equality

The Ten-year Development Plan is a significant national strategy for promoting gender equality. It includes a dedicated pillar focused on gender equality and social inclusion, with the goal of advancing gender equality across all levels, including leadership positions and access to resources. This plan places a strong emphasis on gender and social inclusion, recognizing it as one of the critical areas among the 12 focus areas.

The gender and social inclusion plan primarily aim to empower various segments of vulnerable society, enabling them to benefit from economic development through skills training, capacity building, and equal participation. Special attention is given to strengthening the social welfare and social protection system to support women, children, youth, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations, ensuring their security and rights are protected. This plan also focuses on promoting their equal participation in leadership and decision-making processes, allowing them to have a more significant role in economic and social matters.

The plan establishes specific objectives to achieve gender equality and empower women effectively within the development plan for the next decade (2020/21-2029/30). These objectives include protecting women's rights, ensuring their safety, promoting their participation in economic development, and creating an environment where women are completely free from physical and moral abuse, FGM/C, and early marriage by 2029/30. The targets aim to reduce the rates of sexual abuse in women from 10% to 5%, produce 10,000 capable female leaders to make Ethiopia the hub of African female leadership, increase the representation of women in decision-making roles in the legislative and judicial branches to 50%, and eliminate the current pay gap of 44% between men and women in similar job positions. Additionally, the plan aims to provide land ownership rights to 59.7% of women who currently lack access to land, increase the percentage of women engaged in microenterprises from 41% to 50%, and raise the number of women involved in income-generating activities through microfinance loans from 33% to 55%.

Ethiopia has prepared a draft National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to replace the National Policy on Ethiopian Women (1993). The draft policy aligned to the international and regional commitments Ethiopia has entered into including the SDGs, is expected to promote the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment further. The draft policy will be accompanied by a costed gender equality roadmap.

4.2 Gender budgeting and investment in promotion of gender equality

The Government of Ethiopia has integrated a Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in the program budget process through the adoption of the Finance Proclamation No. 970/2016 which requires sectors to integrate gender perspective into the preparation of budget programs to enhance the participation and benefit of women. Following the proclamation, the Ministry of Finance has rolled out Gender Responsive Budgeting guidelines that facilitate the efforts to increase and track national planning and budget allocation related to achieving GEWE and has trained relevant federal and regional sector on the guideline.

The inclusion of these measures has resulted in various sectors integrating gender-specific objectives into their budget plans. The MoF acknowledges gender as a significant factor when evaluating and prioritizing budget allocations. The MoF's gender directorate has conducted a thorough assessment and offered valuable input on sectors' gender-responsive budgeting, which plays a crucial role in achieving effective gender budgeting.

The gender responsive budget allocation of sector ministries has been improving. The evaluation of gender budgeting indicators for the 21 sector ministries through the MoWSA's performance leveling tool criteria revealed a positive trend in gender budgeting and implementation across these ministries.

The large budget allocation for the pro poor sectors is another budgeting strategy that benefits women and girls. In the annual budget which mostly comes from domestic sources around 80% budget the largest proportion on the expenditure is allocated to poverty targeted sectors such as education, health, water and energy and agriculture and food security. The amount of budget allocated for these sectors has been showing an increase. Comparing the budget allocation in 2014/15 fiscal year and the 2019/20 budget education has increased from 24.6 billion to 50.6 billion ETB; water and energy from 5 billion to 17.5 billion ETB and health from 5.1 billion to 12.8 billion ETB. The government also allocates over 6 billion ETB every year for the implementation of the SDG and investment in these crucial sectors has led to an evident improvement in the lives of women and girls in Ethiopia. The increase in girls' enrolment with less dropout rates and the decline in maternal and child mortality rates are the direct results of the increased budget allocation for SDG gender specific indicators. However, it is important to note that recent crisis have led to a slight decline in budget allocations to pro-poor sectors due to overlapping crisis.

Various actors have been also promoting inclusive policy processes that require wide stakeholder participation in Gender Responsive Budgeting. In this regards Ethiopia Social Accountability Program (ESAP) provided an opportunity to introduce a community-based gender-responsive budgeting tool in almost a quarter of Ethiopia's woredas (districts) across five public services: education, health, water, agriculture, and rural roads. The program guided over 110 local organizations to help communities assess the standards and budgets of basic services they received, prioritize necessary improvement, engage in dialogue with service providers and local government, and realize the agreed reforms.

