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Fourth periodic report submitted by Kyrgyzstan under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2020^{*}, ^{}**

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



1. The present report includes information about the implementation by the Kyrgyz Republic of the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
2. The report was drafted in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, taking into account the concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 7 July 2015 (E/C.12/KGZ/CO/2-3) and the general guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports.
3. The report was prepared by an interdepartmental working group headed by the secretariat of the Coordinating Council on Human Rights attached to the Government. The working group was established by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic.
4. Following this preparation, the report was also discussed with non-profit organizations.
5. The report contains an analysis of the legal and regulatory framework in the Kyrgyz Republic, statistical data and other information related to the implementation by the Kyrgyz Republic of its obligations under the Covenant.

Paragraph 5

Non-discrimination

6. Anti-discrimination provisions can be found in the Constitution and in several laws.
7. In accordance with the Constitution, human rights and freedoms are inalienable and belong to everyone from birth.
8. No one may be subjected to discrimination on the basis of sex, race, language, disability, ethnicity, religion, age, political or other opinion, education, origin, property or other status, or other circumstances.
9. Special measures established by law and aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for various social groups in accordance with international obligations do not constitute discrimination.
10. Kyrgyzstan is taking progressive steps to bring its national law into line with the standards set out in the international conventions to which it is a party.
11. The Kyrgyz Republic has comprehensive legislation in the area of ethnicity. For example, the Constitutional Act on Presidential Elections and Elections to the Zhogorku Kenesh, the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, includes compulsory quotas of at least 15 per cent for persons from different ethnic backgrounds.
12. Electoral law prohibits advocacy of ethnic, racial, religious or interregional hatred, or the dissemination of ideas based on the superiority of one gender or social group, that constitutes incitement to discrimination or hostility.
13. The commission of an offence for reasons of racial, ethnic, religious or interregional hostility or hatred constitutes an aggravating circumstance under criminal law. The Criminal Code provides for liability in that regard.
14. Existing law is not discriminatory towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and realizes their rights in a positive manner.
15. In 2019, the Human Rights Action Plan for the period 2019–2021 was approved by government order, with a view to ensuring implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies.
16. A special law was adopted to safeguard the rights of persons living with HIV. Equally significant was the entry into force in 2019 of the new Criminal Code, which distinguishes between unintentional and intentional HIV transmission and reduces the applicable penalties. Consensual same-sex sexual relations are not a criminal offence.
17. Sexual services and sexual relations between adults, including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, are decriminalized in the country. The most

significant positive developments include a new procedure for sex reassignment and the amendment of passport data for transgender persons.

18. Everyone in Kyrgyzstan has the right to sex reassignment. This right is set out in the Health Care Act. The measures taken to reduce the prevalence of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity include the acceptance of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the approval in 2019 by government order of an interdepartmental plan of action for the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee for the period 2019–2022.

19. In 2017, important clinical protocols and guidance for health care were approved, including the Manual on Provision of Medical and Social Care for Transgender, Transsexual and Gender-Nonconforming Persons, for use by medical professionals at all levels of the national health-care system and at other national institutions.

20. This manual constitutes the national standard for the provision of medical and social care for transgender, transsexual and gender-nonconforming persons.

21. The Ministry of Health has developed and approved a form for submission to the civil registration authorities, which is necessary and sufficient for the purpose of legal gender recognition. This has made it possible to fulfil United Nations recommendations and develop a system for a quick, transparent and accessible procedure for transgender, transsexual and gender-nonconforming persons to change the sex indicated on their passports (their gender marker).

22. The process of introducing the manual into medical practice and the curricula of medical schools began in 2018. Medical specialists, clinics and faculties in Bishkek, Osh Province and Jalalabad Province are now familiar with the manual.

23. In its 2018 interim report, the Kyrgyz Republic reported to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on the status of implementation of the Committee's recommendations, including the recommendation on a procedure to change the gender marker on the identity documents of transgender persons.

24. Kyrgyzstan is the only country in Central Asia to have established a legal framework and regulations for the provision of medical and social care and the amendment of identity documents for transgender persons.

25. It must be recalled that the country is in a transitional period of democratic development, which means that the fostering of tolerance is a major challenge at all levels of the State, including public service institutions, local communities, families and individual citizens. This work has been scrupulously carried out throughout the period of development of an independent Kyrgyzstan but needs to be continued, which involves changing attitudes to build a tolerant democratic society. For this reason, discriminatory law enforcement practices occur, primarily affecting the most disadvantaged population groups: women, sex workers, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and persons living with HIV and tuberculosis.

26. Such cases are documented and are examined by the Office of the Ombudsman and by State organizations. In parallel, the legal issues related to health-care provision and gender are taught as part of undergraduate and postgraduate continuous learning in the systems of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Penal Correction Service and as part of the training of lawyers, procurators and judges.

27. In March 2019, Kyrgyzstan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The country thereby undertook to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability.

28. A draft plan of priority measures for implementation of the Convention for the period 2021–2023 has been elaborated. The “Accessible Country” programme has also been developed with the aim of creating an accessible living environment for persons with disabilities.

29. As part of the National Development Strategy for the period 2018–2040, approved by Presidential Decree No. 221 of 31 October 2018, it has been decided to facilitate the creation of a society in which ethnicity, attitude to religion, regional and tribal affiliation and other cultural differences among citizens are not grounds for discrimination and have no impact on political processes.

30. Video surveillance cameras have been installed in most ministries and departments to prevent abusive practices in their work, monitor the observance of citizens' rights, improve the quality of public services and ensure non-discrimination.

31. The procuratorial authorities have approved instructions on working with vulnerable groups in the prevention of HIV, which provide for a set of anti-discrimination measures for vulnerable groups and a training module to explain the particularities of procuratorial supervision of the implementation of legislation on rights and guarantees for persons with disabilities, including in respect of women with disabilities.¹

32. The specific nature of work with vulnerable population groups, including women, and intersecting forms of violence is reflected in the instruments governing the work of the internal affairs authorities.² For example, internal affairs officials are required to ensure equal access to justice for women in vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities, women released from places of detention, women with drug or alcohol dependence, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and sex workers.

Paragraph 6 Enabling environment for civil society

33. In 2014, a bill was initiated to amend the Non-Profit Organizations Act to exclude the right of citizens to establish unregistered non-profit organizations.

34. The bill was intended to restrict the activities of local and international non-profit organizations by declaring the organizations concerned to be "foreign agents" and imposing controls on their activities, with the government agency responsible for registration having the authority to request information on their activities, carry out audits and suspend their activities for six months.

35. On 12 May 2016, the national parliament rejected the bill.

36. As of 28 October 2020, there were approximately 29,439 non-profit organizations operating in the country. Non-profit organizations play an active role in national dialogue on the latest issues in the country's development, participate in parliamentary and other public hearings and take a stand on the most pressing issues.

37. Civil society representatives sit on the public supervisory councils attached to ministries and administrative departments, the boards of trustees of State entities and government commissions and other organizations.

38. For example, 40 per cent of the members of the HIV and tuberculosis committee under the Government's Public Health Committee are civil society representatives, with an equal voice in decision-making on the Committee. Representatives of non-profit organizations and associations also serve as the Committee's vice-chair and chairs of its subcommittees.

39. The government social-sector procurement system is being expanded in the country. In 2018, the Ministry of Health approved a programme and plan of action for government social-sector procurement for the period 2018–2020. The programme includes a procedure for the provision of grants and funding to civil society organizations carrying out programmes related to HIV, tuberculosis, cancer and mental illness.

¹ Instructions on HIV prevention in the procuratorial bodies and institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic in interactions with vulnerable groups, approved by Order of the Office of the Procurator General No. 64-n of 30 October 2017.

² Ministry of Internal Affairs Order No. 946-r of 14 December 2017 on the improvement of the work of the internal affairs authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic with members of vulnerable population groups.

Paragraph 7 Corruption

40. To strengthen the fight against corruption, the Anti-Corruption Service of the State Committee on National Security was established in 2011, a State Anti-Corruption Policy Strategy was approved, and measures were taken to eradicate the causes of political and systemic corruption in public bodies.

41. Active measures to combat corruption have allowed the country to move up 28 places in the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International. In 2019, the country was ranked 126th, up from 154th in 2012.

42. The country has a multifaceted anti-corruption system in place, including legislative, preventive and law enforcement measures and punitive action.

43. Most significantly, the following fundamental laws, regulations and other instruments on the subject have been adopted:

- Anti-Corruption Act (2012)
- Act on the Declaration of Income, Expenses, Liabilities and Assets for Persons Acting in or Occupying State or Municipal Posts (2017)
- Conflict of Interest Act (2017)
- State Anti-Corruption Policy Strategy (2012)
- National Sustainable Development Strategy for the period 2013–2017 (2013) (includes a section on combating corruption)
- Government Plan of Action to Combat Corruption for the period 2012–2014 (2012)
- Plan of Action to Implement the State Anti-Corruption Policy Strategy for the period 2015–2017 (2015)
- Government Plan of Action to Combat Corruption for the period 2019–2021 (2019)

44. In 2019, the Act on the Protection of Persons Reporting Corruption Offences was adopted. The Act provides for the payment of a reward to the person who reported a corruption offence, taken from the proceeds recovered in the corruption case.

