

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

# The Socio-economic Status of Palestinian Women and Girls (2018-2020)



UNITED NATIONS

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ESCWA

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# ESCWA: Monitoring and Analyzing the Socio-Economic Impact of Israeli Occupation

The biennial report is part of a larger framework for ESCWA to monitor and analyze the socio-economic impact of the Israeli Occupation on the Palestinian people, including:

- Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/42 on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, and in line with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 330 (XXX) requesting the secretariat to “monitor, analyse and document the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and Israeli violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and of international law.”
- Periodic reports to ESCWA member countries and Ministerial Sessions on the plight of the Palestinian people and continued violations by Israel of international law and United Nations resolutions
- The yearly Note of the UN Secretary-General on the “Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan”

# ESCWA Report: The Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls

## Data collection:

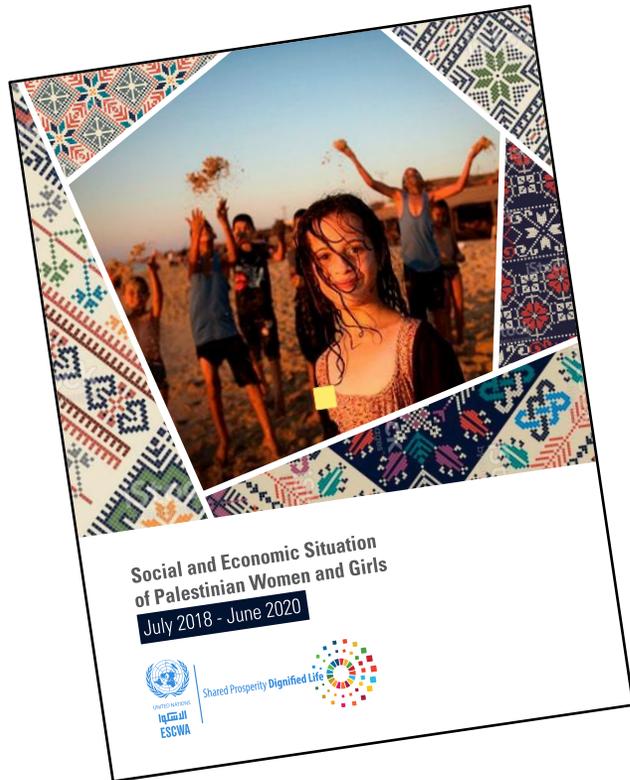
1. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)
2. Reports published by United Nations entities, including:
  - OCHA: The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
  - OHCHR: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
  - UNDP: The United Nations Development Programme
  - UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
  - UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund
  - UNRWA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
  - UNSCO: The United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories
  - UN Women: the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
  - WHO: World Health Organization
3. Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education
4. Civil society organizations
5. International development agencies



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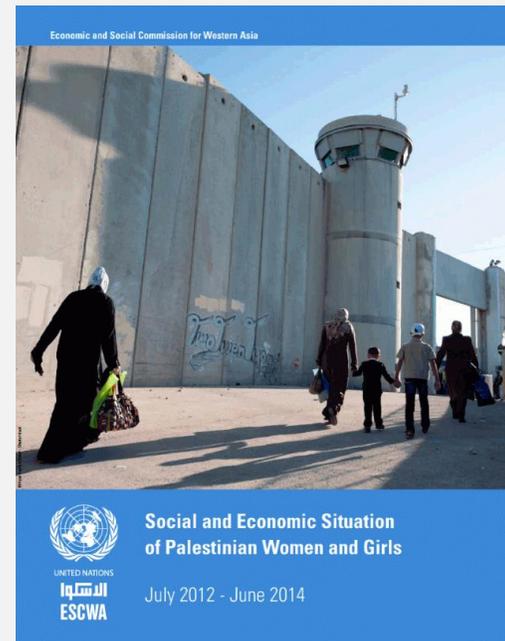
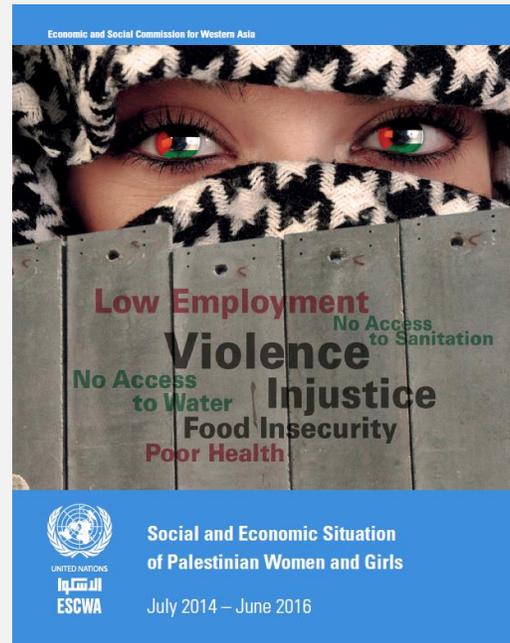