Efforts have been made to raise awareness on gender responsive budgeting and provided training for key government officials, including the gender directorates of each sector office. The Ministry of Finance Gender Affairs Directorate has initiated a national assessment of sector performance in Gender Responsive Budgeting at both Federal and Regional levels and , at present, the Ministry, developed a budget tracking tool called a Gender Budget Statement (GBS), that will play a crucial role in ensuring that gender is fully integrated into the budgeting process and in monitoring spending for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) which is in the process of endorsement and approval.

4.3 Participation in implementation, monitoring of BDPfA and preparation of the present national report

Whole government ministries are required to integrate gender equality and women's issues in their respective policy, program and strategies through the Proclamation No. 1263/2021 that defines the Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs. This has created sectoral gender mainstreaming mechanisms facilitating the participation of different sectors in the implementation and monitoring of the BDPfA and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

A significant number of sectors established gender directorates responsible for gender mainstreaming in their respective sectors and undertaken gender mainstreaming initiatives. The sectors have developed gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans to incorporate gender perspectives and address the concerns of women and girls in their sector policies, programs, and projects. These sector ministries, such as education, health, water and sanitation, and road and infrastructure, play a crucial role in advancing gender equality in the 12 critical areas of the BDPfA, particularly in the critical areas of inclusive development, shared prosperity, decent work, and poverty reduction. Additionally, other sectors, such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Peace, and Ministry of Defense, have implemented effective gender

mainstreaming strategies and actions to contribute to critical areas such as freedom from violence, peaceful, and environmental protection.

The implementation of the BDPfA in Ethiopia has been supported by the government through the promotion of a participatory mechanisms. This mechanism encourages the involvement of various actors, such as CSOs, development partners, and other stakeholders, in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment policy of Ethiopia explicitly recognize the importance of these actors in the participation and contribution towards gender equality and women empowerment.

In terms of gender sensitivity, the MoWSA service mapping study indicated that over half (54%) of the services provided by these CSOs are gender responsive, while 11.9% have made efforts to transform the root causes of gender inequality. However, a significant percentage (31.44%) of the services still need improvement in addressing gender-specific needs and interests indicating that the need to develop critical strategies to mainstream gender and transform these services to be more gender responsive and transformative.

The National Women Economic Empowerment Forum (NWEEF), which was established in April 2022 by the MoWSA, the MoLS and the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, acts as a forum for the execution of the BDPfA by bringing together organizations with similar goals. Its primary objective is to establish a nationwide platform that aims to stimulate and assist in the implementation of policy reforms, thereby enhancing women's economic empowerment through the creation of economic opportunities throughout the nation.

Various CSOs and UN agencies, have collaborated on a key program where mechanisms have been established for development partners to engage in the execution and oversight of the BDPfA as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Throughout the reporting period, several joint initiatives focusing on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have been carried out, making significant contributions to the 12 critical areas of focus outlined in the BDPfA and the gender indicators of the SDGs.

Diverse stakeholders such as federal and regional states, city administrations, civil society organizations, professional associations, national human rights institutions, and development partners have all played an active role and provided significant input in the development of the present national report. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWSA) has taken the lead, with the Steering Committee comprising sector ministers and the Technical Committee consisting of gender experts from relevant sectors, strategically and technically guiding the national review process.

4.4 Timeline and action on implementation of CEDAW recommendation

Ethiopia underwent review before the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2019 on the 8th periodic report. The CEDAW committee recommended that Ethiopia evaluate its laws from a gender perspective and establish a comprehensive legislation to combat gender-based violence, including various forms of violence against women like gang rape, acid attacks, and marital rape.

In response the MoWSA, in partnership with UN Agencies, has conducted a thorough review of more than 28 laws from a gender perspective. As a result, it has recommended that the Government repeal 5 laws or provisions either entirely or partially and enact 26 existing laws to align Ethiopia's legislative framework with regional and international obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment. The importance of prioritizing the implementation of national laws that adhere to gender equality standards

was also highlighted. In this context, a policy measure has been proposed to ensure that laws effectively uphold women's rights.