45. A working group has been established under the Security Council of Kyrgyzstan to organize and coordinate efforts to prevent corruption through the elimination of conditions conducive to corrupt practices. Expert groups consisting of independent experts, specialist workers and law enforcement officials act under the auspices of this working group.

46. The expert groups study and analyse all industries and the activities of all State bodies. The results of this work are used to draw up recommendations and detailed action plans. Almost all State bodies have approved such plans.

47. The Government has an Anti-Corruption Council whose main aim is to organize public involvement in anti-corruption activities.

48. In order to forge an open and transparent State, increase quality of life for citizens and improve business conditions, the Government has launched a nationwide digital transformation programme, which will lead to the formation of a developed information society based on knowledge, efficient and transparent State administration, universal access to information for citizens, a developed digital economy and minimal corruption.

49. The “Trust, Unity, Creation” government programme for the period 2018–2022 provides for the development of a single platform for the provision of all public services in digital format.

50. The Government has implemented the following public projects to enhance the confidence of citizens in State bodies:

- Information kiosks and mobile service centres for citizens in remote areas of the country

- The State electronic services portal for the remote provision of public services to citizens, allowing for the effective delivery of around 200 different public services
- E-gates at the country's airports to automate border control
- Introduction of a secure electronic cash register system for tax compliance purposes, which will significantly increase State revenues and reduce the size of the shadow economy
- Launch of the Tunduk interdepartmental cooperation system, which will remove the need for large quantities of hard copies of official documents; for businesses and citizens, it will result in higher quality public services provided within shorter time frames

51. In 2017, Kyrgyzstan became the first country in Central Asia to become an official member of the Open Government Partnership.

52. In 2018, in order to ensure transparency in the work of State bodies, reduce corruption and create a legal and institutional framework for the protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of business entities, the Government adopted a decision establishing the post of Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights, Freedoms and Legitimate Interests of Business Entities (Business Ombudsman) and approved its statute.

53. Moreover, in order to create an enabling environment for business development, improve the investment climate, support the economic activities of entrepreneurs, provide them with legal protection and eliminate unjustified and excessive interference in entrepreneurial activities by the relevant authorities, a temporary ban (moratorium) on business inspections by the authorities competent to carry out business inspections was introduced pursuant to a government decision.

Paragraph 8

Equality between men and women

54. In accordance with article 42 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to freedom of work, to make use of his or her capacity to work, to choose a profession and occupation, to have safe and healthy working conditions and to be paid at least the legal minimum wage for his or her work.

55. In accordance with article 9 of the Labour Code, everyone has equal opportunities to exercise his or her labour rights and freedoms. No person's labour rights and freedoms may be restricted, nor may any person enjoy any advantage in exercising those rights on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property, or official status, age, place of residence, attitude to religion, political convictions, membership or non-membership of voluntary associations or other circumstances unrelated to an employee's professional competencies or performance. Unequal pay for equal work is prohibited. Persons who consider that they have been subjected to employment discrimination are entitled to apply to the courts for the restoration of their violated rights and compensation for material and moral harm.

56. In the Kyrgyz Republic, men and women enjoy equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities to exercise them. This constitutional provision is implemented through the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women. Gender discrimination towards persons of either sex is prohibited in all areas of activity.

57. Between 2013 and 2018, the procuratorial authorities carried out 895 checks on the correct application of the law guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Following these investigations, 576 orders to desist from unlawful activity and 422 directives were issued, 189 persons received warnings and 361 officials were subject to disciplinary measures and 2 to administrative penalties for violations of the law.

58. In 2012, the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020, which reflects the priorities of public policy on gender, was approved by a government decision. The specific measures taken to implement it over the forthcoming period were set

out in the fifth National Plan of Action for Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2018–2020.

59. Under the National Strategy, the following instruments have been adopted:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Development order on the development and approval of draft instructions for annual monitoring of the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2018–2020 (2019)
- Government decision on the procedure for ensuring protection against domestic violence (2019)
- Government decision amending Government Decision No. 268 of 2 May 2012 on the establishment of the National Council on Gender Development reporting to the Government (2019)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Development order on the development of proposals for special measures to ensure gender representation in special political State and municipal posts (2019)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Development order on the development of a plan of action to prevent early marriage among minors (2019)

60. In 2012, the National Council on Gender Development reporting to the Government was established pursuant to a government decision. The Council is a consultative and advisory body that coordinates the elaboration and implementation of public policy on gender development and provides analysis and expertise for achieving negotiated gender development solutions.

61. A plan of action for the period 2018–2020 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security was approved by a government order in 2018.

62. A plan of action to implement the recommendations set out in the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan was approved by a government order in 2017.

63. Under the Plan of Action on Implementation of the State Policy Framework on Religion for the period 2015–2020, approved by a government order in 2015, awareness-raising and preventive measures are being carried out among members of the clergy. As part of these measures, persons working in mosques are informed about the need to comply with laws related to religion and warned against performing *nike*, the religious part of wedding ceremonies, before the marriage has been registered with the competent public authority.

64. In addition, regulations on the Gender Commission of the State Commission on Religious Affairs have been developed, in accordance with a government decision in 2012 on the National Strategy for the Achievement of Gender Equality by 2020 and the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality. The Gender Commission was established to coordinate work on implementation of the objectives and measures to achieve gender equality set out in government strategy and other documents and to organize the related actions on gender issues. Gender commissions have also been established in ministries, departments and local government bodies.

65. On 17 November 2016, the Act amending Certain Legislative Acts (the Family Code and the Criminal Code) was adopted. Pursuant to the Act, the Criminal Code was supplemented with article 155¹, which states that “the parents (or persons in loco parentis) of a person who has been married in a religious ceremony in contravention of legislation on the legal age for marriage, the person who conducted the ceremony and the adult married to the minor in such a ceremony all face a penalty of deprivation of liberty for 3 to 5 years”. A provision was added to article 14 of the Family Code to state that persons found guilty of violating the requirements of the Code will be held liable in accordance with the law.

66. In accordance with fundamental laws such as the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women and the Social and Legal Protection against

Domestic Violence Act, the Kyrgyz Republic has supported the idea of equality throughout the period of its independence.

67. For example, women's economic activity has been ensured through a network of preschool and other educational institutions assisting in child development; their career growth has been supported through a number of rules on the promotion of women; and their social independence is realized through the opportunity to receive all levels of education, access to work with a constant and stable salary, payments to divorced mothers, benefits for single mothers and other measures.

68. Women with the status of single mother are not subject to any restrictions on access to public services.

69. The Kyrgyz Republic has comprehensive gender equality legislation in place to ensure the political participation of women. For example, the Constitutional Act on Presidential Elections of the Kyrgyz Republic and Elections to the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic provides for mandatory gender quotas: neither sex may account for more than 70 per cent of the members of the legislature. The law also provides that, if the term of office of a female member of the Zhogorku Kenesh ends prematurely, her seat passes to the next registered candidate from among the female candidates. The Local Council Elections Act contains a similar provision; at least 30 per cent of local council seats must be reserved for women in elections held using the majority system.

70. Article 13 of the Civil Registration Act of 2020 provides that, if one or both parents lack identity documents, the child's birth is officially registered by recording the birth in the registry and issuing a birth certificate. The certificate serves as the equivalent to a document of entitlement to social and medical services until the parent or parents can provide their identity documents.

71. Religious wedding ceremonies do take place, although marriages of this type are by and large registered with the civil registration authorities at the same time. According to data from the National Statistics Committee, the proportion of children born to parents in unregistered marriages fell from 25.9 per cent in 2014 to 21.5 per cent in 2018.

72. In accordance with article 1 (2) of the Family Code, only marriages concluded in local and central government agencies authorized to perform the official registration of civil status are recognized. Religious ceremonies related to marriage and the family have no legal significance.

73. A women's council has been established within the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan. In 2018, the council held meetings to which it invited representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the non-governmental organization Women's Democracy Network and a gender expert. The members of the women's council were briefed on Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, the priorities of the National Plan of Action for the period 2018–2020, the Protection from Domestic Violence Act and the incorporation of the gender dimension into the sixth national report on the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Paragraph 9 Unemployment

74. In 2019, the work force comprised 2,583,600 persons, of whom 2,442,700 were part of the active population and 140,900 were unemployed. The employment rate was 57.0 per cent and the unemployment rate was 5.5 per cent.

75. From 2012 to 2018, the employment rate underwent insignificant fluctuations, while the unemployment rate decreased significantly. In 2019, there were no drastic negative changes in the national economy, positive development trends were observed, and the labour market was therefore stable.

Table 1
Trends in employment and unemployment indicators

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Active population, thousands of people	2 286.4	2 263.0	2 302.7	2 352.1	2 363.7	2 351.2	2 382.5	2 442.7
Employment rate, percentage	58.8	57.2	57.3	57.7	57.1	55.9	56.2	57.0
Unemployed persons, thousands	210.4	205.7	201.5	192.2	183.7	174.0	156.3	140.9
Unemployment rate, percentage	8.4	8.3	8.0	7.6	7.2	6.9	6.2	5.5

76. Public policy on employment promotion has been implemented in accordance with the Employment Promotion Act, under the applicable policy documents providing for proactive employment policy measures and additional measures aimed at reducing market tightness.