# The Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls (July 2018 – July 2020)



- Published by ESCWA in 2021 and based on the request of the Executive Committee during its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Beirut in December 2018
- Reviews the status of Palestinian women and girls during the period July 2018 - July 2020, including the the COVID-19 pandemic
- Presents a background of the political setting and its impact on the well-being and rights of women and girls
- Presents the socio-economic indicators impacting women and girls in the State of Palestine
- Assesses the extent to which the State of Palestine has made progress in aligning national legislation and policies with international frameworks
- Presents recommendations to enhance the rights and well-being of Palestinian women and girls

# Trends and Developments Concerning the Socio-economic Status of Palestinian Women and Girls



Reports produced since 1990:

July 1990 – June 2004 (14 years)

July 2000 – June 2006 (6 years)

July 2006 – June 2009 (3 years)

July 2009 – June 2011

July 2011 – June 2012

July 2012 – June 2014

July 2014 – June 2016

July 2016 – June 2018

July 2018 – June 2020

# The Political Setting and the Gendered Aspects of the Palestinian Territory under Occupation

## Life under Occupation

**Life under occupation has gendered dimensions and impacts**

The blockade on  
Gaza

Movement and  
access restrictions

Revocation of  
residency and its  
impact on family  
reunification

House demolitions  
and forcible  
transfer

Night raids and  
daytime incursions

Arrests, detention  
and political  
imprisonment

# The Political Setting and Gendered Aspects of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

## Political Developments and the Security Context

### The Impact on Women and Girls

- Catastrophic living conditions, high rates of poverty and unemployment, poor access to water and sanitation, deepened vulnerability among women and girls
- High number of casualties including women and girls, psychological impact on women and girls, increased risk of gender-based violence
- Undermined economic growth, restricted access to basic services and opportunities, disrupted family life, impact on emotional well-being, heavier economic burden

# State of Emergency following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic

- The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls, exacerbating their pre-existing vulnerabilities and heightening protection and livelihood risks.
- Female care workers were working under stressful conditions, which negatively affected their psychological well-being.
- Designated quarantine facilities were not adequate for women and girls and their respective needs, including their health, reproductive, and sanitation rights.
- Limited access to essential services such as shelters and other anti-violence interventions and heavy reliance on hotlines and online interventions

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Food Security, Access to Water, and Poverty

- Palestinian economic growth has decelerated and food security, access to water and poverty and unemployment have increased, especially in Gaza and Area C.
- Preliminary evidence suggests that since the outbreak of COVID-19, food insecurity has been increasing, with female-headed households more likely to reduce the quality and quantity of food consumption and adopt additional negative coping strategies.
- Already vulnerable populations, such as female-headed households, women with disabilities, and households across Gaza and in Area C, H2, the Seam Zone, and Bedouin and herding communities in the West Bank are likely to be disproportionately impacted.

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Education and Literacy

- Gender parity in education has been achieved
- In the period covered by the report, girls' educational attendance rate was consistently higher than boys in all age groups: In the academic year 2019/2020, slightly more girls than boys were enrolled in basic and secondary schools (660,255 and 652,481, respectively).
- Gender gaps in favor of girls are particularly notable in secondary education.

However:

- Girls with disabilities continue to face particularly high risks of exclusion
- The estimated out-of-school rate for girls increases from 0.4% of girls at age 10 to 5.4% at age 15
- The military occupation and Israeli policies and practices have limited girls' access to education as a result of:
  - A lack of security in reaching school
  - Deteriorated school infrastructure and chronic power shortages

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Employment

- Women's access to employment remains highly restricted despite high educational attainment.
- Women's labor force participation (16%) remains among the lowest in the world (41.2% of women were unemployed in 2020).
- In 2019, the average daily wage for women was 73% that of men.
- In the private sector, 25% of women earn less than the minimum wage,