In response to CEDAW recommendations No.35 on GBV, Ethiopia drafted and finalized for approval Gender Equality and Women Empowerment policy with strong provisions on prevention and response of GBV. This groundbreaking policy in Ethiopia represents the initial step towards addressing limitations in the normative legal frameworks concerning the prevention and response to violence against women and girls. Additionally, the national policy on gender equality and women's empowerment has been established as a significant achievement for Ethiopia, offering a framework for coordinating and providing gender equality services in the country.

SECTION-FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

5.1 Progress and measures to strengthen national gender statistics

Ethiopia has taken measures to strengthen the production, analysis, dissemination, and utilization of gender statistics over the past five years. Key achievements include re-processing existing data from census and survey to produce more disaggregated gender statistics, conducting new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics including asset ownership, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 pandemic and undertaking capacity building to strengthen gender statistics and mainstreaming of gender in the national statistical services.

During the reporting period, national gender statistics have been developed on asset ownership and poverty, encompassing key indicators of gender disparities in housing, agricultural land, real estate, livestock, and financial assets. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, in collaboration with development partners and UN Agencies, has crafted the Ethiopia Country Gender Equality Profile, offering insights on gender equality and women's empowerment across various sectors such as education, health, economics, agriculture, industry, entrepreneurship, digital technology, energy, infrastructure, leadership, environment, and peace using existing gender statistics.

The Ethiopian Statistical Services (ESS) has made progress enhancing its capacity to produce gender statistics, marking a significant achievement in the reporting period. The National Statistical System (NSS) has taken steps to advance gender equality by incorporating a specific focus on gender mainstreaming and statistical development in its latest plan, Ethiopian Statistical Development Programme (2023/24-2025/26). This move is a crucial advancement towards establishing a more equitable and inclusive statistical system. The ESS conducts a national census every ten years, Demographic and Health surveys every five years, welfare monitoring survey every five years, and national labor force survey every five years, providing gender statistics on various sectors such as health, education, and the economy. Gender-specific indicators in these surveys include contraceptive prevalence, mortality rates for mothers and children, antenatal care coverage, skilled birth attendance rates, and HIV prevalence by sex. Education-related data comprises indicators like education attainment, school attendance, and literacy rates by sex, while economic sector statistics include sex-disaggregated labor force participation, employment by sex, business ownership by sex, informal employment, and unemployment by age and sex.

Furthermore, to ensure systematic integration of gender in the national statistics Ethiopia has developed a Gender Statistics Indicator handbook in March 2020 recognizing the gaps in systematic integration of gender in regular statistical activities. This handbook provides practical guidance on comprehensive coverage of gender issues in data production, survey and census design, addressing biases, data analysis, and user-friendly statistics. Following the development of gender statistic indicator handbook, a booklet on how to produce, analyze and communicate gender statistic developed intends to provide a handy tool to guide the production, analysis, and communication of gender statistics among data producers and users and promote the use of gender statistics for informed decision-making and policy prescriptions.

During the reporting period Ethiopian Statistics Service has undergone a restructuring process to enhance its effectiveness on genders statistics. Accordingly, a dedicated Social and Inclusive Statistics department separate from internal gender mainstreaming directorate has been established and capacitated with various trainings and experience sharing for leadership and expertise on gender mainstreaming in the national statistics services.

The establishment of inter-agency coordination mechanisms on gender statistics is one of the key achievements that Ethiopia made during the reporting period which is utmost importance in collaboration and coordination of the gender statistics. This structure, which includes a technical working group and an

inter-agency committee, facilitates collaboration among all sectors and institutions that provide sex and gender disaggregated data.

To further strengthen the inter-agency coordination mechanisms on gender statistics Ethiopia has developed a module for gender statistics as part of the PARIS21 initiative, with the support of UN Agencies, under the framework of the "Making Every Woman and Girl Count" project. These modules strongly emphasize the need for coordination mechanisms within the National Statistical System (NSS), which can be achieved through inter-agency working groups or committees. These collaboration plays a vital role in preventing duplication and enhancing prioritization, considering the participation of various NSS institutions in gender data collection, analysis, and utilization. Moreover, harnessing the comprehensive gender data production across the NSS can help evaluate the efficiency of NSS coordination mechanisms and their influence on inter-agency exchange and data governance.

