

## **The Report Prepared on Occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (TURKEY)**

### **CHAPTER I**

The women's movement which gained impetus during the 1980s, ratification of CEDAW in 1986, establishment of the General Directorate on the Status of Women (GDSW) as a national mechanism in 1990 has greatly contributed to the active participation of Turkey to the approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action processes in 1995.

Turkey has submitted and defended its first CEDAW Country Report in 1990, the Second and Third Combined Reports in 1997, Fourth and Fifth Combined Reports Periodic Reports in 2005, Sixth Periodic Report in 2010 to the CEDAW Committee. The Interim Report requested by the CEDAW Committee was submitted to the Committee in 2012.

The Optional Protocol prepared in line with the CEDAW Convention was approved by Turkey on July 30, 2002 and came into force on February 29, 2003.

When Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was opened for signature on May 11, 2011 Turkey was the first country who signed the Convention and became the first country to ratify it on November 25, 2011.

Turkey has recorded significant legal progress especially including the Constitution since the approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The principle of equality between women and men in Turkey has been strengthened with the amendments made to the articles 41 and 66 in 2001 and the articles 10 and 90 in 2004 of the Constitution. And the principle of equality between women and men was further strengthened with the amendment made to the 10<sup>th</sup> Article of the Constitution.

- The amendments made 10<sup>th</sup> Article of the Constitution are as follows;

In 2004 the provision, the statement which reads as "Men and women have equal rights and the State is liable for ensuring this equality in practice" was added.

In 2010 the provision, the statement that "the measures to be taken with this aim cannot be contradictory to the principle of equality" was added to the end of the second subparagraph of the 10<sup>th</sup> Article.

- The amendments made 41<sup>st</sup> Article of the Constitution are as follows;

The provision that "family is the foundation of society" and to be followed by the phrase "is based on the equality between the spouses" was added.

- Another amendment made to the 66<sup>th</sup> Article is as follows;

The provision which includes unequal regulations regarding the Turkish citizenship was abolished.

- The amendments made to the 90<sup>th</sup> Article are as follows;

The provision that “in case of contradiction arising from the difference between the provisions of the duly ratified international agreements on fundamental rights and freedoms and the provisions of domestic laws, provisions of the international agreements shall be predicated” was added. Thus, United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been granted priority over national regulations.

As a result of the amendments made to the Civil Code in 2002, a number of regulations were introduced, which equalize women with men in family and society and count women’s labor and endeavors. Some the regulations are as follows:

- The provision that “the head of the family is the husband” was amended and the provision that “the conjugal union is governed by both spouses” was introduced.
- The provision that “both spouses have custody over the children” and “custody over children born out-of-wedlock belongs to the mother” was introduced.
- While the legal property was included as “separation of property”, the New Law introduced “participation in acquisitions”.
- While subsistence of households and the children belonged to men in the previous Law, the new Law introduced the provision that “spouses participate in the expenses of the conjugal union in proportion to their powers with their labor and properties”.
- With the new Law, the age of marriage has been equalized and raised to 17 for both women and men and 17 age condition was brought in to establish a marital union.
- The amendment introduced with regard to the family residence brings limitation to the disposition over the family residence by either spouse without the explicit consent of other spouse. Neither of the spouses alone may annul the rental contract without explicit consent of the other.

The Law No: 4320 1998, which aimed to prevent violence against women and provided a description of “domestic violence” in a legal document for the first time, was amended in 2007 and the scope of the Law was broadened. The Regulation regarding the implementation of the Law was enacted in 2008. Despite the regulations, the implementation gaps raised the need for an immediate revision and reassessment of the Law to remedy existing gaps. Within this scope, a number of meetings were held with the participation of the representatives from non-governmental organizations, Public Prosecutors working on domestic violence in the Court of Ankara, Family Court Judges and Heads of Bars of sixteen provinces which have a metropolitan municipality and the written opinions and reviews of all relevant public institutions and agencies and non-governmental organizations were received. As a result of all these works, the Law No:6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women was prepared and enacted on March 20, 2012 after being published in the official gazette No 28239.

One of the most significant regulations, introduced by the New Labor Act which came into force in 2003, is that no discrimination will be permitted in employer-employee relations regarding fundamental human rights by no means including sex. Within this regard;

- No discriminatory procedure will be followed directly or indirectly during the formulation, implementation and termination of a labor contract on grounds of sex or pregnancy.
- Setting lower wages based on sex for the same work or work of equal value is out of question,
- The termination of the labor contract for unjustified reasons such as sex, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy and delivery will not be permitted,
- The Law includes the provision that in the event that the employee is subjected to sexual rape in the workplace by the employer, or the other employees or by a third party and no measures are taken although the employer reports the case to the employer, the employee has the right to annul the labor contract for justifiable reasons.
- The Law includes the provision that the duration of paid maternity leaves will be increased.

A number of new regulations were introduced with regard to gender equality and violence against women by the Penal Code, which came into force in 2005. Some of the regulations are as follows:

- Sexual crimes are classified as crimes against sexual immunity under the heading of crimes against persons.
- Marital rape is regulated as a crime.
- The concept of “sexual rape at work” is introduced and the major forms of sexual rape are established.
- The expression “with motive of custom” was added to the article which establishes the major forms of crime of willful murder which requires aggravated imprisonment and with this regulation, the perpetrators of custom crimes were envisaged the severest form of punishment. • Another important regulation regarding the issue is the “unjust provocation” provision. In order to forestall the misapplication of sentence reductions for unjust provocation in cases of domestic killings named as “custom and honor killings”; the Law pertaining to “unjust provocation” has been amended and the grounds for reduction of criminal responsibility is now based on perpetration of a crime in a state of anger of severe distress provoked by a tort. Tort refers to unlawful acts.
- The provision that “No punishment is imposed for women who terminates her pregnancy which occurred as a result of a crime of which she has been the victim depending upon the consent of the women on condition that the duration of pregnancy does not exceed twenty weeks. And the termination of pregnancy should be conducted by an expert doctor in a hospital under proper conditions” was introduced in the Law.
- The aggravated forms of sexual assault have been established with the law. Assuming that the crime of sexual assault causes the impairment of the physical or mental health of the victim, more severe punishment is envisaged for the perpetration of the crime of sexual assault. The concept of “imperfection” has been abolished and the concept of “mental health” has been introduced. In the event that the victim falls into a vegetative state or dies, the perpetrator will be punished to aggravated life imprisonment.
- Major elements which require more aggravated punishments envisaged for the perpetration of the crime of abuse of a civil service or undue influence acquired through a service relation is described in the article which establishes the crime of sexual assault.
- The crime of willful injury is established and in the event that the crime is perpetrated against a person from a lineal kinship or a spouse or a sibling, the crime is accepted as the major form of crime.

- The genital examination is established as a separate article, three month to a year imprisonment is envisaged for the perpetrator who sends the person to have a genital examination or exercise the examination without a judicial decision by a judge or prosecutor.
- Having a sexual intercourse with a minor is established as a separate crime.
- Acts of sexual abuse of children is established as crime. If the sexual abuse is perpetrated by lineal ancestors, in the second and third remove step father in blood relation, adopter and the guardian, the punishments envisaged for such crimes are increased by half.
- Perpetrators of acts of subjecting the victim to torture or inhuman treatments in scope of the crimes against humanity, exercising sexual assault against a person, forced impregnating, solitation of forced prostitution are envisaged aggravated life imprisonment and statute of limitation will not apply to such forms of crimes
- Discrimination is also taken to the scope of crime.

Since the approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Turkey has recorded a significant number of institutional progresses. The Equal Opportunities Commission for Women and Men was established within the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 2009. The Commission was established to monitor the international improvements recorded countrywide and worldwide with regard to protection and promotion of women's rights and achievement of gender equality, to inform the Turkish Grand National Assembly about these improvements, negotiate the works and activities assigned to them substantially or secondarily, submit opinions to expertise commission on the draft laws and proposals submitted to the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Ombudsman was established in 2012 to act as an independent and efficient complaint mechanism in the proceeding of public services with the Law No. 9328 dated June 14, 2012 to supervise and screen out every acts, deeds and approaches of administration in terms of law and equity and to research and provide recommendations by a human rights-based justice understanding. The institution has a "women rights" supervisor within itself.

Another improvement is the recognition of violence against women as a state policy and embracement of combating violence against women by all organs of the state since 1995. The Law No: 4320 on the Protection of Family, which was enacted in 1998, provided a description of domestic violence in a legal document for the first time. "Family Courts" were set up in 2003 and the Courts were authorized to implement the Law.

The advocacy activities were reinforced and public awareness increased thanks to the "National Stop Violence against Women Campaign" which was launched in 2004. Through the amendments introduced to Penal Code in 2005, necessary legal basis and statutory ground were laid down to protect women from custom killings and sexual rape.