77. From 2012 to 2019, the employment services found work for more than 300,000 persons.

78. Given the shortage of skilled workers, the priority for work with the public is to train unemployed persons in professions in demand on the labour market.

79. From 2012 to 2019, 60,300 unemployed persons were referred for vocational training.

80. One of the proactive employment policy measures is paid community service. Between 2012 and 2019, to provide long-term job seekers with temporary employment, the employment services referred 167,400 persons for temporary paid community service placements. Paid community service is organized mainly to improve the social infrastructure of the regions.

81. The Employment Promotion Act, which sets out the legal, economic and organizational basis for public policy on employment promotion, including State guarantees to uphold citizens' constitutional rights to work and receive social protection from unemployment, was adopted in 2015.

82. In 2016, regulations on vocational training, retraining and professional development for unemployed persons, regulations on the organization of paid community service and regulations on the procedure, conditions and time frames for the payment of unemployment benefits were approved by a government decision.

83. In 2019, the procedure for the organization of paid community service and the conditions and time frames for the receipt of unemployment benefits were adjusted through amendments to a government decision in 2016 on measures to implement the Employment Promotion Act.

84. Furthermore, active labour market policies are being carried out to help people to find work.

85. In 2019, 17,872 unemployed persons were referred for paid community service as a temporary work placement.

86. Labour market information system software is being introduced throughout the country as part of digitization of the employment promotion system. The labour market information system is a specialized open job placement system, which provides unemployed persons and employers with information about current trends on the labour market, the professions in demand and the available vacancies.

87. An interactive employment portal (www.zanyatost.kg), which posts news and information on job vacancies in the country, public employment services and events, is now operational.

88. In addition, pursuant to a government decision, the basic rate of unemployment benefit has been set at 300 soms as from 1 July 2019.

89. The labour force participation rate has gradually decreased, from 69.2 per cent of the working-age population in 2013 to 66.9 per cent in 2019, while there continues to be a clear gender imbalance: the labour force participation rate for men has consistently remained above 80 per cent and that for women below 60 per cent.

90. Over the past decade, a national trend towards a decrease in employment rates among the working-age population has been observed. The decrease shows a clear gender imbalance. The employment rate among working-age women decreased from 50.4 per cent in 2013 to 48.1 per cent in 2019 (among men it increased from 76 per cent to 77.2 per cent). The main reason for the gender gap in employment is unpaid care work. However, there is no imbalance in the employment rate between the urban and rural populations (a little over 60 per cent in both urban and rural areas).

Paragraph 10 Minimum wage

91. In accordance with the Minimum Wage Act, the minimum wage is established by the national budget law for the relevant year, based on the principle of gradual increase in the amount to reach the subsistence level for a working-age person.

92. In accordance with the Act on the 2019 National Budget and the 2020–2021 Forecast, the minimum wage was set at 1,750 soms for 2019, 1,854 soms for 2020 and 1,970 soms for 2021.

93. In 2019, the nominal average monthly wage per worker (not counting small businesses) stood at 17,166 soms, a 5.9 per cent increase from the 2018 level. However, the real growth, calculated from the consumer price index, was 4.7 per cent. The nominal average monthly wage per worker in the regions, not counting the figures for Bishkek (22,269 soms), was 14,607 soms.

94. The minimum wage level is not used to determine the remuneration paid to public sector employees. For example, the remuneration of education and health workers is calculated from a base rate, which is two to three times higher than the minimum wage.

Paragraph 11 Informal economy

95. An interdepartmental working group was established pursuant to an order of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (2018) to investigate the non-observed economy and develop a government plan of action to reduce it. The group included as a matter of priority representatives of the State sector and direct representatives of business associations.

96. With technical support from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Ministry of Economic Affairs has conducted research on the size of the country's non-observed economy. The research was carried out at the Ministry by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, together with a team of international experts, who held a series of meetings with representatives of the business community and government agencies, to identify the sectoral problems encountered by business in conducting entrepreneurial activities.

97. According to data from the National Statistics Committee, the size of the non-observed (hidden and informal) economy, estimated from the production side, stood at 23.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) or 133.4 billion soms in 2018 and 23.5 per cent or 145.2 billion soms in 2019.

98. In 2019, two thirds (68 per cent) of active small and medium-sized enterprises were operating in Bishkek. The number of persons employed in small and medium-sized enterprises in 2019 was 107,800. The proportion of women among the employees of small businesses was 31 per cent. Between 2015 and 2019, the proportion of women employed in small businesses decreased in most sectors of the economy (including information and communication technology, financial and insurance services and hospitality).

99. On 5 July 2019, the participants of a national conference entitled “Women’s Entrepreneurship in the Kyrgyz Republic: New Impetus” met and adopted a resolution to develop a national programme for the development of women’s entrepreneurship for the period up to 2030.

Paragraph 12

Health and safety conditions in the workplace

100. The country has 28 active mining companies. In accordance with a government decision on the approval of national public health regulations (2011), persons employed in harmful working conditions must undergo preliminary and periodic medical checks. In 2018, 7,451 persons required a preventive medical check. Coverage stood at 7,320 persons or 98.2 per cent.

101. In 2018 and the first nine months of 2019, there were no recorded cases of occupational diseases.

102. Workers’ accommodation and food is monitored. The quality of drinking water and foodstuffs undergoes laboratory testing. Laboratory tests were carried out on 110 samples of drinking water and 560 samples of foodstuffs, and no abnormalities were found.

103. Article 211 of the Labour Code provides that the obligations to provide workers with safe and healthy working conditions and comply with occupational safety and health requirements are incumbent on the employer and paid for by the employer.

104. In accordance with article 223 of the Code, industrial accidents and occupational diseases are investigated and recorded in line with the procedure determined by the Government. If the employer declines to investigate, complete an N-1 accident reporting form or draw up an occupational disease report, or if the victim or the relatives of the deceased or their authorized representative do not agree with the content of the report, they are entitled to complain to the public authorities competent to supervise and monitor compliance with labour legislation, the technical labour inspectorate of a trade union, the State public health services or a court.

105. Moreover, in accordance with article 225 of the Code, the employer is liable for harm caused to employees through injury, occupational disease or other health impairment related to the fulfilment of their professional duties, whether it occurred on or off the employer’s premises, or during the employee’s travel to or from work in transport provided by the employer.

106. Article 231 of the Labour Code provides that reparation to the victim consists in the payment of lost wages (or of the appropriate portion), compensation for additional expenses incurred, payment in certain circumstances of a one-off allowance, compensation for moral harm and the reimbursement of burial costs.

107. In 2018, the technical labour inspectorate of the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan and the State Economic Technical Inspectorate jointly inspected 286 organizations. This led to the finding of 781 violations of occupational health and safety rules and regulations. In response to the identified violations, 201 directives were issued, pursuant to which 147 compliance notifications were received in due time.

108. Jointly with the State supervisory authorities, the technical labour inspectors took part in 131 investigations into industrial accidents, including 43 fatal accidents and 75 serious accidents. A total of 151 workers were the victims of an industrial accident, including 19 women and 3 workers under the age of 18.

109. The labour inspectors of the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan considered 508 reports, statements and complaints regarding violations of workers' rights in the area of occupational safety and health in 2018 and 773 in 2019. Written explanations were provided in accordance with labour legislation, including in response to 39 reports from businesses. The indexed amounts of the compensation for harm, one-off allowances and lost wages were calculated at a total of 68.57 million soms in 2018 and 70.8 million soms in 2019. They took part in 202 court hearings at various levels in 2018 and 234 in 2019, at which the court decisions led to favourable outcomes for employees in 39 and 55 cases, respectively.

110. In 2018, 31 accidents, including 12 fatal accidents, were registered at mining companies. In the first half of 2019, nine accidents were registered, of which three were fatal.

111. In 2019, the technical labour inspectors of the trade unions inspected 222 organizations, of which 64 organizations were inspected jointly with the State supervisory authorities. This led to the finding of 856 violations of occupational health and safety rules and regulations. Owing to an imminent threat to workers' life and health, equipment, machines and mechanisms were temporarily shut down in 12 cases, including in three workshops and one company.

112. In 2019, jointly with the State supervisory authorities, the technical labour inspectors took part in 137 investigations into industrial accidents, including 44 fatal accidents. Seven deaths in the workplace were found to be unrelated to work. Of the total number of accidents, 13 had multiple victims, involving 41 persons, of whom 8 died.

113. A total of 165 workers, including 24 women, were the victims of an industrial accident.

Paragraph 13

Protection of the rights and interests of migrant workers working abroad

114. In 2019, approximately 850,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan were in situations of labour migration in foreign countries. The majority were working in Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey.

115. It is estimated that the number of citizens of Kyrgyzstan in Russia was 750,000, of whom 600,000 were of working age, mainly working in commerce, services and construction. The number in Kazakhstan was 50,000, mainly private entrepreneurs, seasonal farm and pasture workers and employees, along with a small number of doctors, teachers and various types of specialists. In Turkey, there were 30,000 Kyrgyz citizens, working in the care, catering and cleaning service sectors.

116. Regarding registration and work permits, in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation on the Procedure for the Stay of Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Territory of the Russian Federation and Citizens of the Russian Federation in the Territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, signed on 19 June 2015, the period for which Kyrgyz citizens may stay in the Russian Federation without registration was increased from 7 to 30 days.