Over the next five years Ethiopia has strong focus on improving gender statistics and prioritized placing laws, regulations and statistical programs and strategies promoting the development of gender statistics, strengthening the inter-agency coordination mechanisms on gender statistics including technical working groups, interagency committee; use more gender sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programs and projects; reprocessing of existing data; conduct new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics; greater utilization and improvement of administrative based data; production of knowledge products on gender statistics and capacity building on gender statistics.

5.2 Gender specific indicators for mobilizing progress on the SDG

Ethiopia has made remarkable strides in terms of data availability, with 37.7% of the required SDG gender indicators being accessible as of December 2020. This represents a significant improvement compared to the 17% figure reported in 2018. Nevertheless, there are still crucial areas where data remains scarce, particularly in relation to key labor market indicators such as the gender pay gap, information and communications technology skills, and the representation of women in local governments. Furthermore, several important aspects including gender and poverty, physical and sexual harassment, women's access to assets (including land), and the intersection of gender and the environment lack standardized methodologies for regular monitoring. Addressing these gaps in gender data is imperative for Ethiopia to fulfill its gender-related Sustainable Development Goal commitments.

In accordance with the 2030 Agenda, Ethiopia has committed to back the implementation of SDG with robust voluntary, effective, participatory transparent and integrated review of progress. However, lack of up-to-date and quality data and costly processes to generate data as per each of SDG indicators to report at regional level and capacity of generating disaggregated data and gender statistics at all levels has been challenging to fully reporting on the gender specific indicators and needs improvements. Ethiopia has undertaken a Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the SDGs in 2022.

Approximately 40% of the data used for monitoring the SDGs is provided by the Ethiopian Statistical Services while the rest is gathered from administrative data and information from other government executive bodies. Efforts have been made by the MoWSA and UN Agencies during the reporting period to include gender-specific indicators in the CSS national statistics, which should be further emphasized in the future.

5.3 Data disaggregation routinely provided by major surveys

The Ethiopian Statistical Services (ESS) of Ethiopia is responsible for producing statistics across various disciplines. Apart from conducting surveys and censuses, the agency also examines existing administrative records. Data is gathered, organized, and analyzed before being made available to users through various channels, including online platforms. The ESS consistently offers disaggregated data by age, gender, and geographic location (rural and urban) for key indicators of education, health and Income. Other sectors and institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, Health, Agriculture, Water, Irrigation, and Energy, also generate administrative data on sector-specific indicators disaggregated by gender, age, and location. The Health Management Information System is a source that consistently provides data broken down by sex and age in the health sector.

Gender-specific data is often generated as an afterthought, rather than being consistently provided to address important issues. This has resulted in the marginalization of such data, rendering it ineffective in informing policy and decision-making processes that aim to promote gender sensitivity and inclusivity. The lack of expertise and collaboration in data collection has been a significant challenge in ensuring the routine availability of key indicators disaggregated by gender. Additionally, there is a misconception among data experts that gender-specific data is expensive and burdensome to collect.

In response to the growing demand for gender statistics, the CSA recently published a comprehensive guidebook in December 2020. This guidebook aims to assist data experts in producing, analyzing, and effectively communicating gender statistics.

SECTION-SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethiopia has made significant strides in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls over the last five years. Concrete and well-thought-out measures have been implemented by the Government of Ethiopia in collaboration with CSOs and development partners, leading to remarkable progress in critical areas outlined in the BDPfA. This progress was achieved despite the poly-crisis faced by the country in the reporting period.

Despite setback in women's representation at the ministerial level, women continue to play a significant role and excel in important positions, serving as crucial role models. The recent election saw a 45% participation rate of women voters, indicating a growing awareness and exercise of women's right to vote. The integration of gender perspectives across sectors has led to an increase in women's representation in leadership roles, with over 45% of women holding senior and middle-level positions in most ministries.

Ethiopia has made notable progress in promoting women's leadership in high-level political positions, showcasing gender-equitable leadership compared to other countries in the sub-Saharan region. Particularly, women are well-represented in the Ethiopian parliament, with 41.5% of parliamentarians in the lower house (HoPR) and 32% in the upper house (HoF) being women. Ethiopia holds the joint 19th position out of 192 countries in the world ranking of women in national parliaments by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The government recognizes that these gains need to be institutionalized and efforts at bringing women to leadership positions strengthened further to prevent set-backs.