A Research Commission was set up within the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 2005 to Research the Reasons of Custom and Honor Killings and Violence against Women and Children and Take the Necessary Measures. A Prime Ministerial Circular on "Measures to be Taken to Prevent the Acts of Violence against

Women and Children and Custom and Honor Killings” No 2006/17 was issued in line with the report prepared and released by the Research Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Publication of the Circular by the Prime Ministry is a significant indicator which shows that combating violence against women is embraced as a state policy. The activities are monitored by quarterly reports. A number of trainings have been organized for the police, health personnel and social service experts and activities have been launched to raise the awareness of men since 2006.

The “National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence against Women 2007-2010“ was prepared and updated for the years 2012 and 2015. “The National Research on Domestic Violence” was carried out to enable a more efficient policy and program formulation in combating violence against women and collect data on violence against women at national level in 2008. And activities are underway regarding the renewal of such a research.

Signing and ratification of Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (İstanbul Convention), abolishment of the available Law on combating violence against women (namely the Law No 4320) and enactment of the Law No 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, which is broader and more comprehensive in scope on March 8, 2012 reinforced the legal regulations and legal grounds.

Women’s shelters started to function for the first time in 1990. The number of women shelters in Turkey is gradually increasing. Currently, there are 125 women’s shelters throughout Turkey 90 of which are affiliated to the General Directorate on the Status of Women and 35 of which are affiliated to the governorates, district governorates and local administrations. In addition to the shelters, there are 14 Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers and 25 First Step Stations which are delivering services for victims of violence.

The budget allocated to the activities carried out for women issue is increasing gradually in Turkey. Recently, a budget of 67 million \$ was allocated for the General Directorate on the Status of women, a national mechanism in Turkey for the year 2014.

NGOs are engaged in the activities carried out by the General Directorate on the Status of Women, the recommendations and opinions of NGOs, trade unions, occupational groups are received during the legislation activities. General Directorate on the Status of Women organizes common training programs, seminars and runs project in cooperation with the NGOs.

Turkey has recorded significant improvements with respect to the Millennium Development Goals since 2000. Turkey has witnessed a number of progresses in protection of women’s human rights and women’s economic empowerment and social status.

When the improvements recorded by Turkey with regard to the education in terms of the Millennium Development Goals are examined, it is seen that Turkey accelerated her activities with regard to increasing women’s and girl’s education. The net enrolment rate for girls which was 90 percent in 2000

rose to 99 percent in 2013. Significant progress has also been recorded in girls' enrolment rate in secondary and tertiary educational levels. The illiteracy rate which was 19.6 percent in 2000 decreased to 6,8 percent in 2013.

As a result of the steps and activities put forth, there has been a number of pleasing and encouraging advancements in terms of women's enjoyment of their health rights within the last decade. Within this regard, the maternal mortality and infant mortality rates has decreased. Turkey has been among the 10 countries that experienced the highest decrease in the maternal mortality rates between the years 1990-2008. The rate of both pre-natal and post natal service beneficiaries has increased in course of time. Furthermore, regular cash assistance are provided to the poorest families on the condition that they bring their 0-6 age children to regular health checks and health assistances are provided to the pregnant women on the condition that they deliver their births at hospitals and have regular health checks.

A variety of supportive programs like Micro Loan Practices, Social Support Programs and Conditional Health Transfers were put into practice to reduce women poverty, empower women's economic status and enable their participation in employment.

A variety of activities have been carried out to enable the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action so far. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality which was prepared in line with the critical areas included in the Beijing Platform for Action was implemented during 2008 and 2013 and monitored in semi-annual periodicals. The Action Plan is being renewed for 2014 and 2018.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Poverty**

Increasing participation in women's economic and social life and their life quality, improving income distribution and reducing poverty through facilitating the access of women who are under the risk of poverty and social exclusion are among the basic objectives set forth in the Tenth Development Plan<sup>1</sup> (2014-2018) . It is planned to reduce the absolute poverty to ignorable levels and focus on the relative poverty as in the case of the developed countries within the framework of the Development Program. In order to prevent the transfer of poverty to the generations, it is planned to further strengthen the equal access to basic public services including education, increase the participation of non-governmental organizations in combating poverty and reinforce the role of local administrations. It is planned to increase women's labor force participation and employment rates for women who are among the most vulnerable groups in terms of poverty.

In the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (2013-2017), it is aimed to prevent a long-term cycle of poverty. The Strategic Plan also includes the objective of increasing the proportion of social services to gross national product, the amount of social services per family, reducing food poverty rates and formulating policies with regard to the launching of minimum income support. It is underlined

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The Development Plan which is prepared every five years.<sup>1</sup>

in the Strategic Plan that the participation of women under protection who are among the most vulnerable groups to poverty in vocational and training courses will be encouraged; activities will be introduced to enable the employment of women who participated to the vocational and training courses in public and private sector.

One of the reasons behind women's poverty is their lower participation in labor force. Another factor which contributes to women's poverty is their employment in informal employment (54,1%). And pay gaps show an explicit difference between the sexes. Gender pay gap in primary and below primary education is 16,5%, 16,7% in primary and secondary education, 10,1% in high school, 19,5% in vocational school and 16,1% in tertiary and over educational levels.

The most striking success recorded by Turkey with regard to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals in the recent years is the reduction of poverty. While the proportion of the population whose income is less than 1 dollar per day to total population was 0.2 in 2002, the proportion decreased to 0 in 2006. While the rate of food poverty in Turkey was 1,35% in 2002, the rate decreased to 0.54% in 2006. According to the 2012 data, the rate of people who have an income less than 4,3\$ in the urban was 0,6%, the rate for the rural was 5,88%.

The poverty rate for women was 19% for women and %17,1% for men in 2009. While the rate of poverty in the rural increases for both sexes, it is seen that the poverty rate in the urban decreases.

“Conditional Educational Assistance” and “Conditional Health Assistance” are provided by the General Directorate of Social Assistances of the Ministry of family and Social Policies to the poorest families on the condition that they ensure the retention of their children in education, bring their 0-6 age children to regular health checks and health assistances are provided to the pregnant women on the condition that they deliver their births at hospitals and have regular health checks. The amount of the Conditional Educational Assistances is more than that of boys. The Conditional Educational Assistance and Conditional Health Assistance payments are directly made to the mothers.

The General Directorate of Social Assistances provides income generating project support with an amount of 7000\$ per person who are in social and economic deprivation. In the event that the project quotas are filled, the project quota for the income generating project will be increased by 30%.

A “Project on Developing a Social Assistance Cash Program for Women Whose Husband Died” was launched in December 2010, and following the research assistances are started to be provided for these women whose husband died in 2012.

Unpaid crèche services are provided to the children of families who are in economic deprivation in private crèches and day care services by sparing a quota by 5%. Children of women in shelters and women convicts can also benefit from this form of care services.

A system was developed to provide guidance and counseling services by Vocational and Business Consultants for the people who were identified as a result of field research carried out by the people who apply for a social assistance, received social assistance and Family and Social Support Consultants.

National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) includes objectives and strategies on women and poverty. The plan is monitored by semiannual meetings. National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for 2014 and 2018.

## **Education**

The Fundamental Law of National Education of the Republic of Turkey establishes that the existing educational institutions are available for all without any discrimination in terms of language, race, sex and religion and women and men should have the equal opportunities in access to education. In parallel to this, according to the Law of Primary Education and Education, primary education is free of charge in the state schools and compulsory for both girls and boys who are at their educational ages. The duration of compulsory education is 12 years in total, 4 years for primary education, 4 years for secondary education and 4 years for high school education.

Tenth Development Plan includes objectives and purposes stating that “access of all children to education especially including the disabled children and girls in primary and secondary education will be ensured, grade repetition and school drop outs will be reduced”. Raising social awareness through formal and informal education in order to eliminate discrimination against women is among the objectives of Tenth Development Plan.

The Medium-Term Programs also includes objectives on the elimination of obstacles in access to education at all levels and regional and regional gender disparities.

The Annual Program states that measures will be taken to eliminate and change the unfavorable conditions for girls countrywide in order to reduce school drop outs in primary and secondary education, the rate of secondary education transitions will be increased; access to education will be increased through scholarship, bussed education and conditional cash transfers mechanisms; the education campaigns will be continued; pensions will be set up for girls in places where the transition rate from primary school to secondary school is low.

Turkey has a young population. 33% of the population is below 2; 65 age and over constitute 7,7 % of the population. 72,7% of 6 age and over is at least primary school graduates. The rate for women is 68,3% and for men is 76,9%. The rate of high school graduates is 27,3% in total; the rate for women is 23,2% and 31,4% for men. In terms of educational level, the figures tell that the rates are lower for women than men however the indicators gradually increase both for women and men. When compared with the year 2008, the rate of illiterate women has decreased and the rates for education at all levels for women have increased in course of time. The graduation rates for men from primary school, high school and over educational level is higher for men (10% and 6,5%) than women (6,7% and 5,3%) however the change in the illiteracy rates for women is more striking (5,5% for women and 1,7 for men).

2.788.757 of the population in total, of which 2.313.689 are women at 6 age and over, are illiterate in Turkey. Thus women constitutes 82,9% of the illiterate. The illiteracy rates have decreased in course of time. The illiteracy rate, which was 7,7% in 2008, decreased to 4,1% in 2012. While the illiteracy rate for



women was 12,3% in 2008, it decreased to 6,8% in 2012. While the illiteracy rate for men was 3,1% in 2008, it decreased to 1,4% in 2012.