117. In accordance with the provisions of the Protocol amending the Agreement of 11 May 2012 between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Procedure for the Stay of Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, signed on 17 October 2016, the period for which Kyrgyz citizens may stay in Kazakhstan without registration was increased from 5 to 30 days.

118. Since the accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Eurasian Economic Union with the signing of the Treaty on the Accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of 29 May 2014, ratified by Act No. 111 of 21 May 2015, workers from Kyrgyzstan have acquired a number of advantages when working in the territory of Union States. For example, they do not need a work permit; they are exempt from the requirement to be placed on the immigration register within 30 days of arrival; the length of their stay is determined by the validity period of their work contract; their educational qualifications are recognized (except for teaching, law, medicine and pharmacy qualifications, which are

subject to an additional validation procedure); and their children are entitled to attend kindergartens and schools. In recent years, Kyrgyz citizens in Russia have been granted additional advantages based on bilateral agreements, such as the “migration amnesties” carried out in 2015, 2018 and 2019 and the right to use a Kyrgyz driving licence for professional driving work.

119. In 2019, an agreement was reached with Turkey to reduce consular fees and the cost of work permits for citizens of Kyrgyzstan from US\$ 283 to US\$ 80, to ensure favourable conditions and reduce personal expenses for Kyrgyz citizens.

120. Regarding social security and health insurance for workers, in accordance with article 98 of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, social security (insurance), including compulsory health insurance for workers from member States and the members of their families, is provided under the same conditions and in the same manner as for citizens of the State of employment.

121. Pursuant to the Protocol on the Mechanism for Implementation of the Agreement on the Provision of Medical Care to Citizens of States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus), approved by a government decision in 2002, in respect of the procedure for the provision of medical services, emergency health care for sudden acute conditions and illnesses that threaten the life of the patient or the health of others, accidents, poisonings, injuries, childbirth and urgent conditions during pregnancy is provided without hindrance, free of charge and to the extent necessary to stabilize the life-threatening condition in all medical institutions (regardless of whether the patient has a health insurance policy) to citizens of one State who are in the territory of another State.

122. In accordance with article 7 of the Agreement on the Provision of Medical Care to Citizens of States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), signed on 27 March 1997 in Minsk, elective health care for citizens working under an employment contract in a State of temporary residence is paid for by the employer under the procedure established in the contract.

123. On 20 December 2019, at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Saint Petersburg, the Heads of the States members of the Eurasian Economic Union signed the Agreement on Pensions for Workers of the States Members of the Eurasian Economic Union. The main purpose of the Agreement is to ensure equal rights in pension provision and protect workers’ acquired pension rights in Eurasian Economic Union member States.

124. The Agreement will enter into force once it has been ratified by all the Eurasian Economic Union member States.

125. The Social Security Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Turkey was signed on 9 April 2018 in Ankara and entered into force on 1 November 2020.

126. The Social Fund also works closely with the National Pension Service of the Republic of Korea under the Memorandum of Cooperation on pension benefits paid by the National Pension Service of the Republic of Korea, which was signed on 30 July 2015 in Bishkek.

Fair remuneration and health and safety at work

127. In 2016, an Office of the State Migration Service attached to the Government of Kyrgyzstan opened in the Russian Federation. In accordance with its mandate, the Office helps workers from Kyrgyzstan in Russia to exercise their labour rights and protect their interests. It helps citizens find employment, provides advice on labour issues and facilitates the resolution of labour disputes. In 2019, citizens of Kyrgyzstan in the Russian Federation were given assistance regarding the payment by employers of wage arrears worth 66.2 million roubles.

128. The Agreement on the Procedure for the Investigation of Industrial Accidents Involving Citizens of One State Member of the Eurasian Economic Community Working in the Territory of Another State Member of the Eurasian Economic Community was signed in Minsk on 31 May 2013, to establish a procedure to investigate industrial accidents.

129. A programme of cooperation between the Consular Services Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the Kyrgyz Republic on the provision of practical assistance to citizens of Kyrgyzstan abroad for the period 2018–2020 was signed on 22 March 2018. Under the programme, IOM helps persons who become victims of trafficking in persons and labour exploitation during migration to return to the Kyrgyz Republic. Foreign missions of Kyrgyzstan work with IOM offices to help these persons obtain travel documents. So far, such instances have been isolated.

130. Regarding protection of the rights of migrant children, to protect migrant children left without parental care, 13 children were repatriated from the Russian Federation in 2017, 21 in 2018 and 14 in the first half of 2019.

131. At the end of 2019, a total of 106,985 children of migrant parents left in the care of relatives or other persons in Kyrgyzstan were identified, including 89,544 children of international migrants and 17,441 internal migrants.

132. In December 2018, the 528 district headquarters located throughout the country resumed their operations, to identify and prevent abuse and violence against children in families of migrant workers and children in difficult circumstances, including children who have been subjected to violence and abuse. The staff of the headquarters consists of representatives of health, education and social development services, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and local government.

133. Regarding consular assistance to migrants, consular consultations with foreign States, at which issues are raised concerning the stay of citizens of Kyrgyzstan in foreign countries, are conducted on a regular basis. For example, such consultations were held with Uzbekistan, Russia and Iran in 2017, with Turkey, Russia, Armenia, China and Tajikistan in 2018, and, with Kazakhstan and Turkey in 2019.

134. Work has been carried out to establish and organize contact between the consular posts of Kyrgyzstan and lawyers in foreign countries. A list of such lawyers has been drawn up.

135. A 24-hour telephone line for citizens to call in emergencies has been set up in foreign missions and the information is published on official websites.

136. The details of connecting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic missions and consular posts of the Kyrgyz Republic to the automated information systems for passport services, civil registration and citizenship have been worked out, which has significantly reduced the time taken to issue documents to citizens of Kyrgyzstan abroad. A consular registration application has been developed, which allows citizens to carry out online consular registration in their place of residence abroad. A government decision was adopted providing that the consular registration service is free of charge.

137. A mobile application called Kyrgyz Consul, which citizens will be able to use to receive online information and advice about various consular and legal matters, is under development.

138. Since 2019, a 24-hour communication channel (WhatsApp, Viber, SMS) has been operating at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which offers advice and, in some cases, an effective emergency response and assistance from consular services.

Paragraph 14

Economic exploitation

139. Slavery and trafficking in persons are prohibited under article 23 of the Constitution. The exploitation of child labour is prohibited. Forced or compulsory labour is prohibited, except in cases of war, response to natural disasters and other emergencies or in enforcement of a judicial decision.

140. Under article 2 of the Labour Code, the principles underlying the legal regulation of labour and associated relations include the prohibition of forced labour, of discrimination in employment and of the worst forms of child labour.

141. Article 57 of the Code of Infractions establishes liability for violations of the law on occupational safety and health.

142. Article 171 of the Criminal Code establishes liability for trafficking in persons.

143. Under article 171 (1) of the Criminal Code, trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transport, harbouring, receipt or transfer of persons, with or without their consent, by means of threats, use of force or other forms of coercion, blackmail, abduction, fraud or deception, for the purpose of exploitation or obtaining a benefit or without such benefit.

144. In accordance with the fourth paragraph of article 171 (4) of the Code, the definition of exploitation includes forced labour.

145. In accordance with the Children's Code, it is prohibited to use or recruit a child to perform any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

146. In 2016, the relevant ministries and departments implemented the Interdepartmental Plan on Prevention of the Engagement of Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour for the period 2016–2018, to prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour.

147. A government decision of 13 November 2020 introduced amendments to the list of industries, occupations and jobs with difficult and dangerous working conditions, in which it is prohibited to use the labour of persons under the age of 18 years.

148. The Kyrgyz Republic is a party to both International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions on child labour:

- ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); when it became a member of ILO, the Kyrgyz Republic declared that the ILO conventions ratified by the former Soviet Union remained in force in its territory
- ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

149. According to data from the 2018 multiple indicator cluster survey, 26.7 per cent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 were involved in child labour, of whom 11.7 per cent were working in dangerous conditions.

150. In general, boys were involved in child labour more often than girls (33.6 per cent versus 19.0 per cent). The proportion of children involved in child labour in rural areas was 2.8 times higher than in urban areas (33.6 per cent and 11.9 per cent, respectively).

151. The highest rates of child labour were in Naryn Province (40.5 per cent) and Talas Province (36.1 per cent), while the lowest were in the city of Osh (6.1 per cent). The percentage of children working in dangerous conditions increases with the age of the child. Children who attend school have a higher probability of being involved in child labour.

152. The National Statistics Committee carries out an annual integrated sample survey on household budgets and the labour force.

153. In 2019, the number of children between the ages of 15 and 17 in employment was 32,800.

<i>Active population between 15 and 17 years of age</i>	<i>2019</i>
Persons employed, thousands	32.8
By sex:	
Men	20.8
Women	12.0
By place of residence:	
Urban	3.5

<i>Active population between 15 and 17 years of age</i>	<i>2019</i>
Rural	29.3
As a % of the total population between 15 and 17 years of age	10.8
Men	13.4
Women	8.1

154. In 2019, 20 children were identified as working in the worst forms of child labour in Bishkek. The information related to each identified incident was sent to the local agencies responsible for the protection of children's rights.