Addressing different manifestations of gender-based violence (GBV) in both development and humanitarian contexts has been given utmost importance by the government. During the reporting period, the government has specifically focused on combating domestic violence, trafficking of women and girls, gender-based violence in conflict situations, sexual harassment and violence in public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions, harmful traditional practices such as child, early, and forced marriages, as well as FGM/C, have been identified as key areas for action and notable achievements are made in prevention, protection and response of GBV.

Ethiopia has made significant progress in promoting women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. The country has prioritized poverty reduction and social development in its overall development policy goals, leading to increased investment in pro-poor sectors. This strategic allocation of public spending has played a crucial role in reducing poverty and advancing women's economic status.

The Ethiopian government has made significant efforts to reduce the gender gap in accessing essential resources. Equal access for women to resources such as land, finance, and agricultural inputs, along with social services like healthcare and sanitation, is vital for promoting women's empowerment. Progress has been achieved in advancing women's economic empowerment.

Awareness programs have been carried out in the past five years through MoWSA structures, and various initiatives on gender-transformative norms have been implemented by civil society organizations and development partners to challenge gender inequality and discriminatory norms. An intersectional approach has been promoted to address the intersection of gender and various forms of discrimination, with a particular focus on the vulnerability of rural women and girls, women, and girls with disabilities, those affected by HIV/AIDS, and women and girls in humanitarian settings to gender-based violence and discrimination during the implementation of the BDPfA.

Ethiopia has faced a variety of obstacles that have impeded the implementation of the BDPfA and the progress of gender equality over the past five years. Some of these challenges have been particularly severe, hindering the advancements made in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the country. Issues such as weak enforcement of laws and policies related to gender equality and

women's empowerment, limited technical capacity for mainstreaming, under-resourced gender machineries, insufficient capacity in Gender Transformative Approach (GTA), and the absence of gender-sensitive crisis response strategies have been significant hurdles faced by the country during the reporting period.

The national review process has embraced a participatory approach by involving various stakeholders from the government, civil society organizations, particularly women rights and women led organizations, development partners, and others. The active participation of sectors in establishing technical committees for the review process has been commendable. This process has allowed each sector to reflect on their priorities, actions, achievements, challenges, and setbacks in terms of gender mainstreaming. Expanding the role and authority of the technical committees as the BDPfA Implementers Technical Team and establishing a platform for collaborative planning, implementation, and monitoring is a valuable lesson learned that will strengthen sectoral gender machineries to better promote gender equality and empower women and girls.

The Ethiopian Government is fully dedicated to advancing the cause of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Moreover, it will actively work towards institutionalizing and sustaining the progress achieved so far, while also addressing emerging issues pertaining to gender and women's rights. Aligned with the objectives outlined in the Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan (2021-2030) for gender equality and social inclusion, BDPfA, and the SDGs, the following areas have been identified as key priorities for the next five years in order to promote gender equality and empower women: putting an end to Gender Based Violence (GBV), increasing the representation and participation of women in influential and leadership positions, enhancing women's economic independence, adopting a gender transformative approach to eliminate discriminatory norms, ensuring gender equitable access to productive and social services, and placing greater emphasis on understanding the gender dynamics within the Humanitarian Sector.