The pre-school education covers the education of children who are not at the educational age in Turkey and is optional. Nearly 30,93% of the children at 3 and 5 years of age participate to a form of pre-school program. 48% of these children are girls. The pre-school enrollment rate for 2009-2010 educational year is 26,92% and 804.765 children in total participated to an educational program. Although the rate for boys is slightly higher than girls and the figures for both boys and girls increased in years, we still could not reach at a desirable level.

The primary education in Turkey covers children at the age of 6 and 13 and compulsory primary schools with a duration of 4 years and compulsory secondary schools with a duration of 4 years. The rates for primary school for both girls and boys have showed a continuous increase over the last five years. While the net enrollment rate for primary level was 96,49% in total in 2008 and 2009 educational years, the rate for girls and boys are 96,99% and 95,97% respectively. While the net enrollment rate in primary educational level was 99,57% in 2013 and 2014 educational period, the rate for both boys and girls was recorded as 99,53 and 99,61% respectively. While the net enrollment rate in the secondary educational level was 94,52%, the rate for boys and girls was recorded as 94,57% and 94,47% respectively.

The secondary education covers all general, vocational and technical educational institutions which provide compulsory formal or non-formal education based on primary education with 4-year duration. The rates for secondary school for both girls and boys have showed a continuous increase over the last five years. While the net enrollment rate for secondary level education was 58,52% in total in 2008 and 2009 educational years, the rate for girls and boys are 56,30% and 60,63% respectively. These rates are %70,65 77,22% and 76,05% respectively for 2013 and 2014 educational years.

In the 2013-2014 educational year, girls makeup of the 48,79% of the children who continue general high schools. 43,89% of the students who continue vocational and technical schools which rear intermediate staff for the labor force market are girls.

Tertiary education covers all educational institutions based on secondary education which provide at least two years of education. Women constitute 46,6% of the tertiary education students. The tertiary enrolment rate which was 27,69% in total in the 2008 and 2009 educational year, rose to 38,50% in 2012 and 2013. The tertiary education enrolment rate for women rose from 25,92% to 38,61%. Women constitute 42,5% of graduate and postgraduate students. While the rate of women in faculty of dentistry, pharmacy, literature, language, history and geography, science, education, fine arts, theology and architecture is higher than men ; the rate of men in faculty of medicine, engineering, agriculture and veterinary medicine is higher than women. The faculties of economics and administrative sciences have a relatively balanced distribution of women and men students.

The rate of transition from primary to secondary education, which was 85,2% in the 2008 and 2009 educational year, rose to 90,1 in 2012 and 2013 educational year.

The rate of women who attend open secondary schools for at all ages for those who are out of the formal education is 63,4% and the rate of women who continue open high school is 44,77% in the 2013-2014 school year.

The rate of women who attend skill and vocational courses organized by a variety of public institutions in scope of the lifelong learning is 60,55%.

The rate of women teachers who work in the pre-school educational institutions is 94,25 %, primary educational institutions is 58,16%, the secondary educational institutions is 53,16%, high school educational institutions is 45,58% respectively in the 2013-2014 educational year. Women constitute 15,51% of the managers working within the Ministry of National Education, central and rural schools and institutions.

Women constitute 41,57% of the lecturers, 49% of research assistants, 37,12% of associate professors, 28,12% of professors in the tertiary education. 14 out of 175 rectors are women (8%).

A variety of General Directorates affiliated to the Ministry of National Education provide scholarships, which are of great importance, for students and girls constitute 50,79% of the scholarship beneficiaries and 43,73% of the students who stay at the pensions affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. 50,84 % (2013-2014) of the students who continue their education at boarding schools are girls. Women constitute 61,4% of women who stay at the dormitories affiliated to Credit and Dormitories Institution.

Within the framework of the activities regarding the elimination of discriminatory pictures, expressions and similar components from the textbooks, a "Gender Equality Commission" was set up within the Ministry of National Education to achieve the strategies and objectives of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2008-2013 and the curriculums were reviewed with a gender equality perspective.

The Commission was nullified and a system was built in which the textbooks to be used in the courses for formal and non-formal educational institutions will be reviewed electronically by the educators. The Regulation on Textbooks and Educational Materials was accepted within this scope and an approach was adopted in the textbooks which supports the fundamental human rights and strongly rejects all forms of discriminatory objects. Another assessment criteria set by the Board of Education and Discipline is provision of a balance in the samples and characters used in the textbooks in terms of gender equality". Another progress is inclusion of "Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy" subject which is read as a compulsory lesson for the fourth classes. It is stated that gender inequalities will be stressed as a violation of human rights and the issues of gender-based violence and social exclusion will be handled in a universal dimension. The pilot implementation of the launching of "Democracy and Human Rights" lesson was started in the 2012 and 2013 educational year as an optional subject for the secondary education. It is aimed to raise awareness on gender equality under the theme of Pluralist Perspective for Diversity.

A leading decision was taken with the Turkish Linguistic Society to start a work regarding the elimination of humiliating proverbs and idioms from the dictionaries. It is planned to introduce the activities as soon as possible.

Some of the activities carried out to enable women and girls further access to educational opportunities are as follows;

- The “Mother and Daughter at School” campaign is run to increase the number of literate women.
- Some quantity of payment is made to the families who do not have a social insurance and in need, for each child going to school within the framework of the Conditional Educational Assistance run as a part of the Social Risk Reduction Project (SRAP). The amount of the payments is higher for girls and students who continue secondary education in order to increase the enrollment rates of girls and transition rates from primary to secondary education.
- Though not systematically involved, the gender equality trainings are included in the in-service training programs of educators.
- Bussed education is applied for children who live in rural areas places where no school exist near them both in primary and secondary education.
- Family Training Course Programs are run for parents who have 0-18 age children to raise their awareness on gender equality and a number of other issues.
- The Projects on Increasing the Enrollment Rates for Specially Girls are run to decrease the school drop outs in the primary education and secondary education through increasing the enrollment rates in primary, secondary and vocational educations.
- The Primary Education Institutions Standards were prepared to improve the quality of primary education services. The Standards are gender-sensitive.

National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) includes strategies and objectives on women and education. The Plan is monitored through quarterly meetings. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for 2014 and 2018.

## **Health**

Turkey made a commitment on women’s full and equal access to health facilities through the documents she has accepted and international convention to which she has been a party; and guaranteed the “right to a healthy and balanced environment for all” in her Constitution.

The Tenth Development Plan includes objectives on the development of protective health services with a multi-sectoral approach to enable a state of a physical and mental welfare; delivery of proper, effective and efficient health services, reduction of maternal and infant mortalities till the year 2018. Another point which is directly related to the women in The Tenth Development Plan is the inclusion of “increasing the total fertility rates” and fertility rate and total fertility rate indicators of the working women, among the objectives of “Protection of Family and Dynamic Population Nature”.

“Sexual and Reproductive Health National Strategic Action Plan for Health Sector 2005-2015” which is being implemented by the Ministry of Health includes objectives on reducing the maternal mortality rates, preventing unplanned pregnancies, preventing sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, raising the awareness of the young on sexual health and reproductive health and eliminating regional disparities.

The total population of Turkey was recorded as 76.667.864 by the end of 2013 (38.473.360 men; 38.194.504 women). The population rate in 2013 showed an increase when compared to the previous year and rose from 12 in a thousand to 13,7 in a thousand.

Women at fertility age (15-49), which is the longest period of time in the life cycle, constitute 53,3% of total women population and 26,58% of the total domestic population. Girls at 0 and 14 age constitute 24% of the total women population and 11% of domestic population.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) data 2013, the lifetime expectancy at birth for men is 74,7 and 79,2 for women. Women's rate is higher among 65 and over age population (the rate of women in old population is 57% and 43% for men).

While the rate of the adolescents who started to deliver birth at the age of 15 and 19 was 3,7% in 2009, the rate decreased to 2,9% in 2012.

According to the 2008<sup>2</sup> Turkish Population and Health (TNSA) Research, the total fertility rate countrywide was 2,16%. As the education level increases, the fertility rate decreases.

The willful abortion has been applied for pregnancies up to 10 weeks upon request within the framework of the Population Planning Law No: 2827 since the year 1983. The number of willful miscarriages decreased to 10 out of each 100 pregnancy as of 2008. The activities are underway regarding the extension of modern contraceptive methods to maintain the reductions in maternal mortalities and willful miscarriages.

Maternal mortality rates have shown a decrease in recent years. While the maternal mortality was 18,4 out of each hundred thousand live births in 2009, it decreased to 15,9 in 2013.