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Health

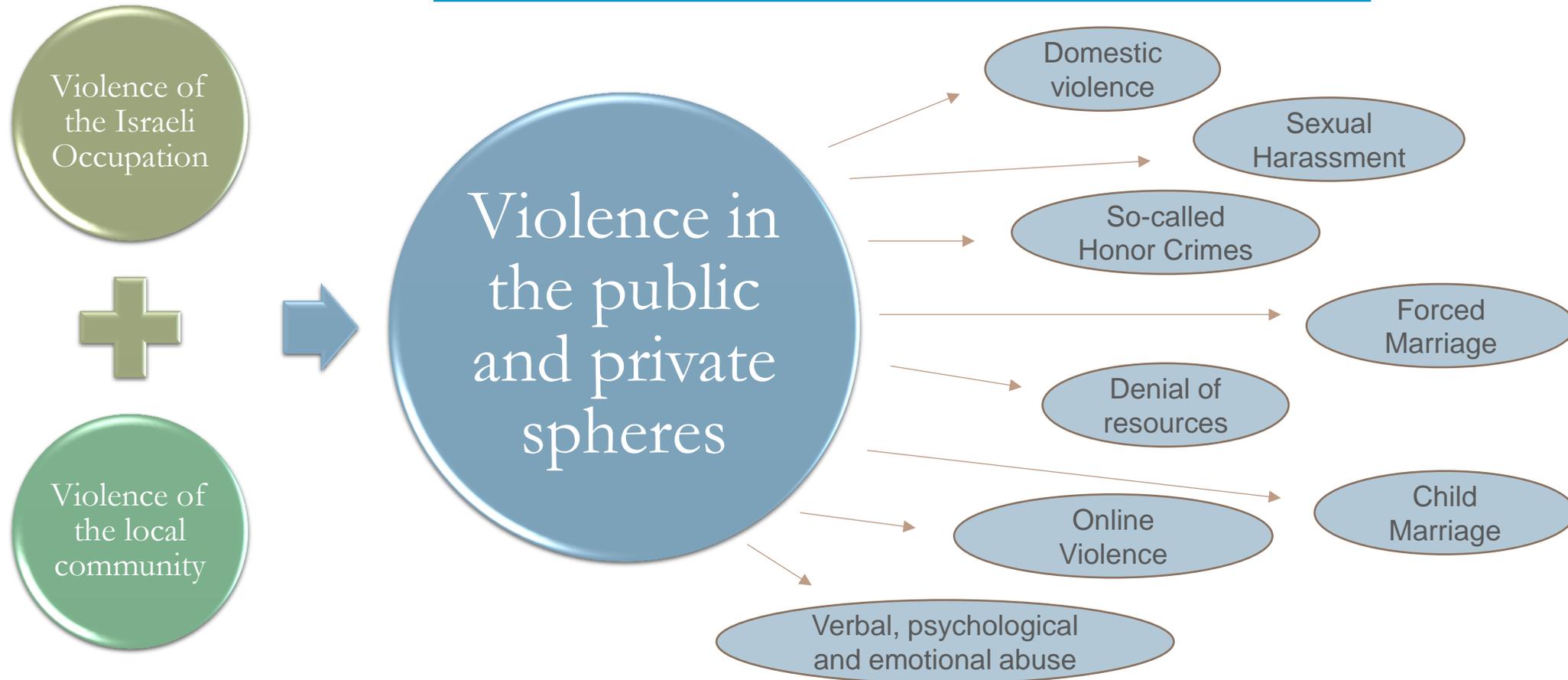
- Israel continues to impose a number of restrictions affecting the movement of persons and goods, including patients, medical personnel and medical supplies, impacting on women's right to access and obtain healthcare.
- The capacity of healthcare systems, to effectively deal with surges in COVID-19 cases, is severely limited by shortages in health-care equipment including intensive care unit beds and ventilators.
- The nutritional status of vulnerable groups, including pregnant and lactating women, and women and girls with disabilities, is expected to deteriorate further due to the socio-economic impact of the pandemic.

## Environment, Water and Sanitation

Enormous challenges related to environment, water and sanitation which negatively impact the well-being of women and girls and the achievement of their rights, such as for example access to safe drinking water

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Violence against Women and Girls



# Violence against women in comparison: 2011 vs. 2019

Region	Type of Violence											
	Prevalence of Violence		Psychological violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence		Social violence		Economic violence	
	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019	2011	2019
<b>Palestine</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>36.2</b>
<b>West Bank</b>	29.9	22.2	48.8	46.1	17.4	12.1	10.2	5.8	44.8	20.2	41.6	29.3
<b>Gaza Strip</b>	51	35.2	76.4	62.5	34.7	25.8	14.9	8.7	78.9	41	88.3	46.7

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2019), Preliminary Results of the Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Access to justice, the response to gender-based violence, and prevention services

- The 2019 national violence survey revealed that only 40% of women are aware of institutions or centers for protection against violence in the region, governorate or locality where they live.
- Before the pandemic, only 1.4% of women who sought counselling or legal assistance and 60.6% of survivors reported that they never told anyone, including a friend, family member, colleague, or neighbour, about the abuse.
- In the midst of COVID-19 and despite the availability of services, only 2.9% of interviewed respondents were familiar with helplines, new and established, as a source of support for survivors.

# Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends among Palestinian Women

## Media

- There continues to be an unbalanced representation of women in Palestinian media
- The Palestinian Syndicate of Journalists is comprised of only 20 per cent female representation

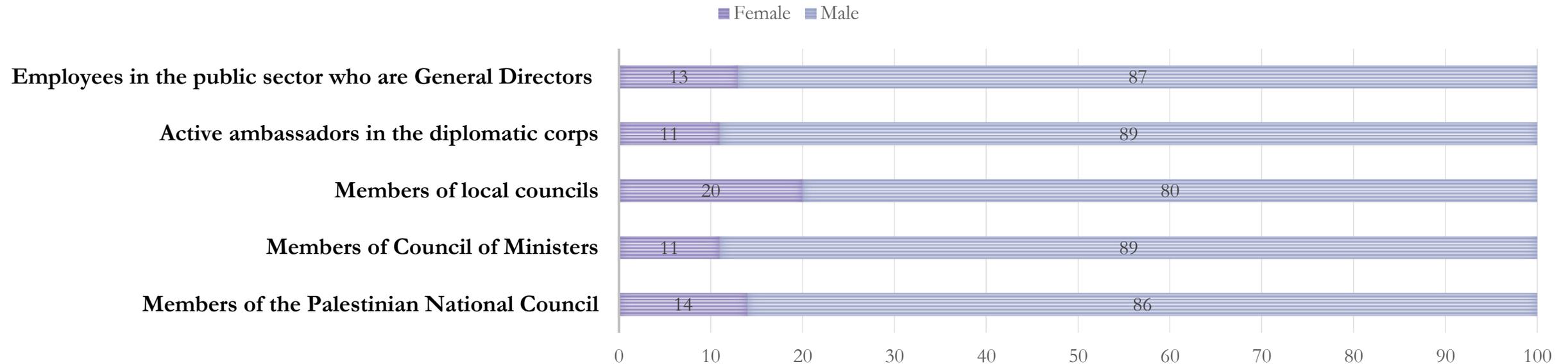
## Girl Child

- The persistence of child marriage in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of:
  - high poverty rates
  - the coercive environment resulting from the Israeli occupation's policies and practices

# Political and Social Participation, Legal Frameworks and the Rights of Palestinian Women

## Political Participation and Processes

### FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE, 2019



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2020), *Palestine in Figures 2019*, p.19

# Political and Social Participation, Legal Frameworks and the Rights of Palestinian Women

## National Women's Machineries and other Institutions

### ☐ Ministry of Women's Affairs

- Launch of the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy (2017-2022)
- Leading efforts to cost marital violence in the State of Palestine
- Currently updating the National Strategy on Violence against Women
- Close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development concerning shelters for survivors of violence, and services for women and girls with disabilities, and older women

### ☐ Ministry of Social Development

- Provide services to vulnerable women in line with its Social Development Sector Strategy (2017-2022)

# Political and Social Participation, Legal Frameworks and the Rights of Palestinian Women

## Aligning National Legislation with International Frameworks

- **National Policy Agenda (2017-2022): Putting Citizens First and Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy.**
- Presentation of the first **Voluntary National Review** on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the United Nations High-level Political Forum
- PCBS launched the national database of **SDGs indicators in Palestine**
- The Council of Ministers adopted a decision to provide for the formation of a **national team to review** the 2011 Draft Palestinian Penal Code
- The Ministry of Women's Affairs' **National Report on Beijing + 25: Accomplishments, Challenges and Procedures** outlined the State of Palestine's achievements in gender equality
- Commitment to issue the second **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP)** and to submit a report on the implementation of the first NAP

# Conclusions and Recommendations

- Call upon the international community to pressure Israel to end the occupation of the Palestinian territory
- Ensure harmonization of domestic legislation with international frameworks
- Empower the national machinery for the advancement of women and partner ministries
- Ensure the full implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda
- Enhance the economic and political participation of women
- Increase responsiveness to GBV, especially through the adoption of the family protection law and greater protection, prevention, and response services
- Ensure a gendered COVID-19 response, including increased access to GBV services and economic recovery efforts



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Thank you!