REFERENCES

- Decent work country program for Ethiopia 2021–2025
- Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP IV) 2010/2011 – 2014/2015 E.C
- Ethiopia Central Statistics Agency (CSA), gender statistics indicators -handbook, March 2020,
- Ethiopia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission Integrating Gender Considerations in Ethiopia’s National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process- Analysis and Recommendation June 2019,
- Ethiopia Human Right Commission, Women and Childers Right Status Annual Report 2023/2024
- Ethiopia Human Rights Commission, GBV survivors and families human right protection monitoring report, March 2024
- Ethiopia UNOCHA Humanitarian Response Plan February 2024,
- Ethiopia National Refugee Strategy for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender based Violence 2017-2019
- Ethiopia updated Nationally Determined Contribution, July 2021
- Ethiopia’s Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy (2011-2019) – Implementation Progress Assessment Report.
- Ethiopia’s 8th Periodic Report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women,
- Ethiopian Country Gender Equality Profile, 2023
- Ethiopian Media Authority -Guideline for Gender Sensitive Conflict Reporting for Media in Ethiopia, November 2021
- Ethiopian Public Health HIV Related Estimates and Projections in Ethiopia for the Year 2022- 2023.
- Ethiopian Statistics Service, Ethiopian Gender Asset Gap survey, December 2022
- European Union Agency for Asylum, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Ethiopia, May 2022.
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission Integrating Gender Considerations in Ethiopia’s National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process-Analysis and recommendations June 2019
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Jobs Creation Commission, Plan of Action for Job Creation 2020-2025
- Federal Ministry of Planning and Development, Ethiopia Voluntary Nation Review 2022
- Federal Ministry of Planning and Development Ethiopia’s long-term low emission and climate resilient development strategy (2020-2050)
- Gender in Ethiopian Media Landscape: An indicative research report with recommendations for the Fojo- IMS Ethiopia Program, March 2021

- Gender-based violence against adolescent girls in humanitarian settings: a review of the evidence Lancet Child Adolescent Health 2021; 5: 210–22 Published Online November 19, 2020, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30245-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30245-5)
- JIS 2021, Women in Tech in Ethiopia: We need to know more
- International Telecommunication Union Development Sector: Gender equality in digital policy in Ethiopia, 2023
- Ministry of Education 2016, Participants manual modules for prevention of gender-based violence/Sexual violence
- Ministry of Education Gender and School analysis of school feeding program in selected locations of Ethiopia
- Ministry of Education Gender Strategies for Education and Training
- Ministry of Education, Assessment to Gather Various Contributions for the Revision of the Gender Strategy of the MoE, Ethiopia, December 2023.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ethiopia’s Climate Resilient Green Economy, National Action Plan 20217.
- Ministry of Finance sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment prevention and response action plan for Response – Recovery – Resilience for Conflict-Affected Communities in Ethiopia (3R-4-CACE) (P177233), August 2022.
- Ministry of Health, National Adolescent and Youth Health Strategies (2016-2020)
- Ministry of Health, National Adolescents and Youth health strategy (2021-2025), December 2021.
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and UN Women Ethiopia Country analysis of international and national normative frameworks related to the women peace and security, 2023.
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and UN Women, “Context assessment on women, peace, and security situation in Ethiopia”, 2023.
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and UN Women Ethiopia Country Office towards women, peace and security responsive institutions in Ethiopia un women and ministry of women and 2023.
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Gender (In)equality in Ethiopia: A Context Analysis, October 2023
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response Policy, 2023.
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy 2024.
- Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Mapping of Services by Civil Society Organizations in Ethiopia: A Gender, November 2023 Sensitive Approach.
- MOWCY, UNICEF Ethiopia and SPRI (2019): Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Child Wellbeing in Ethiopia.
- National Bank of Ethiopia National Financial Inclusion Strategy-II 2021-2025 Policy Brief, Ethiopia.unwomen@unwomen.org

- PoWER Women and Girls Financial Inclusion Country Assessment Ethiopia by Dalberg Global Development Advisors 11th July 2017 (revised August 2017)
- Selam Gebretsion: Assessment on the Mainstreaming of Women, Children, Youth, Persons with Disabilities, Old Persons and Other Vulnerable Groups' Concerns in Ethiopia`, August 2023.
- The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia National Voluntary Report on the Implementation of the Global Compact on Migration for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, December 2020 National Partnership Coalition (NPC) on Migration, December 2020
- UN Women Ethiopia Country context assessment on women, peace and security situation in Ethiopia, 2023.
- UN Women Ethiopia Country Office A review of Ethiopian Law from A gender perspectives, 2022.
- UN Women Ethiopia Country Office and Ministry of Woman and Social Affairs, analysis of international and national normative frameworks related to the women peace and security agenda in Ethiopia 2023.
- UN Women Ethiopia Country Office gender responsiveness of fiscal policies and related legal frameworks in Ethiopia, 2023.
- UN Women Ethiopia Country Office good practices, lessons, opportunities, and challenges in the care economy in Ethiopia social affairs of Ethiopia, 2023.
- UN Women Ethiopia Country Office humanitarian gender alert- women, peace and security and humanitarian action in context of Ethiopia, Issue 3 April 2023.
- UN Women Ethiopia Country Office policy brief on the care economy in Ethiopia.
- UN Women Innovation and Technology, and Education in the Digital Age to Achieve Gender Equality and Ensuring Empowerment of all Women and Girls in Ethiopia
- UN Women, Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Humanitarian Settings in Ethiopia
- UNDP Assessment on the Role of Women in Peace and Reconciliation in Oromia and Somali Regional States, December 2022
- UNHCR Ethiopia report on the state of disability inclusion in Ethiopian refugee and IDP settings, December 2022
- UNOCHA Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund annual report 2023.
- Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Section, UN Women Ethiopia institutional audit on women, peace and security situation in Ethiopia, 2023
- World Food Program Ethiopia Food Security Outlook, January 2022 to January 2023