While the perinatal mortality rate was 24 out of 1000 births according to 2003 TNSA (live and dead), it decreased to 19 according to 2008 TNSA. A reduction is expected in perinatal mortality rates of women who received sufficient and qualified pre-natal care services. While the rate of pre-natal care services beneficiaries was 92% in 2009, it rose to 97% in 2009. The number of follow-up per pregnant women is 4,1. The rate of births delivered at hospitals has increased countrywide. While the rate of births at hospitals was 89,4% in 2009, the rate rose to 98,3% in 2013. While the cesarean rate was 42,3% in 2009, it rose to 50,3% in 2013.

While the post-natal care rate was %90,6 in 2011, it rose to 93,8% in 2012. While the number of puerperant follow up was 2,0 in 2011, it reached to 2,3 in 2012.

Within the framework of the Health Transformation Program, pregnant and infant follow-ups are mandatory and performance-based. Within the scope of Maternal Mortality Follow-up Program, "Provincial Maternal Mortality Detection and Prevention Unit", "Provincial Examination Commission"; were set up in each provinces; and "National Preliminary Maternal Mortalities Examination Commission" and "Central Examination Commission" were established within the Ministry of Health. The National

Action Plan on Gender equality (2008-2013)<sup>2</sup> includes objectives and strategies on women and health. The Plan is monitored through quarterly meetings. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for 2014 and 2018.

### **Violence against Women**

Very holistic and comprehensive activities have been launched on combating violence against women in Turkey since the 2000 onwards. The legal basis for combating violence against women has been reinforced by the regulations introduced to the basic laws.

All these improvements were moved to a new dimension through the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) which was opened for signature on May 11, 2011 and ratified by Turkey for the first time on November 24, 2011.

Law No: 4320, dated 1998 on the Protection of Family which provided a legal basis for the definition of violence against women for the first time, raised the need for the revision and reassessment of the Law on account of the problems arising from the implementation gaps. A working group was set up within the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and "The Law No: 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women" was prepared. The Law, prepared in accordance with the meetings with the participation of public prosecutors working on violence against women, Family Court Judges, the representatives of NGO's, Bar Heads of 16 provinces which have metropolitan municipalities and about which the written opinions of all relevant institutions, agencies and NGOs were taken, was approved in the Turkish Grand National General Assembly unanimously on March 8, 2012 and came into force on March 20, 2012.

- In line with the reference in the Istanbul Convention, all women, children and other family members, as well as the victims of unilateral persistent stalking are included within the scope of the Law; and the concepts of "violence", "domestic violence" and "violence against women" are defined in such a way as to comprise physical, verbal, economic and psychological violence.
- Preventive and protective measures regarding the protected person, perpetrator and potential perpetrator are established in the Law in detail.
- Local authorities and law enforcement officer chiefs are also entitled to rule preventive orders along with the family court judge within the framework of the provisions established by the Law. Thus, it enabled the ruling of protective and preventive orders both at the weekends and on holidays.
- The Law also provides for confidentiality and security of the victim and it is specified that where necessary, identity information of the persons and other family members under protection or other details which could disclose their identity shall be concealed in all official records upon request or ex officio along with the protection orders.

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<sup>2</sup>The 2014 Research has not been released yet

- The Law also establishes in detail the sanctions to be imposed on the perpetrator so as to increase efficiency and deterrent power of the protection orders in the event that the perpetrator acts in violation of them. In this context, the law envisages sentencing the perpetrator to coercive imprisonment for a period of three days to ten days and a 15 – 30 day-period for each repetitive contradictory act
- The Law sets forth the establishment of “Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers”, which provide support and monitoring services to actively monitor the implementation of preventive and protective orders to prevent violence.
- It is envisaged in the provisions of the Law that implementation of the protection orders shall be prosecutable using the technical tools and methods with a judicial decision.

The Law is the main legislative amendment on combating violence and domestic violence against women; the protective and preventive measures set forth in the Law aim to combat not only physical violence but also psychological, sexual and economic violence.

The implementation scope of the Law was broadened and all women, children, their family members and victims of persistent stalking were taken to the scope of the Law regardless of any discrimination. The inclusion of the victims of persistent stalking is of great importance in terms of being able to provide an urgent response to acts of harassment and threat via internet.

Following the entry into force of the Law, the Prime Ministerial Circular No: 2012/13 on the Regulation on the Implementation of the Law No: 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women was issued in April 2012 to provide a clarification regarding the implementation of the Law and guidance for the implementers.

The Implementation Regulation was prepared in accordance with the opinions and views of the relevant institutions and organizations and came into force on January 18, 2013.

The regulation activities of the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers, establishment of which was envisaged in the Law, are still going on.

Furthermore, the Regulation on the Opening and Operation of Women’s Shelter, which is about the restructuring of the women’s shelters, was prepared with the participation and contribution of all relevant parties and came into force on January 4, 2013.

A “Sub-Commission on Examination of Practices on Prevention of Violence against Women” was set up within the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Commission completed its report.

The information on the activities and events launched within the scope of the Prime Ministerial Circular on “the Measures to be Taken to Prevent Acts of Violence against Women and Children and Custom and Honor Killings”, issued in 2006 are compiled by the responsible institutions and cooperating organizations and submitted to the Ministry quarterly in order to monitor the implementation of the Circular.

The Monitoring Committee on Violence against Women convenes annually with the participation of all relevant public institutions and organizations, universities, non-governmental organizations and assesses the activities and progress launched with regard to violence against women and submits recommendations. The Committee has organized 7 meetings so far.

“The National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence against Women” was implemented between 2007 and 2010. The implementation of the measures set forth in the Action Plan is monitored through periodical meetings.

The Action Plan was updated with the participation and contribution of the relevant public institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations and women research centers of universities and the “National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women 2012-2015” came into force on July 10, 2012.

The National Action Plan aims improvements in five fundamental areas including legislative amendments, awareness raising and mental transformation, empowerment of women and protective service delivery, delivery of health services and inter-institutional cooperation. The Action Plan covers three implementation period: Short-term (2012-2013), Medium-term (2012-2014) and Long-term (2012-2015 and aftermath). The assessment meetings of the Action plan are organized periodically.

A number of trainings are organized for the personnel working in institutions/organizations which deliver services to women victims of violence to raise their awareness on “violence against women, domestic violence, gender equality, manners of approach and the implementation of the relevant law”.

- 71.000 police officers have been trained so far since 2006 within the framework of the “Training on the Role of Police in Prevention of Violence against Women and Procedures to be Followed”. The Expert Training Trainee Project was run and the training of 23 police officers was completed. Thus a group of expert trainers on domestic violence against women was formed up within the Law Enforcement Agency. The “Domestic Violence Incidence Registration Forms” were conveyed to all police stations countrywide through Pol-Net and the form has been put in use. The police make a risk assessment of the victim through the form and after the risk assessment necessary measures are taken by the police.
- 65.000 health personnel have been trained since 2008 within the scope of the “Training on the Role of Health Personnel in Combating Domestic Violence against Women”.
- Within the scope of the “Project on the Role of Judiciary Personnel in Preventing Violence against Women”, 336 Family Court Judges and Public Prosecutors have been trained since 2009.
- Within the scope of the “Training on the Role of Religious Officials in Preventing Violence against Women and the Procedures to be followed”, 21.000 religious officials have been trained since 2010. It is aimed to launch activities regarding continuation of the trainings in the following periods, promotion of human rights, combating violence against women, violence against children, strengthening family, increasing intra-familial communication, enhancing the problem solving capacity of family members.

- The activities launched in 2012 aims to raise awareness of the General Commandership of Gendarmerie personnel on “gender equality” and “violence against women”, include the “gender equality” and “violence against women” issues in the curriculums of the schools functioning within the Commandership, improve the capacity of the services offered to victims of violence and enable the standardization of these services. A variety of conferences and training of trainees are organized within this scope. The “Combating Violence against Women” issue will be read as a separate lesson in the curriculums of the Gendarmerie Schools Command as of the 2013-2014 training and educational year. Training of trainees on “Gender Equality” and “Combating Violence against Women” was conducted for the military officers working within the Gendarmerie Schools Command in order to ensure the sustainability of the lesson and raise awareness on “gender equality”.
- A Cooperation Protocol was signed between the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies on July 7, 2013 and came into force. The Protocol aims to deliver trainings to soldiers who are doing their military service within Turkish Armed Forces on “Gender Equality” and “Combating Violence against Women”, strengthen the content of the existing training programs and train the personnel who is supposed to deliver these trainings. The trainings within the scope of the Protocol will be organized in four phases:
  - At the first phase, 85 trainees will be trained two-week specialized ToT program.
  - At the second phase, 300 trainees are targeted to attend the 2-week ToT trainings.
  - At the third phase, 3000 trainees are intended to be trained in scope of a regional-scale Gender Equality and Combating Violence against Women Training Program to last 2 days.
  - At the fourth phase, 3000 trained trainers are targeted to run a training program of 6 hours for the private soldiers and non-commissioned officers from the troops.

Within this framework, The Specialized Trainer’s Training Program, which was the first phase, was organized between March 10 and 28, 2014 with the participation of 32 personnel from the Turkish Armed Forces.