155. For children left without parental care and the children of international and internal migrants, 515 headquarters have been established, of which 63 are attached to district and municipal administrations and 447 to rural administrations. The total number of staff in the headquarters is 3,450, including 454 from the juvenile affairs inspectorates of the internal affairs agencies. These staff members have conducted 238,339 door-to-door visits to identify parents who have left to work in neighbouring or other foreign countries.

156. To reinforce the preventive work of the country's internal affairs agencies, 110 juvenile affairs inspectors have been assigned to 117 children's homes and residential schools, of which 84 are State-run and 33 privately run, and which accommodate 10,355 children. In accordance with a 2019 Ministry of Internal Affairs interdepartmental order on strengthening interdepartmental cooperation to prevent juvenile delinquency and crime among young people and minors in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2019–2020, internal affairs officials together with actors involved in crime prevention carry out appropriate prevention activities at general education establishments, including at the country's children's homes and residential institutions. A total of 2,055 lectures, 99 discussions, 109 seminars, 70 round tables, 7 quizzes, 45 sporting events and 47 other events have been held.

157. To reduce the potential recruitment of children to work on tobacco plantations in the Kyrgyz Republic, recommendations on cropping patterns have been developed, which have facilitated a decrease in tobacco production and a reduction in the areas under crop. While the area occupied by tobacco crops was 2,000 ha in 2014, that figure had decreased to 700 ha by 2018 and as little as 400 ha by 2019.

158. In addition, owing to an increase in the capital-labour ratio of agriculture in the country (with the leasing of farming machinery and agroprocessing equipment), total employment in agriculture had decreased to 20.3 per cent by 2019, in comparison to 2018 levels (23 per cent of total employment nationwide). This has helped reduce the use of manual labour and, accordingly, the possible use of child labour.

159. Over the first nine months of 2019, labour inspectors performed systematic supervision and monitoring of compliance with labour legislation, in order to implement the provisions of the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Labour Code and other laws and regulations and to protect citizens' labour rights, including the right to safe working conditions.

160. In total, 504 inspections were carried out, of which 117 concerned non-State-owned companies and organizations, 361 State entities and 22 individual persons.

161. To eliminate and combat the labour legislation violations identified during supervisory and monitoring activities and prevent typical labour law offences, State labour inspectors issued employers with 259 binding directives over the first nine months of 2019.

162. Child labour is most often used during the summer (school holidays), mainly for cleaning and beautification work in communities and parks, unskilled agricultural work (regardless of form of ownership or season), market trading, serving in cafes and restaurants and courier work. For this reason, not all employers draw up written employment contracts, relying on oral agreements, which are not always fair to adolescents who have no work-record book and are not familiar with labour legislation and therefore with their labour rights.

163. In accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, a State labour inspector may not perform an unannounced inspection of an employer who is intentionally violating an

adolescent's rights, because businesses must be informed in writing of a scheduled inspection at least 10 calendar days before it begins, which means that, even if child labour is being used, it is almost impossible to establish the facts at the time of the scheduled inspection.

164. In the first nine months of 2019, in the course of inspections and 64 joint raids organized with the law enforcement authorities and social services, the labour inspectors identified 229 persons under the age of 18 working in difficult and harmful conditions that could harm their health and moral development, including 6 boys under the age of 14, 203 boys over the age of 14 and 20 girls over the age of 14.

165. In the first nine months of 2019, the State Inspectorate of Environmental and Technical Safety did not identify any cases of forced labour using persons under the age of 18 years.

Paragraph 15

Access to social security

166. In accordance with pension legislation, citizens of Kyrgyzstan, foreign nationals and stateless persons living in the country and making pension contributions are entitled to a pension.

167. The Government adopted and fulfilled the Social Protection Development Programme for the period 2015–2017.

168. The Family Support and Child Protection Programme for the period 2018–2028 was adopted by a government decision in 2017.

169. Between 2014 and 2016, in accordance with the Government Social-Sector Procurement Act, 21 centres were established in order to provide social services to families and children in difficult circumstances, and 11,460 persons have been provided with social services at these centres.

170. As of 1 January 2020:

- The number of pensioners was 670,400, which was 19,200 (or 3 per cent) more than in 2018, when the number was 651,200.
- The average pension was 5,786 soms, or 135 per cent of the subsistence level for a pensioner, which is 3.2 per cent higher than the equivalent figure on 1 January 2019.
- The number of female pensioners in the country registered with the Social Fund was 449,600, or 67.1 per cent of the total number of pensioners.

171. To further support pensioners' living standards, in 2019, the Government adopted a decision on indexation of the basic pension component whose total amount is below the subsistence level for a pensioner for the previous year, effective 1 October 2019, and on indexation of the insurance pension component, effective 1 October 2019.

172. In accordance with these decisions, the basic pension component grew by 105 per cent, or 100 soms. The basic pension component was adjusted if the total amount of the pension was below the subsistence level for a pensioner for the previous year, or 4,283 soms. The increase applied to 38 per cent of pensioners, or 241,500 persons.

173. The earnings-related part of pensions, or "insurance" pension component, was increased by a factor of 1.05 but by no less than 200 soms for pensions below 4,283 soms and 320 soms for pensions equal to or exceeding 4,283 soms.

174. In 2010, the average pension was worth approximately 89 per cent of the subsistence level for a pensioner.

175. As regards the gender aspects, women are entitled to an old-age pension at the age of 58 with 20 years of insurance contributions, while the age and contribution period are five years longer for men (63 years of age and 25 years of contributions).

176. The law also provides for the early payment of old-age pensions based on living conditions, number of children and working conditions.

177. Pursuant to the State Pension Social Insurance Act, a pension indexing mechanism was established and continues to be applied.

178. Pensions are indexed annually within the limits of the funds set aside in the Social Fund budget.

179. In accordance with the State Benefits Act, entitlement to a monthly social benefit is accorded to:

- Men over the age of 65 years
- Women over the age of 60 years

180. A monthly social benefit is paid to persons with no pension entitlement, through the Social Fund.

181. The benefit amounts to 1,000 soms.

182. As of 1 January 2020, more than 1,546 older persons with no pension entitlement were receiving a monthly social benefit of 1,000 soms.

183. To strengthen the insurance principles used for the allocation of pensions and increase pension provision, the law provides for:

- A single mechanism for indexing of the insurance pension component, based on the inflation rate (consumer price index) and the growth in average earnings in the economy, combined with a minimum increase equal to at least the rise in a pensioner's subsistence level for the previous year
- For pensions amounting to less than the subsistence level for a pensioner, indexation of the basic pension component to the national growth in average earnings for the previous year
- Annual indexing of the entire accumulated individual (notional) account balance to the actual consumer price index for the previous year
- For the social support of vulnerable groups, top-ups of the pensions of persons with category I disabilities to reach a pensioner's subsistence level for the previous year

Maternity benefit

184. In accordance with labour legislation, female workers, sole traders, farmers and officially unemployed persons entitled to unemployment benefit who apply on the basis of a medical report are granted maternity leave of between 126 and 180 calendar days, with the payment of a maternity benefit for this period in the amount established by law.

185. As of 1 January 2020, the total number of maternity benefit recipients was 38,538 and the average amount of the benefit was 8,673 soms.

Funeral benefit

186. In accordance with the Act on Guaranteed State Minimum Social Standards, funeral benefits are paid following the death of a citizen, from the national or local budget.

187. The amount of the average monthly wage for calculation of the funeral benefit was established by a government decision in 2012.

188. As of 1 January 2020, the number of funeral benefit recipients was 2,968 and the average amount of the benefit was 3,419 soms.

189. In order to ensure high-quality and safe social services, two minimum social standards for social services have been introduced, respectively:

- For persons in social residential facilities operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (17 facilities)
- For persons in semi-residential (day-care) social service facilities

190. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development operates 17 social residential facilities, including 6 for older persons and persons with disabilities.