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
30th Anniversary Comprehensive National
Review Process of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia**

2024

Background

The sixth national comprehensive country review highlights Ethiopia's progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) from 2020 to 2024, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the BDPfA. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) led the coordination of the review process, supported by the National Steering Committee (NSC) consisting of State Ministers of relevant sector ministries and the Technical Committee (TC) comprising experts from various sectors. The process was led at the highest level by the Minister of MoWSA, H.E Dr. Ergogie Tesfaye.

Several consultations were held during the review process, involving federal and regional states, city administrations, civil society organizations, professional associations, national human rights institutions, and development partners. These consultations aimed to enhance the report's quality and ensure its ownership. The national level review process received significant publicity, starting with an inauguration of the process by MoWSA and validation in the presence of sector ministers, development partners, CSOs, media agencies, and stakeholders.

The process was supported by UN Women Ethiopia Country Office which provided financial and technical support for the preparation of the report including through hiring a national consultant to support the review and report writing. The major challenge in the process was the lack of available and up to date gender disaggregated data.

Initial Meeting of the Steering and Technical Committee and Official Launching of the Process

26 April 2024-Radisson Blu Hotel Addis Ababa

The initial meeting of the Steering and Technical Committee of the Beijing+30 review process took place on 26 April 2024 with the participation of members of parliament, state ministers from sector ministries represented in the steering committee, technical experts from government sectors, civil society organizations, women led and women's rights organizations, and development partners. The meeting was led by H.E Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) Minister of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) and H.E Alemitu Omut, State Minister for women and children, MoWSA. During the initial meeting, the guidance on the Beijing+30 review process was presented and discussed in detail to reach consensus on the preparation of the report. In addition, possible data sources were identified through the participation of stakeholders. In addition, the roles of the steering and technical committees were outlined with participants committing to contribute to the process.



H.E Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) making opening remarks at the Initial Meeting of the Beijing+30 Review Process. Photo credit@MoWSA





Pictures of the Initial Meeting on the Beijing+30 National Review Process- 26 April 2024. Photo credit@MoWSA



H.E Ergogie Tesfaye (PhD) and H.E Alemitu Omut leading discussions at the initial meeting. . Photo credit@MoWSA

Consultation with Key Stakeholders

22 May 2024- Jupiter Hotel Addis Ababa

A consultation on the initial draft of the Beijing+30 national report as a result of the comprehensive national review has undergone consultation with key stakeholders with government at the federal and regional level, civil society organizations, women led and women's right organizations, representatives of youth associations, academia and development partners. The consultation allowed participants to provide inputs on the process and report incorporating missing data and information and significantly enriching the report. The consultation was also an opportunity for stakeholders to ensure that the concerns of different groups of women and girls were effectively reflected in the report.



Pictures of the Consultation on the Beijing+30 report. Photo credit@ UN Women Ethiopia

Validation of the Beijing+30 National Review

30 May 2024- Skylight Hotel, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia's review on the Beijing+30 process was validated in the presence of the Steering and Technical Committee members as well as stakeholders within government, civil society, and development partners. The validation allowed members of the steering and technical committees to verify the outcomes of the review process, providing final insights and guidance. It was also an opportunity to provide public awareness on the review process through the media representatives that attended the validation.



Members of the Steering Committee on the Official Validation of the Beijing+30 Comprehensive National Review



Pictures from the validation workshop Photo Credit@UN Women Ethiopia