- The activities started in 2013 are aimed at holding training programs on “Gender Equality” and “Combating Violence against Women” for the soldiers and non-commissioned officers in compulsory military service within the Turkish Armed Forces as well as enriching and reinforcing those available and training the personnel to be assigned for these trainings.
- 250 Chief Administrative Officers and approximately 190 District Governor Candidates received seminars on violence against women and gender equality.
- A “Seminar on Gender Equality, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Respect for Peace and Diversity” was delivered to the Provincial Directors of Family and Social Policies and the Directors of the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers. Furthermore, trainings were organized for 250 members of profession under the roof of the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers and Provincial Directorates.



One of the vital instruments for combating violence against women is to collect reliable data. On the other hand, “The Project on a Pilot Survey into Building Violence against Women Database” was run in the 2012-2013 period to standardize the data on combating violence against women. In scope of the project, a proposal on Violence against Women Database was put forward to prepare the substructure of a system which would collect the relevant data at a center and standardize them.

The National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey was conducted in 2008. The research, the results of which were revealed in 2009, was conducive to reviewing and analyzing the Turkish pattern of violence against women with regard to qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The research is the most comprehensive one conducted nationwide so far, in order to make out the prevalence of domestic violence against women, forms of this violence alongside its causes and results. Based on the 2008 National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey, the rate of women subjected to violence some time throughout their lifecycle was 39 percent. This rate happens to be 10 percent in the last 12 months. On the other hand, while the rate of women subjected to sexual violence some time throughout their lifecycle was 15 percent, the same rate has receded to 7 percent in the last 12 months.

The research is needed to be renewed so that up-to-date data is collected and the efficiency of the measures and policies adopted is analyzed pursuant to the research. Accordingly, the renewal activities of The National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey were started in 2013 and its wrap-up meeting, where the results are going to be publicized, is intended to be held in September 2014.

*Services Available:* Women’s shelters have been spreading rapidly country-wide. Currently, a total of 125 shelters are available in Turkey, 90 of which are affiliated with the GDSW and 35 with the NGOs, district governorates, governorates and the local government (this figure was 48 back in 2009).

The Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers are the centers of reference for women who are exposed to or at risk of violence that run monitoring activities round the clock seven days a week offering the services of consultancy, guidance as well as empowering and supportive services they would need, for the purpose of preventing violence and implementing the protection orders effectively. It was envisaged that the centers be set up in the pilot cities in 2 years’ time and currently 14 cities have had their Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers set up.

Aside from the Shelters and The Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers, 25 first step stations are available in service.

Another mechanism of reference for the victims/survivors of violence or those under risk and in need of support is the “ALO 183” Hotline.

“Pilot Application on the Use of Electronic Support Technologies for Combating Violence against Women” has been started. In two pilot cities, safety pushbuttons have been handed out to the survivors/ victims or those under risk, upon order of a judge.

Additionally, psychosocial support services are being offered at the Women's Counseling Centers of the Bar Associations and the "Psychosocial Support and Crisis Response Units" formed within the emergency rooms of hospitals.

### **Women at times of conflict**

Turkey has experienced intensive demographic movements triggered by the turmoil which broke out in Syria in April 2011. Turkey has provided the Syrian guests with social and psychological support aside from shelter and caring for their other basic needs. At the camps set up in 10 cities to cater for over 430 thousand Syrian citizens, all the requirements of humanitarian assistance have been fulfilled, for over two years now.

Accordingly, "The Humanitarian Assistance Program for Combating and Responding to Gender Based Violence" has been run with the joint efforts of The General Directorate on the Status of Women and UNFPA since April 2013, in order to raise awareness on gender based violence among the Syrian citizens which fled from the ongoing conflict home to Turkey, build up the capacity of the personnel in service of the Syrian citizens to respond to gender based violence and obtain technical assistance for our country in this respect.

The following are listed among the Priorities and Objectives of the Program: Reinforce the available domestic services to fulfill the requirements of the growing Syrian population in Turkey; improve the skills and capacity of the camp authorities and service providers regarding the psychosocial needs of the Syrian citizens in Turkey; stimulate the Syrian people on the issue of gender based violence and raise their awareness accordingly; and prevent violence against women and girl children.

In scope of the "Supporting the Supporters" trainings, 41 training courses were held for the managers, interpreters, health staff, voluntary Syrian teachers/ instructors, Turkish instructors, security staff, cleaning staff, qualified instructors and trainers and the station soldiers. The trainings covered emergency trauma information as well as the assessment and guidance relating to the violence-affected individuals.

Furthermore, meetings have been held with the Syrian women to stimulate action among the Syrians relating to gender based violence and raise their awareness, exchange information as to early and forced marriages, build solidarity among women and develop emotional skills. Accordingly, 17 meetings have been organized so far with the involvement of 395 Syrian women. The trainings aimed at the staff and the Syrian people will be continued.

In addition, around 400 thousands of information brochures were printed in Arabic and Turkish and their dissemination has been started.

Similar work is planned for 2014 in scope of the Project.

## **Economy**

It is pointed out in the 10<sup>th</sup> Development Plan that promotion of labor force participation and employment maintains its importance particularly among the youth and women. It is stated among the primary objectives to build a labor market based on a gender equality perspective and women's participation in labor force and their employment rate is targeted to be raised up to 34,9 percent and 31 percent respectively, at the end of the plan term.

Within the framework of the Priority Transformation Programs run in this context, there are ongoing efforts for preparing an action plan aimed at the "Labor Market Activation Program" components, which are activation of the employment incentives for women in scope of the program, extension of the child care services, as the most notorious obstacle to women's employment and implementation of an integrated support program specific to women entrepreneurs.

Likewise, action plans are underway for reconciliation of work and family life and dissemination of high quality, affordable and accessible crèche and pre-school education facilities to preserve the dynamic demographic structure, within the framework of the "Program for Preserving Family and Dynamic Demographic Structure" included in the Plan.

The Prime Ministerial Circular Nr.2010/14 on "Promotion of Women's Employment and Equal Opportunities", which was designed to boost women's employment and promote equal pay for equal work so that their socio-economic status is strengthened, equality of men and women is established in social life and the goals of sustainable economic growth and social development are achieved, was put into force on May 25, 2010. In scope of the circular, "The National Monitoring and Coordination Committee on Women's Employment" was formed.

It is set forth in a new Law, which took effect in February 2011, that affirmative action shall be taken in favor of women as the new employment opportunities are offered and if they are older than 18 years of age, their insurance premiums shall be covered from the Unemployment Insurance Fund of the employer's shares for a period of 12 to 54 months, under specific circumstances.

Moreover, the modifications made to the Labor Act and Civil Servant Law have introduced arrangements relating to the maternity and parental leaves; thereby, in case of premature births, the period of pre-natal maternity leave not taken before the delivery can be added on the post-natal leave period of the women workers. Thanks to these modifications, civil servants are exempted from night watches and shifts during the pregnancy and for one year after birth. The period of unpaid maternal leave for the civil servants who deliver a baby is extended up to 24 months, which can also be shared with the civil servant fathers. The breastfeeding breaks are also increased to 3 hours daily for the first three months upon expiry of the maternity leave, while it is 1,5hours daily for the next period of six months.

"The Prime Ministerial Circular on Prevention of Mobbing at Work" took effect in March 2011.

As per "The Regulation on Heavy and Hazardous Jobs" dated March 7, 2010, many jobs have been omitted from the list of heavy and hazardous jobs, removing the restrictions on the employment of women and the youth. Hence, some jobs are no longer "men's job" solely by law.

The legal amendments relating to the trade unions are also aimed at mainstreaming the gender perspective. The Law on Government Employee Unions and Collective Bargaining provides for the trade unions and confederations to observe gender equality in all their activities in line with their founding principles.

The Law on Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining envisages that the trade unions and confederations shall observe gender equality among the members benefiting from their activities.

While the rate of women's labor force participation was 24,5 and employment 21,6 percent in 2008; they rose up to 30,8 and 27,1 respectively in 2013. Turkey has been experiencing significant structural and social transformations to facilitate women's access to the labor market. Women's employment has been favored more by the society, women have been educated better, the marriageable age has been raised and the birth rates have been reduced. In addition, basic trends such as legal improvements in women's participation in work life, the upward demand for women in the services sector are expected to boost women's labor force participation particularly in the cities. The data as to the upward trend of the urban rate of women participation in labor force is also testimony to these prospects (while women's rate of labor force participation was 20,8 percent in 2008, it was 28% in 2013).

Considering women's levels of participation in labor force by their educational backgrounds, it is seen that the highest rate, 72,2% (2013) belongs to the women educated at the higher education level. The gap between the labor force participation rates of men and women is the smallest among this group of women of higher educational background.

As far as the sectoral distribution of employment by years is concerned; the share of agricultural sector decreased from 23,7% in 2008 to 23,6% in 2013, while the shares of the industrial and services sectors stood at 26,4% and 50% respectively. The sectors where women are employed the most are the services sector (47,7%), agricultural sector (37,0%) and the industrial sector (15,3%).