191. Currently, 2,364 recipients of social services are staying in these residential facilities, of whom 383 are older persons and 340 persons with disabilities, or 723 from both groups.
192. There are 925 social workers providing free at-home services to approximately 6,900 older persons and persons with disabilities who live alone, of whom 4,382 are older persons.
193. The Plan of Action to Improve the Quality of Life of Older Persons for the period 2019–2025 was approved by a government decision in 2019, with the aim of ensuring a safe and decent life for older persons.
194. The implementation of this plan will ensure a safe and decent life for older persons and their equal participation in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres.
195. In 2019, under government-sector social procurement, support was provided to 56 social projects, including 8 projects related to day centres for older persons (2 to establish such centres and 6 to support them).
196. In 2019, 38 million soms were set aside from the national budget for government-sector social procurement.
197. Between 15 September and 15 October each year, the country holds a month-long awareness-raising event on caring for older persons in accordance with a 2012 government decision on the annual observance of international awareness days for the protection of children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
198. In 2018, State bodies and local executive bodies provided 32.4 million soms in additional support for older citizens as part of this month-long event.
199. Since 1 December 2019, a lump-sum payment (*balaga suiunchu*) of 50,000 soms has been paid on the birth of a third or subsequent child in a family.
200. Moreover, on 1 December 2019, the level of the guaranteed minimum income used to calculate the monthly benefit (*ui-bulogo komok*) increased from 900 to 1,000 soms (Government Decision No. 584 of 30 October 2019). In 2019, 308,770 children received this monthly benefit, compared to 276,447 children in 2018.
201. In July 2019, a simplified mechanism was launched, based on a one-stop-service approach, for provision of the *balaga suiunchu* lump-sum payment. Applicants may also receive the payment in any bank branch regardless of the place of application.
202. In 2019, 161,800 persons received the *balaga suiunchu* lump-sum payment (of 4,000 soms) on the birth of a child, compared to 90,900 persons in 2018.
203. An automated electronic database of children living in difficult circumstances has been developed and pilot testing of the system has begun (in the Sverdlovsk, Pervomai, Ysyk-Ata, Sokuluk and Moskva districts).
204. An online calculator for levels of State benefits (allowances, cash compensation in lieu of in-kind benefits, funeral benefit, unemployment benefit) has been placed on the Ministry of Labour and Social Development website (www.mlsp.gov.kg). Citizens can now make their own calculations and find out whether they are entitled to receive social benefits.
205. Since 1 January 2019, payment has been assured for personal assistant services for children with disabilities requiring constant care and supervision. Personal assistant services are paid for on a monthly basis at the rate of 4,900 soms.
206. As of 1 January 2020, the number of beneficiaries of personal assistant services was 6,557.
207. As of 1 January 2020, more than 647,000 persons were receiving social benefits in the form of allowances or compensation.
208. As a result of actions undertaken by member organizations of the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan, more than 2,000 older persons were given material assistance amounting to 2,679,400 soms as part of the month-long awareness-raising campaign on caring for older persons conducted from 15 September to 15 October 2019 and approximately 1,400 persons with disabilities were given material assistance amounting to 484,900 soms as

part of the “All Together!” month-long awareness-raising campaign conducted from 15 November to 15 December 2019.

209. In 2019, more than 8,000 travel vouchers were distributed for workers’ children to enjoy rest and recuperation at the Kelechek, Zhalyln, Ak-Suu, Den Sooluk, Mayak, Balastan and Krasnaya Gvozdika summer camps.

Paragraph 16

Domestic violence

210. The Protection against Domestic Violence Act was adopted in April 2017.

211. In accordance with international standards, the Act sets out fundamental principles to guide the actors responsible for its implementation, the number of which has been increased and includes 11 designated bodies. The Act includes specific objectives for each of these bodies and the approval of an interdepartmental mechanism for coordination and cooperation in achieving them. For example, it provides for victims of domestic violence to be referred for the necessary legal, medical and psychological assistance, social support and advisory services.

212. The Act has some groundbreaking provisions:

- The internal affairs agencies have a strict obligation to respond to all reports of domestic violence and not only those made by victims.
- A single type of restraining order has been introduced to replace the two previous ones: temporary restraining orders and court orders.
- For the first time, provision has been made for rehabilitation programmes to change violent behaviour among perpetrators of violence.

213. In 2020, a law was adopted to amend the Protection against Domestic Violence Act. The amendments were introduced to bring the Act into line with the provisions of the legal codes that entered into force on 1 January 2019.

214. Pursuant to Act No. 64 of 27 April 2017, the Administrative Liability Code (no longer in force as of 1 January 2019) was amended to establish administrative liability under article 66³ for domestic violence (i.e., deliberate acts of physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence or threats to commit such acts committed by one family member or person of equivalent status against another family member or person of equivalent status).

215. Moreover, if there was evidence that the perpetrators’ acts constituted a criminal offence, they were categorized under the appropriate articles of the Criminal Code.

216. The Code of Misdemeanours, which establishes criminal liability for such acts, entered into force on 1 January 2019.

217. Article 75 of the Code establishes criminal liability for the use of physical or psychological violence by one family member against another.

218. Therefore, the recommendations to increase penalties for domestic violence were considered during the drafting of the Code and its adoption by the parliament.

219. The internal affairs agencies have issued more than 14,000 temporary restraining orders since 2004. In 2017, the internal affairs agencies recorded 7,333 instances of domestic violence, issued 7,323 temporary restraining orders and initiated and referred to court 218 criminal cases of domestic violence.

220. In 2017, the judicial authorities examined 2,547 cases of administrative offences (carrying an administrative penalty) and 313 criminal cases of domestic violence.

221. Since 23 March 2018, workshops have been held in all regions of the country to provide training on the legislation on protection against domestic violence and serve as a forum for the discussion of draft laws and regulations with experts from local subdivisions of the bodies covered under the legislation on protection against domestic violence. In addition, districts and municipalities have drawn up joint plans for the implementation of the

Protection against Domestic Violence Act. In total, 470 employees of local subdivisions of State bodies or local authorities have received training.

222. A 2019 government decision sets out the procedure for cooperation between government agencies following the identification of domestic violence incidents and for the provision of prompt and comprehensive assistance to domestic violence victims.

223. In 2018, to prevent abuse and violence against children in family, educational and public settings and provide assistance to children and adolescents at social risk, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an order on strengthening measures to prevent violence and abuse against minors, which provides for door-to-door surveys of families to establish a database and take measures to protect children left without parental care, including the children of internal and international migrants, and raise awareness among parents about the need to notify the social services about impending trips abroad and ensure that the necessary arrangements are made for the care of their children.

224. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development have drafted and approved a joint order to approve instructions on the procedure for cooperation between the social development agencies responsible for child protection and the internal affairs agencies in the area of protection against domestic violence.

225. The juvenile affairs inspectorates of the internal affairs agencies have mounted 10 awareness-raising campaigns in schools, involving school students, parents, local authorities and voluntary organizations, and have held public meetings to present information on the crime situation in new housing developments and on the prevention of theft and domestic violence.

226. Internal affairs officials also took part in events on the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence with the members of 27 domestic violence prevention committees in various regions of the country involving 3,477 persons. Four videos on the prevention of theft and violence against children have been produced.

227. Booklets on domestic violence (8,000 copies) with information about assistance services for victims of domestic violence have been published and distributed.

228. A practical manual for officials of the investigation service of the internal affairs agencies on the effective investigation of gender-based offences against women and children has been developed and published in a print run of 400 copies in Kyrgyz and Russian.

229. Four seminars on the investigation of gender-based offences have been held for 100 officials of the investigation service of the internal affairs agencies in the country's provinces.

230. The website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has a gender policy section, where the main provisions of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act and information about assistance services can be found and a compendium of laws and regulations governing the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence has been published. The section also has videos about the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence and a video on liability for violation of the law on the legal age for marriage. More than 15 videos have been published on the website. Video clips entitled "Don't crush their dreams", "Parents, watch over your children!" and "Obey the traffic rules and save your life!" have been produced and broadcast on national television.

231. Community-based prevention centres also contribute to the prevention of domestic violence (there are 538 such centres, 547 youth councils, 526 women's councils and 731 elders' (*aksakal*) courts).

232. In 2019, 6,145 incidents of domestic violence were registered, including 4,194 incidents of physical violence, 1,688 incidents of psychological violence, 8 incidents of sexual violence, 1 incident of economic violence and 254 incidents of neglect.

233. Over the same period, the country's internal affairs agencies issued 1,654 restraining orders in Bishkek, 316 in Osh, 1,429 in Chu Province, 402 in Issyk Kul Province, 372 in Naryn Province, 796 in Osh Province, 777 in Jalalabad Province, 186 in Talas Province and 213 in Batken Province.

234. The figures include 790 extensions of restraining orders.

235. Restraining orders were issued to protect 169 minor victims of domestic violence, of whom 81 were boys and 88 girls.

236. Domestic violence offences were recorded in respect of 7,045 persons under the Code of Misdemeanours, as follows: 4,983 article 75 (Domestic violence); 18 under article 76 (Non-compliance with the conditions of a temporary restraining order); 438 under article 65 (Battery); 287 under article 66 (Infliction of minor bodily harm); 95 under article 67 (Infliction of less serious bodily harm through negligence); 833 under 119 (Disorderly conduct); and 391 under other articles.

237. There were 129 cases under article 61 of the Code of Infractions (Avoidance of parental responsibilities).

238. The number of recorded incidents of domestic violence for which criminal cases were initiated under the Criminal Code was 649, of which 41 were in Bishkek, 6 in Osh, 155 in Chu Province, 57 in Issyk Kul Province, 103 in Naryn Province, 174 in Osh Province, 18 in Jalalabad Province, 4 in Talas Province and 91 in Batken Province.

239. In 2019, in the course of their oversight of compliance by central and local government agencies with the legislation on protection from domestic violence, the procuratorial authorities identified 73 violations and issued 67 orders to desist from unlawful activity, which led to disciplinary action being taken against 107 persons.

240. In 2019, 6,145 incidents of domestic violence were recorded in the country, in which 5,659 of the victims were female and 486 were male; 169 of the victims were children (81 boys and 88 girls).

241. Of these incidents of domestic violence, 649 were registered in the automated information system constituting the single register of offences under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code (4 cases of murder, 451 cases of less serious and serious bodily harm and 6 cases of rape and acts of sexual violence) and 5,496 were recorded as misdemeanours (under article 75 of the Code of Misdemeanours).

242. Since 2015, in order to ensure effective detection, identification and child protection mechanisms, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development has operated a State-run children's helpline, the "111 Children's Helpline" Centre. The helpline operates 24 hours a day; calls from all regions of the country are free.