According to the 2013 Turkish Statistics Institute (TÜİK) data, 56,6% of female labor force are casual workers, 31,5% are unpaid family workers, 10,7% work on their own account and 1,2% are employers. It means that while the rate of female entrepreneurs in our country is 11,9%, that of men is 28,2%. It is seen that the share of unpaid family workers in employment is getting fairly low (from 34,4% in 2008 down to 32,5% in 2013) while the shares of the female casual and paid workers are on the rise (from 53,2% in 2008 up to 56,6% in 2013).

Women were employed the most in agricultural jobs and those without any special qualifications, respectively. The rate of women with professional jobs was 13 percent among the employed women while the rate of men with professional jobs was 7 percent.

The unemployment rate of women is higher than men. While women's unemployment rate was 11,6% and men's unemployment rate 10,7% in 2008; these figures were 11,9% and 8,7% in 2013. This hints that women do not get enough employment opportunities in the labor market even though their rate of labor force participation gets higher. This challenge is tried to be overcome, developing projects and policies to facilitate women's quest in the labor market and increase their employability.

The rate of women among all the unregistered employees in Turkey is 42,4% and that of men is 57,6%. While the rate of unregistered workers among women employees was 51,9%, men had a rate of 28,2% in 2013. The group of women with the highest rate of unregistered workers comes from the unpaid family workers (95%). 89% of women and 57% of men working on their own account are unregistered employees. Out of the casual and paid workers, 22,2% of women and 19,1% of men are unregistered workers.

The 2013 TÜİK data revealed the rate of part-time work among women 15+ years of age to be 24,4% in Turkey.

Many programs and projects are implemented in our country to boost the employability of women.

With a view to minimizing the economic gender gap in Turkey, “The Equality at Work Platform” was formed in 2013 under the auspices of the MoFSP to minimize the economic gender gap in Turkey which is involved in the task force formed under the roof of The World Economic Forum to combat gender based inequalities. In scope of the project with a 3-year term, the economic gender gap in our country is targeted to be reduced down to 10% in the project term. In the first year, one third of this goal has been fulfilled.

With the Project on “Promotion of Women’s Access to Economic Opportunities”, it is aimed to step up the evidence-based policy-making capacity, enable exchange of information, raise awareness and support a limited number of women’s cooperatives.

“Young Ideas, Powerful Women Project” is geared towards raising awareness on women’s problems by means of the innovative ideas the youth will generate using technology and producing proposals of solution for their problems in different fields.

The Project titled “Mom’s Job, My Future” was launched with the joint efforts of the public and private sectors to increase the number of crèches/ day care centers in the organized industrial zones. In scope of the project, it is targeted to open crèches in a total of 10 organized industrial zones in the first four years.

It is intended to boost women’s participation in labor force in our country through the training courses to be held by the General Directorate of Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) to promote women’s quality of labor force and their employment.

The Operation on Promoting Women’s Employment run by the İŞKUR covered 43 provinces and it was intended to reduce the regional discrepancies in women’s employment in scope of the Operation. Furthermore, İŞKUR runs the Project on “More and Better Jobs for Women: Empowerment of Women for Decent Jobs in Turkey”.

The National Action Plan on The Empowerment of Rural Women (2012-2016) was prepared by The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. The Plan is to play a significant role in addressing the challenges identified at the National and Regional Workshops (poverty, education, health, social security, agricultural production, entrepreneurship, organization, employment, marketing, use and preserving of natural resources), putting them into practice in line with the short, medium and long term

objectives, bringing initiatives into the agricultural sector, empowerment of rural women and boosting their capacities.

On the other hand, “New Entrepreneur Support” is being provided to promote women’s entrepreneurship and the amount offered in support is ever higher, if the entrepreneur is a woman. Women’s entrepreneurship is one of the priority areas in the Entrepreneurship Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2016) prepared by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB).

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) also includes goals and strategies in the field of women and economy. The follow-up of the plan is done through periodic meetings held every six months. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for the 2014-2018 period.

### **Decision-making mechanisms**

Turkish women were granted the right to enfranchisement in the local elections in 1930 and the parliamentary elections in 1934, on par with men.

The Tenth Development Plan includes boosting women’s involvement in the decision-making mechanisms as a measure.

As far as political representation at national level is concerned; only 315 (3,2%) of 9684 MPs elected to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) ever since the elections of 1935, the first time women were nominated, are women. The highest rate of women’s representation was achieved in the latest General Elections held on June 12, 2011, when the number of women MPs at the parliament rose to 79, which meant a 14,4% representation rate.

Considering the organizational structure of the TGNA, 3 out of 4 parliamentary deputy speakers are women. In addition, women chair 3 out of 17 parliamentary specialized committees under the roof of TGNA.

The change in the number of the candidates is also a significant indicator of the rise in the number of women representatives involved in the national policy. Generally speaking, there is a significant rise in the number of women both as candidates for nomination in the general and local elections and those nominated by a political party.

Currently, there is 1 minister at the Cabinet. Out of the Ministers which have taken post so far, only 2% are women.

According to the results of the Local Elections dated March 9, 2009<sup>3</sup>, the rate of women’s representation in the local government is only 1,2%. A total of 2.948 mayors were elected nationwide and only 26 (0,9%) were women. In 81 cities, only Aydin and Tunceli City Mayors are women.

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<sup>3</sup>The rates might vary depending on the final results of the Local Elections dated March 31, 2014.

While the rate of women municipal council members was 1,6percent in 1999, it rose to 2,3 in 2004 and 4,2 in 2009. Likewise, the rate of female members of provincial general councils was 1,4 in 1999, and it rose to 1,8 first and then 3,2 in 2004 and 2009 respectively.

A range of awareness-raising activities are being carried out to involve more women in the decision-making bodies of the political parties such as the headquarters and party councils, administrative boards, render the party policies gender responsive and promote women’s representation in the national and local politics.

The rates of women at the administrative organs of four political parties with a group in the parliament are presented below.

	<b>Vice Chairpersons Women %</b>	<b>Central Executive Board Women%</b>	<b>Disciplinary Board Women %</b>	<b>City Mayors Women %</b>	<b>District Mayors % Women</b>	<b>Registered Members % Women</b>
<b>The Justice and Development Party (Ruling Party)</b>	8,3	15	27,2	0	0,1	49,0
<b>The Peace and Democracy Party</b>	37,5	33,3	42,8	57,4	-	24,8
<b>The Republican People’s Party (the main opposition)</b>	22,2	21,05	33,3	1,2	1,9	28,6
<b>The Nationalist Movement Party</b>	16,7	8	0	0	0,2	16,1

Another important issue about the political parties is the organization of women’s branches. The women’s branches of the political parties in Turkey, which have a background of 50 years, is an integral form of organization in terms of women’s political visibility. Women’s branches play an active role both in the election processes and within the party.

Women comprise 36,9% (Feb.2014) of the personnel employed in the public sector. However, out of the senior public executives, 90,85 percent are men and 9,25% women (in 2008, it was 8,71%).

Speaking of the top levels of bureaucracy, there is 1 woman at the seat of undersecretary and 3 women work as Deputy Undersecretaries at the Ministries as of February 2013.Considering the local authorities, there is 1 woman governor, while out of 458 vice governors 6 are women. Moreover, 26 out of 214 women assigned at the Turkish Foreign Affairs are women.

As far as the personnel at the courts, which make up the judiciary, are concerned; women account for 39 percent of the judges of the judicial courts and 20 percent of those at the administrative courts.

The personnel of the supreme courts are distributed by sex as follows: women account for 10 percent of the members and rapporteurs of the Constitutional Court and 34 percent of the members, judges and prosecutors of the Court of Cassation and the Court of Appeals. As of February 2014, a female member occupies the post of the President of the Court of Appeals.

As of February 2014, around 41 percent of the university instructors are women. Women account for 28,4% of the professors, 33,1% of the associate professors and 42,8% of the academicians. 9 out of 162 universities are ruled by female rectors.

A study completed by the Council of Europe in 2009 revealed that women comprise 6 percent of the CEOs at the public companies. In another similar study of the World Economic Forum, Turkey ranked among the top three countries with the highest rate of women CEOs by 12% and even higher figures, while the average rates of women CEOs in the OECD and BRIC countries were below 5 percent.

A survey titled “Women in Work Life” was started in 2010. According to the results of the survey completed early in 2011, 10,3% of the CEOs from the participating firms were women. The ratio of women vice CEOs to total number of vice CEOs was 17 percent; while the ratio of women executive board members to the total of executive board members was 19 percent. 13 percent of the firms responding to the survey had women as their general directors/CEOs.

The NGOs have particular influence in increasing the social awareness level. Running pre-election campaigns, they have been conducive to raising social awareness on increasing the number of women in the decision-making and power mechanisms. In addition, “The Academies/Schools of Politics” founded by various NGOs and political parties particularly in the election terms have been instrumental in increasing women’s level of information as to the politics and “political preparation” activities carried out.

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) includes the goals and strategies in the field of women’s involvement in the decision-making mechanisms. The follow-up of the plan is subject to periodic meetings held every 6 months. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for the 2014-2018 period.

### **Institutional Mechanisms**

The national mechanism organized within the Prime Ministry and working under control of the State Minister in charge of Women and Family Affairs of Turkey, The General Directorate on the Status of Women (GDSW) has gone through a re-organization process starting from 2011 and been positioned within the Ministry of Family and Social Policies ever since. The women’s shelters which were previously affiliated with the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, have started serving under the roof of the GDSW and the budget and personnel capacity of the General Directorate have been boosted with its organization complemented with the field services.



Following the re-organization of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women was re-established. The Advisory Board engages the NGOs and academicians acting in the field of women's rights.

Another national mechanism is the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (KEFEK) constituted within the TGNA in 2009. The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was set up to keep track of the national and international progress in protecting and promoting women's rights and achieving gender equality, inform the TGNA on the relevant improvements, negotiate the primary and secondary tasks referred to it, and present opinions at the specialized commissions regarding the bills, motions and decrees submitted at the TGNA. Within this framework, KEFEK has constituted sub-committees on Early Marriages, Identifying the Defects in the Legislation on Violence against Women and Implementation Thereof, Psychological Violence Inflicted upon Women due to Sex of Their Children, Bride Price and Traditional Forms of Marriage, Mobbing at the Workplace, Reference to Gender Equality in our Education System, The Role of Media in Achieving Gender Equality, Constitution viewed from Gender Perspective, Promotion of Women's Employment in all Fields and Proposals of Solution, and Gender Responsive Budgeting; and issued reports on these issues.

The executive organs have units involved in the processes of identifying and implementing the gender equality policies. Among these units are "The Women Farmers Working Group" within "The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry", "The Department of Women and Reproductive Health Care" within The Ministry of Health and "The Unit of Equality between Men and Women" under the roof of the Ministry of Development.

The institutional mechanisms and the activities of the local government are vital in achieving gender equality in Turkey. The United Nations Joint Program on Protection and Promotion of the Human Rights of Women and Girls aims to establish and strengthen the local mechanisms for gender equality with its project titled "Women Friendly Cities".

In scope of the Project which covers the period of April 2011- April 2014, activities have been carried out to step up the capacities of the local authorities and women's NGOs; constitute provincial coordination committees on women's rights, equality units and equality commissions; issue and implement local action plans on equality. In all the project partner cities (12), local action plans on equality have been issued and provincial coordination committees on women's rights have been set up, equality units formed units within the governorates, municipalities, development agencies and special provincial administrations and commissions constituted within the provincial general councils and municipal councils.

The Ministry of Interior issued the Circular numbered 2010/10 in order to extend the Project activities throughout Turkey, and promote and protect the human rights of women and girls. This Circular calls upon the Governorates to notify it to the special provincial administrations, district governorates and municipalities and undertake the follow-up procedures. Another notable instrument considering the local government is the Charter on Equality of Men and Women in Local Life opened to signature by The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) with which the Turkish Association of Municipalities is affiliated.

The Research and Application Centers on Women's Issues are available at 57 universities in Turkey. The centers employ academicians from various disciplines and conducts researches on gender, social and economic status of women, health care, education, violence etc.

Moreover, 7 universities have Women's Studies Departments. They are crucial structures particularly for creating human resources in the field of gender equality and gender responsiveness to cover all the segments of the society.

The trade bodies and trade unions, on the other hand, form committees, commissions and working groups both to get themselves engaged in the advocacy activities for promotion of gender equality and mainstream a gender perspective in their own organizations. The Turkish Bar Association (TBB)-Women's Law Commission has set up "commissions/committees/centers of women's rights" within the bars of 68 cities.

Many NGOs, which carry out advocacy and lobbying activities for promotion of gender equality, run various projects and programs at the same time. The GDSW works in cooperation with the NGOs in the legislative, policymaking and program implementation processes.

### **Women's Human Rights**

Turkey has been a signatory to the CEDAW Convention since 1986. The 90th Article of its Constitution guarantees adherence to the Convention. In pursuant to the modifications to the Turkish Nationality Law, our statement as to the 9<sup>th</sup> Article of the Convention was nullified on January 28, 2008. Hence, Turkey has no other statements or reservations left regarding the substance of the Convention.

Turkey submitted the 6<sup>th</sup> CEDAW Periodic Country Report to the Committee at the end of 2008 and defended it before the CEDAW Committee on July 21, 2010. In addition, within the framework of the concluding observations on the 6<sup>th</sup> Periodic Country Report, interim reports were requested on headscarf and violence against women and the requested reports were submitted at the Committee in September 2012. The 7<sup>th</sup> Country Report, which is going to be presented to the CEDAW Committee in 2014, is being prepared through a participative process, with the NGOs included.

In line with the request for nationwide publicity and dissemination of the concluding observations which are built on the country reports and recommendations of the CEDAW Committee, these documents are translated into Turkish and published on the website of the GDSW.

On the other hand, the number of the mechanisms of reference available nationally for protecting women's human rights has risen in Turkey. The Constitution was amended in 2010, and it was stipulated that "Anyone may refer to the Constitutional Court claiming violation by the public authorities of her/his fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and covered by the European Convention on Human Rights". In parallel to these modifications, a new adjustment was introduced in 2011 to make the individual access more substantial. As a result of these arrangements, individual access to the Constitutional Court shall be applicable in case of gender discrimination.

The Ombudsman was founded in 2012. It works to probe, check and advice for all the acts and deeds as well as attitudes and behaviors of an authority in a just manner based on human rights and in terms of conformity with law and justice. The ombudsman employs auditors in charge of “women’s rights”.

The Human Rights Institution of Turkey was founded in 2012. Generally speaking it is responsible for carrying out activities to promote and protect human rights, conducting reviews and researches accordingly, drafting reports, presenting opinions, recommendations and proposals, carrying out information, awareness raising and training activities and probing and investigating the claimed violations of rights. This institution is another mechanism which receives applications in case of gender discrimination and violation of rights.

## **Media**

There are several provisions in The Law No. 6112 on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Broadcasting Services to fight the sexist elements in Turkish media. The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) also has a supervisory function to prevent the broadcasts which “resort to gender discrimination, conflict with gender equality, promote pressure against women and abuse them” within the framework of the Law No.6112. Moreover, media has a set of “ethical principles” developed by various actors such as the Press Council and Media Association, aimed at mainstreaming the gender perspective in media.

Turkey is one of the countries the radio and TV news of which are reviewed in scope of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) (2005-2010). According to its results, while men comprise 76 percent of the news story subjects, women accounted solely for 24 percent. “Celebrities, birth days, marriages, obituary notices etc.” group is the most eye-catching news items among all centered upon women, with the highest rate of 43 percent.

According to the 2012 Written Media Statistics of Turkey (TÜİK), women comprise 34,4 percent of the newspaper and magazine staff. Out of the staff holding a yellow press card, 21,8 percent are women. In the printed press, women concentrate mostly on the publishing departments rather than the printing and dissemination departments. It is observed that women who have a bachelor’s or post-graduate degree are employed more than those with a two-year degree, high school diploma or lower level of educational background. While the rate of women as paid staff at the broadcasting corporations was 29 percent in 2007; it rose to 30 percent based on the 2012 data. The rate of women staff at the management level was 25,4 percent.

According to the RTÜK Research on TV Viewing Trends (2012), women watch TV an average of 3,8 hours a day and men 3,6 hours in Turkey. Women watch the domestic TV series and news programmes the most, in a row.

According to the results of the TÜİK Survey on use of Information Technologies at the Households in Turkey, the rates of computer use at the households were 60,2 percent for men and 39,8 percent for women, in 2013. On the other hand, the rates of the internet use at the households were 59,3 for men and 38,7 percent for women. A comparison of these results with the 2007 results has shown that the

rates of computer and the internet use have risen both for men and women (these rates were 42,7% and 39,2% for men and 23,7% and 20,7% for women, respectively).

Undertaken by The Ministry of Family and Social Policies General Directorate on the Status of Women, the “Media Workshops” are the foremost of the efforts aimed at strengthening the status of women in Turkey. They have been organized to raise awareness of the future media professionals, namely the students of the Communication Faculties, and local media professionals on violence against women and gender equality. Moreover, “The Impact Analysis of the Media Trainings” has also been conducted to identify the effectiveness of these workshop activities.

On the other hand, a Sub-Committee on the Role of Media in Gender Equality, formed by the TGNA Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in 2011, issued a report in June 2011 in order to contribute to transformation of media into a set of tools ever more conducive to the media’s goal of achieving gender equality.

Selective courses of “Media Literacy” are available in Turkey at the secondary school level. The General Directorate on the Status of Women has held seminars to raise awareness of the course instructors on the potential of the course for combating sexism in the media.

The media contents have been evolving lately to enable a more balanced and egalitarian representation of men and women. Women are depicted outside their cliché roles, as well. In addition to the traditional image of women, the programmes also employ a modern, self-confident, hardworking, rational and independent image. However, the secondary position of women in the media contents is still maintained even though the public agencies and authorities, nongovernmental organizations and universities take up small scale initiatives for combating the sexism of media.