243. The 111 helpline was designed for children but accepts calls from both children and adults; all the conversations are recorded. Over a period of three years and nine months, it received 763,269 telephone calls, or 315 per day. Of the calls received, 83 per cent were from adults and 17 per cent from children. Advice, recommendations and psychological counselling are offered through the helpline.

244. On 5 June 2020, the President signed a law amending the Code of Criminal Procedure to regulate the cases in which a perpetrator of domestic violence under article 75 of the Code of Misdemeanours may be detained for 48 hours.

245. Since 2019, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science have been running a joint pilot project in 54 schools on the prevention of sexual violence against girls. As part of the project, guidance on the identification and assistance of child victims of sexual violence for officials of juvenile affairs inspectorates and schoolteachers has been developed and training has been provided to 200 officials of juvenile affairs inspectorates, 997 schoolteachers, approximately 7,000 female students in the eighth to eleventh school years and 4,000 mothers and guardians.

Paragraph 17

Bride kidnapping

246. The Kyrgyz Republic has taken measures to improve the legal framework for combating the abduction of women for the purpose of marriage and with respect to early marriages. Chapter 28 of the Criminal Code (2017 version) criminalizes offences against family relations and the interests of minors.

247. The Criminal Code that entered into force on 1 January 2019 includes a separate article on abduction for the purpose of marriage (art. 175). The first paragraph of this article provides for a penalty of category III deprivation of liberty (between 5 and 7.5 years) and the second paragraph provides for a penalty of category IV deprivation of liberty (between 7.5 and 10 years) with a category IV fine.

248. In 2019, 172 offences under article 175 of the Criminal Code (Abduction for the purpose of marriage) were recorded in the single register of offences through the internal affairs agencies. Of these cases, 14 were referred to court and 127 were terminated.

249. Whereas abduction for the purpose of marriage against a person's will was previously punishable by 5 to 7 years' deprivation of liberty, since 1 January 2019 the penalty has been 2.5 to 4 years' deprivation of liberty for juvenile offenders and 5 to 7.5 years' deprivation of liberty for other persons.

250. Whereas abduction of a person under the age of 18 for the purpose of entering into a de facto marital relationship or for the purpose of marriage against the person's will was previously punishable by 5 to 10 years' deprivation of liberty, since 2019 the penalty has been 4 to 6 years' deprivation of liberty for juvenile offenders and 7.5 to 10 years' deprivation of liberty and a fine of 80,000 to 220,000 soms for other persons.

251. These criminal acts are classified as serious offences. Accordingly, criminal proceedings can be initiated in the absence of a complaint by the victim, accused persons cannot go unpunished in cases where the victim refuses to press charges, and criminal cases in respect of such offences cannot be dropped.

252. Moreover, article 178 of the Criminal Code (2017 version) provides that the parents (or persons in loco parentis) of a person who has been married in a religious ceremony in contravention of legislation on the legal age for marriage, the person who conducted the ceremony and the adult married to the minor in such a ceremony all face a penalty of deprivation of liberty for 3 to 5 years.

253. These actions were intended to strengthen the institution of marriage and the family. It is a criminal offence for clerics to consecrate a marriage before it is registered at a civil registry office or to perform a wedding ceremony involving minors.

254. In addition, despite the fact that criminal legislation has been humanized as part of legal reforms, the penalties for the offences provided for in article 175 of the Criminal Code, on the abduction of women and girls for the purpose of marriage, have not been reduced and are categorized as serious offences in accordance with article 19 of the Code.

255. Pursuant to article 23 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, criminal cases recorded in the single register of offences under article 175 of the Criminal Code are subject to public prosecution, meaning that they are prosecuted regardless of whether the victim gives a statement and cannot be terminated based on reconciliation of the parties.

256. Accordingly, this circumstance does not allow the perpetrators of such acts to avoid punishment, which ensures that the principle of inevitability of criminal liability provided for in article 10 of the Criminal Code is upheld.

257. In addition to this, the Criminal Code provides that acts of coercion to enter into de facto marital relations (art. 176), coercion to enter into marriage (art. 177) and violations of the law on the legal age for marriage during the conduct of religious ceremonies (art. 178) constitute separate criminal offences punishable by deprivation of liberty.

258. Throughout the legislation, liability for offences against family relations and the interests of minors has been strengthened.

259. Table 1 contains data on the number of criminal cases initiated and referred to court under articles 154 and 155 of the Criminal Code (1997 version) between 2014 and 2018.

Table 1

Year	<i>Article 154 of the Criminal Code (Coercion of a person under the age of 17 to enter into de facto marital relations)</i>		<i>Article 155 of the Criminal Code (Coercion of a woman to marry, kidnapping of a woman for the purpose of marriage or obstruction of marriage)</i>	
	<i>Initiated</i>	<i>Referred to court</i>	<i>Initiated</i>	<i>Referred to court</i>
2014	6	6	33	33
2015	4	4	32	32
2016	10	10	26	26
2017	4	4	19	19
2018	3	3	37	37

260. Moreover, in 2016, before the entry into force of the new legal codes adopted under the judicial and legal reform (Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure), a law was adopted to amend various pieces of legislation (the Family Code and the Criminal Code). Article 14 of the Family Code was supplemented with paragraph 3, reading as follows: “Persons found guilty of violating the requirements of the Code on the legal age for marriage shall be held liable in accordance with the law.” The Criminal Code (1997 version) was supplemented with article 155¹, which states: “The parents (or persons in loco parentis) of a person who has been married in a religious ceremony in contravention of legislation on the legal age for marriage, the person who conducted the ceremony and the adult married to the minor in such a ceremony all face a penalty of deprivation of liberty for 3 to 5 years.”

261. A plan for the implementation of this law for the period 2017–2018 (2017) and a procedure for cooperation among government agencies to prevent marriages with minors and early marriages (2018) were approved by interdepartmental order.

262. Monitoring of the action plan undertaken in March 2019 brought to light the following outcomes:

263. Laws, regulations and other instruments have been brought into conformity with the Act amending certain legislative acts (the Family Code and the Criminal Code), which prohibits the conduct of religious marriage ceremonies involving minors.

264. A working group has developed five regulatory instruments on cooperation among government agencies to prevent marriages with minors and early marriages. The development and proposal of methodological recommendations is also significant. A mechanism to receive and transfer to law enforcement agencies reports about the identification of early marriages has been developed and implemented. This mechanism is reflected in the automated information system constituting the single register of offences.

265. Training materials have been produced to build the capacity of all stakeholders in early marriage prevention.

266. Within a fairly short period of time, the public was made aware of the Act amending certain legislative acts (the Family Code and the Criminal Code), prohibiting the conduct of religious marriage ceremonies involving minors, and the related regulations and departmental instruments.

267. A joint order was adopted to approve the implementation plan for the period 2020–2021 for Act No. 179 of 17 November 2016 amending certain legislative acts (the Family Code and the Criminal Code) and article 178 of Criminal Code No. 19 of 2 February 2017 and to approve a communication development strategy aimed at the eradication of marriages of persons below the legal age for marriage. The order was transferred to the relevant government agencies for execution.

268. Moreover, the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality for the period 2018–2020, approved by a government decision in 2018, provides for the inclusion in the curriculum for school students at all levels of lessons on the prevention of violence against women and girls and discriminatory traditional practices such as marriage involving minors and bride kidnapping.

269. Under the plan of action to implement the Presidential Decree on declaring 2018 the Year of Regional Development and the regional policy framework for the period 2018–2022 and in accordance with the 2018 implementation plan for government-sector social procurement, approved by a Ministry of Labour and Social Development decision in 2018, crisis centres provided comprehensive assistance to victims of domestic violence amounting to 2,740,500 soms.

270. In 2018, the Ministry of Health issued an order on measures to prevent early marriage in the Kyrgyz Republic and adopted a plan of action for the relevant law.

271. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development has produced accessible and entertaining videos on the characteristics of adolescence, promotion of gender awareness among young people, prevention of psychoactive substance abuse, prevention of violence among young people, reproductive health and sexual relations, prevention of HIV infection and sexually transmitted infections, interpersonal relations and conflict resolution, and prevention of computer addiction and online violence among young people.

272. At general education establishments, awareness-raising covering human rights, including with respect to violence against women, is provided as part of teaching in social studies and ethics (*adep sabagy*).

Paragraph 18 Detention conditions

273. Article 19 of the Penalties Enforcement Code provides for the right to security of person in the event of a threat to a prisoner's personal safety from his or her fellow prisoners or other persons. In December 2019, the total number of prisoners held in institutions of the State Penal Correction Service was 6,993, of whom 95 were being held under article 19.

274. An interdepartmental working group on the relocation of State Penal Correction Service institutions No. 21 and No. 47 outside the boundaries of Bishkek was established pursuant to a 2019 government decision with the aim of ensuring public safety, improving the city's infrastructure and improving detention conditions for remand and convicted prisoners.

275. It is planned to move institution No. 47 from Bishkek to the location of integrated tuberculosis treatment centre No. 31 in Moldovanovka, Chu Province, and then to convert it into a specialized hospital of the State Penal Correction Service to treat all types of illnesses in different categories of prisoners. The entire hospital system of the State Penal Correction Service will then be located in one place. The interdepartmental working group has produced a preliminary design, including the engineering design and the specifications and estimates, for construction of the central hospital.