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) includes objectives and strategies in the field of gender equality. The plan was followed up in regular meetings held every six months. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for the period of 2014-2018.

### **Environment**

The Article 56 of the Constitution underlines that everyone has the right to live in a balanced and healthy environment and goes on to specify that protection and promotion of the environment is the joint task of the government and citizens. It is provided for in the (e) paragraph of the Article 3 of the Law Nr.2872 on Environment that “The right to participate is essential in the environmental policymaking process”. This statement lays the legal groundwork for women to have a say in the environmental policies.

Based on the TÜİK data, the urban population in Turkey rose from 67,5 percent in 2007 to 72,3% in 2012. The rural population on the other hand, decreased from 32,5 percent in 2007 to 27,7% in 2012. Consequently, wide-scale environmental problems showed up in Turkey. As a result of the rapid-urbanization process, women have borne the brunt of the harsh circumstances resulting from inadequacy of the urban services and labor market in satisfying the needs of the swelling urban population. Climate change sourced from the unfavorable environmental circumstances affects particularly women, more adversely. In view of this fact, The National Action Plan on Climate Change

(2011-2020) prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization regards women as the subject of the struggle against climate change.

Turkey is frequently exposed to devastating earthquakes, floods, landslides, rock falls and avalanches, fires etc., due to its geological and climatic features. In this scope, "The National Strategy and Action Plan on Earthquakes (2012-2023)" prepared by The Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency involves strategies and activities to integrate women, who are damaged the worst and comprise the most vulnerable group, into the disaster management system and step up their capacity for overcoming the disasters.

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) included goals and strategies in the field of women and environment. The plan was followed up in regular meetings held every six months. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated for 2014-2018 period.

### **Girl Child**

The most comprehensive activities aimed at combating discrimination against girl child in Turkey are carried out in the field of education. Thanks to the campaigns run and aids provided so far to eliminate the gender gap in school enrollment and achieve a school enrollment rate of 100% in Turkey; the net rate of school enrollment at the primary school level, which was 96,49% in total in the school year of 2008-2009, was realized as 96,99% and 95,97% for boys and girls respectively. In the school year of 2013-2014, while the net school enrollment rate at the primary school level was 99,57 percent in total; these rates were realized as 99,53 and 99,61 for boys and girls. At the secondary school level, the net school enrollment rate was 94,52 percent while they were realized as 94,57 and 94,47 individually for boys and girls.

At the secondary school level, the school enrollment rates have increased steadily in the last five years both among men and women. While the net school enrollment rate at the secondary level had been 58,52 percent in the school year of 2008-2009 and recorded to be 60,63% and 56,30% for boys and girls respectively; these rates were realized as 76,65%, 77,22% and 76,05% in a row, in 2013-2014.

The most important factor leading to this rise in the school enrollment rate of the girls is the boarding primary and secondary schools made available for the children at the villages and smaller settlements in the rural area without any schools or the children born into poor families to get educated. 43,73% of the beneficiaries of these schools were girls (in 2013/2014).

The Ministry of National Education included it as an objective in its Strategic Planning Document for 2010-2014 to turn minimum one primary regional boarding school into a girls' primary regional boarding school in each city.

Moreover, Conditional Cash Transfers have been applicable to provide the children of the families from the most impoverished group of the population with full access to the basic education services. In order to increase the school enrollment and primary-to-secondary school transition rates of girls, bigger amounts of cash are offered to girls and the students maintain their education at the secondary level.

The national awareness campaigns which are run in cooperation with the international organizations, private sector and NGOs, highlighting the importance of girls' school enrollment, are being continued; and it is targeted to reduce girls' drop-out rates as well as organize training programs for the early drop-out girls and women.

In addition, "The Project on Promotion of School Enrollment Particularly for Girls" was launched in 2009 to develop human resources with a particular focus on women and boost school enrollment at the secondary school level to ensure access to the work life. The target group of the project was comprised of girls at the primary and secondary school levels, school drop-outs or possible drop-outs, those deprived of access to education due to cultural, financial or family reasons and instructors responsible particularly for psychological guidance and counseling.

In scope of the Circular Nr. 2010/38 on "Promotion of Girls' School Enrollment Particularly at the Secondary School Level" issued by the Ministry of National Education, it is targeted to increase the school enrollment rates of girls, their rates of transition to the secondary schools and prevent exclusion of each girl from education.

In 2011, "The Project on Promotion of School Enrollment Particularly for Girls II (IPA)" was launched. At the second phase of the project, it is targeted to boost the total quality and capacity of the secondary education, primarily the Vocational and Technical education, and increase the school enrollment rates, particularly of the girls in secondary education, by means of improving the professional skills and labor qualifications of girls and women, in particular.

One of the harmful practices which victimize girls is early and forced marriages. Turkey has put the necessary legal and administrative measures in place against this challenge. The Turkish Civil Code stipulates a minimum marriageable age on an equal basis for men and women (17 for both). The Code also rules that any forced marriage is voidable.

Forced marriage is not regarded an offense under the Turkish Penal Code. On the other hand, sexual intercourse with an individual under 18 years of age is considered in scope of sexual abuse of a child.

Religious marriage ceremonies are punishable under The Turkish Penal Code unless they follow a civil marriage ceremony. As per the Turkish Civil Code, religious marriage ceremony may not be held without presenting the family record booklet.

In pursuant to The Turkish Civil Code, men and women at 16 years of age are entitled to marriage based solely on a judicial decision; while those at the age of 17 may get married subject to consent of their parents or legal guardians. In this context, the ratio of the civil marriages among the female and male population aged 16 and 17 to the total civil marriages was 0,4 percent for boys and 8,1 percent for girls in 2009. In 2012, these rates were reduced down to 0,3 percent for boys and 6,7 percent for girls. The median age at first marriage which had been 20 according to the 2003 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, rose up to 20,8 for women aged 25-49 when the survey was conducted again in 2008.

Early marriage is closely correlated to compulsory education period. In this regard, a key step was taken against the early marriages with the legal adjustment which extended the compulsory education period to 12 years.

Another important step taken towards Combating Early and Forced Marriages is setting-up of The Sub-Committee on Probing Early Marriages by the TGNA Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. The Committee issued a report based on the opinions of the experts, the information meetings held in the cities and site visits and produced recommendations to address the issue.

As a part of “The Workshop on Early and Forced Marriages” held by The Ministry of Family and Social Policies, activities were carried out in the field of data collection and establishing cooperation. In line with the decisions made at the end of the workshop, “The Committee on Prevention of Early and Forced Marriages” was constituted. Activities were started in 2008 to renew The National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey. Questions about early and forced marriages were added on the question sheet of the research.

Within the framework of the “11<sup>th</sup> October International Day of the Girl Child” activities, The Ministry of Family and Social Policies held a “Workshop on New Policies and Practices in Education and Training of the Girl Child” on October 10-11, 2013 to discuss the problems and solutions regarding the girls’ access to education.

### **CHAPTER III**

The Turkish Statistics Institute (TÜİK) is the relevant government authority for collecting statistics in Turkey. A “gender team” is available within the TÜİK. This team works for collection of the statistics based on gender. Within this framework, TÜİK Gender Team arranges a gender data set (please find the tables pertaining to the data collected in the appendix) and this set is aired on the TÜİK website.

Statistics are collected in the fields included in the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators to a large extent. The activities required to collect the missing data are carried out by the TÜİK Gender Team.

In addition, the statistics as to the rural area, elderly and the disabled alongside HIV/AIDS are collected in the form of sex-disaggregated data.

The National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey run in 2008 was tailored to country needs with due regard to the survey sheet of “Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women” of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Research is going to be renewed in 2014. The survey sheets of the new research have been updated and complemented with new questions through a review of the survey sheets used in the previous research and considering the up-to-date adjustments in the legislation. Furthermore, the research is going to employ the same methods as those developed by the WHO and applicable in the studies on domestic violence against women. In this scope, the research includes the nine criteria set by the UN Statistics Commission, regarding violence against women.

Listed among the studies conducted in the field of violence against women with the hugest sample groups worldwide, the sample group of the 2008 was comprised of 24.048 people. In the 2014 Research, the sample group is targeted to be 15.000 households.

#### **CHAPTER IV**

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality formed within the framework of the critical areas included in the Platform was implemented in the 2008-2013 period and followed up in regular meetings held every six months. The plan is being renewed for the 2014-2018 period. Moreover, The National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women is going to be applied in the 2012-2015 period. The Tenth Development Plan, to be applicable for the 2014-2018 period, involves key goals and strategies regarding gender equality.

The legislation on gender equality has been completed to a large extent. The defects in implementation of the legislation are being monitored and adjustments made necessarily.

From the early 1980s onwards, women's movement has gained fairly important experiences. The number of the NGOs which advocate women's rights has increased steadily. These NGOs extend their organization down to the local level. The number of the "women's issues" research centers is getting higher at the universities.

Considering all these opportunities and dynamics, it could be said that necessary arrangements are in place for achieving gender equality in Turkey. However, it is still needed to carry out social awareness-raising activities. With the support of the NGOs, these activities will be started in the period ahead.