276. In parallel, work is in progress on the relocation of institution No. 21 (remand centre No. 1) from Bishkek to the location of institution No. 50 in Nizhny Norus, Chu Province. The institution's buildings and structures are currently being planned and the statement of work for construction of the new remand centre is being prepared.

277. Additional accommodation has been constructed in the medical unit of institution No. 2, in cooperation with the mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

278. In institution No. 3, the bakery has been upgraded and a shoe repair workshop and sewing workshop have been created, in cooperation with the Programme Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

279. In accordance with paragraph 29 of the list of categories of citizens entitled to health care free of charge or at reduced rates under the programme of State guarantees relating to the provision of medical and health care, this entitlement applies to persons under preliminary investigation and persons serving sentences in the event of an urgent condition threatening the life of the patient, when it is impossible to provide them with health care in the medical services of the prison system, the remand centre of the State Committee on National Security or the temporary holding facilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

280. Between 2015 and 2020, in accordance with the 2008 government decision approving daily food rations for convicted prisoners and persons held in correctional system remand centres, convicted and remand prisoners were provided with 19 different food items in ordinary prison facilities and with 6 different food items in secure care facilities, using 100 per cent of the State funds allocated for food; in other words, convicted and remand prisoners are provided with the full amount of their food allowance.

281. During the same period, the spending on food per person was:

- In ordinary prison facilities, 90 soms for 3,333 kcal of energy
- In the juvenile facility, 110 soms for 3,685 kcal of energy
- In medical prison facilities, 120 soms, for 4,510 kcal of energy

282. Various construction, renovation and other works are ongoing or have been completed by the State Penal Correction Service in cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations in nine correctional facilities (institutions No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 No. 8, No. 10, No. 14, No. 19, No. 16 and No. 47) and the following projects and programmes have been carried out.

283. The Support to Prison Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic Project was carried out by UNODC and the European Union (improvement of detention conditions in institutions of the penal correction system, building the management capacity of the penal correction system and developing manufacturing operations and vocational and technical education) (2010–2012).

284. The project entitled “Chance – Adult education in the penitentiary system: the chance for a better future” was carried out by the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International) (including reinforcement and refurbishment of infrastructure at the vocational and technical schools in institutions No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 and improvement of professionalism among the institutions’ staff and the methods used at the vocational and technical schools) (2012–2013).

285. The project entitled “Promotion of the principles of the rule of law and human rights in the penal correction system of the Kyrgyz Republic” was carried out by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which involved the establishment in penal institution No. 3 of a separate unit for prisoners serving long sentences and support for the work of the Atlantis rehabilitation centres and of the rehabilitation and social adaptation centre (2013–2015).

286. Five methadone substitution therapy centres were opened in State Penal Correction Service institutions No. 1, No. 3, No. 47, No. 21 and No. 25, through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (2014–2015).

287. Capacity-building was carried out in the State Penal Correction Service for work with persons convicted of violent extremism (introduction of manufacturing rooms for the social reintegration of convicted prisoners, provision of libraries and psychologists’ office in three penal institutions and introduction of an electronic register for visitors and packages in the institutions) (2017).

288. A rehabilitation and social adaptation centre for drug-dependent women prisoners was established in penal institution No. 2 under a programme carried out in phase 6 of the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (the centre was established and furnished) (2018).

289. The Social Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Convicted Prisoners Project was carried out by UNODC (creation of two manufacturing units) (2018–2019).

290. With the support of international organizations, the State Penal Correction Service continues to teach various handicrafts (sewing, pottery, etc.) to prisoners.

291. With the active development of manufacturing in the correctional system, the State Penal Correction Service provides manufacturing jobs for prisoners at correctional colonies and open prisons.

292. Between 2017 and 2020, the number of prisoners who had a job in a correctional institution was 1,074, of whom:

- 756 worked in prison maintenance
- 318 worked in manufacturing

293. In addition, a bill to amend the Penalties Enforcement Code has been drawn up, in order to:

- Increase the number of meetings and telephone calls for all categories of convicted prisoners and introduce standards establishing an individualized form of employment for prisoners
- Eliminate the incompatibility of individual provisions of articles 25 and 91 of the Penalties Enforcement Code regarding the censorship of prisoners' mail
- Increase the amount of money allocated for the monthly purchase of food items and basic necessities for all categories of convicted prisoners
- Amend the rules providing that prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment may be engaged in paid work

294. In accordance with article 10 of the Employment Promotion Act, working age citizens are entitled to free vocational training and employment assistance.

295. However, no citizens serving sentences in places of detention requested occupational and technical training services from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in 2019.

Paragraph 19

Homelessness and the right to adequate housing

296. Providing the public with social housing is one of the main objectives of the State. In accordance with the public health standard adopted in the Kyrgyz Republic, the residential floor area per person is to be at least 12 m². In the case of CIS member States, the standard is 18 m² per person.

297. According to official data, the average per capita residential floor space in the country stood at 12.2 m² in 1991 and currently remains at the same level. The highest indicator for per capita residential floor space for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic over the past 25 years was 15.7 m², in 2010. Although the foundations for a functional residential real estate market have been established in the Kyrgyz Republic, only a limited section of the population with relatively high incomes is currently able to acquire housing through market mechanisms.

298. In 2015, the Government launched the Affordable Housing Programme for the period 2015–2020, intended to provide accessible housing to citizens.

299. The State Mortgage Company is the body responsible for implementation of the Government's Accessible Housing programme for the period 2015–2020.

300. Through 13 partner banks, 539,900 loans have been issued, amounting to more than 6,581,336,268 soms. Approximately 18,000 persons have been provided with housing. The programme's list of active participants includes more than 6,000 participants, who require more than 9 billion soms in additional funding. On 1 November 2019, the interest rates were lowered to 6–8 per cent per annum.

301. The interest rates on mortgage loans have been lowered five times: from 12–14 per cent to 10–12 per cent per annum in 2016; to 8–10 per cent per annum in 2017; to 7–9 per cent per annum in November 2018; and to 6–8 per cent per annum in November 2019. On 1 May 2020, the rates on previously issued loans (issued before 1 November 2018) were reduced to 7–9 per cent per annum.

302. No surety requirement may be placed on programme participants.

303. Construction has been completed on a block of 60 apartments in Naryn and a block of 135 apartments in the Tunguch neighbourhood of Bishkek. Efforts are currently under way to settle people in the residential buildings using a rent-to-own scheme.

304. With a view to attracting extrabudgetary financial resources, the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the Government of Germany reached an agreement on financial and technical cooperation, including two components of housing funding in the country's regions.

305. Some €11 million (€10.5 million in capital and €500,000 in technical support for the State Mortgage Company) has been allocated to the housing construction financing component.

306. Some €9 million (€8.5 million in capital and €500,000 in technical support for the State Mortgage Company) has been allocated to the social housing construction component.

307. The purpose of the project is to develop affordable mortgage lending in the regions (excluding the cities of Bishkek and Osh) for low- and middle-income families. Under the project, commercial banks will be provided through the State Mortgage Company with cash assets (€10.5 million, or 832 million soms) in national currency to issue mortgages for low- and middle-income families. The State Mortgage Company is actively pursuing the project in the regions of the Kyrgyz Republic and, as of 6 March 2020, had provided 59 loans amounting to 59.5 million soms through its partner banks.

308. The parliament has approved an agreement on the provision of €9 million to complete the project's second phase.

309. The establishment of the State Mortgage Company within the banking system of Kyrgyzstan has given impetus to long-term mortgage lending at low interest rates. The section of the population with average and below-average incomes has gained sustainable access to mortgage loans.

310. According to data from the State Mortgage Company, among the 746 families who took out a mortgage in 2016, 535 of the agreements were concluded with women. This demonstrates increased economic opportunities for women and their desire to invest in housing or the priority given to the conclusion of mortgage agreements by women. More than 55 per cent of State mortgage loans were issued to women.

311. In addition, regulations on a procedure for the provision of housing from the specialized State housing fund attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, which set out a uniform procedure and conditions for the provision of housing to certain categories of citizens in need of social support, were approved by a government decision in 2020.

312. In 2019, using all available sources of funding, drinking water installations were restored or constructed in 38 villages across the country. This gave more than 47,000 persons access to drinking water.

313. Under the Development Strategy for the Drinking Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal System for Settlements for the period up to 2026, it is planned to complete work to construct and restore the water supply system in 425 villages, at a cost of 8,882,000,000 soms, and the wastewater disposal system in 27 district centres, at a cost of 4,048,000,000 soms.

314. Statistical data on homelessness and the right to adequate housing and on access to safe sources of drinking water are included in annex 1 to the present report.

Paragraph 20

Poverty

315. The national budget is socially oriented. Almost half the country's revenue is used to fund spending on education, health, the development of sport, science and culture, social security and social protection.

316. For example, spending on social security and social protection amounts to 5.7 per cent of GDP and 20 per cent of total expenditure from the national budget.

317. A new version of the State Benefits Act entered into force in 2018, aimed at provision of social assistance by the State. The Act provides for different types of State benefits.

318. A lump-sum payment (*balaga suiunchu*) of 4,000 soms is paid on the birth of each child, to all newborns regardless of the family's income, i.e. without targeting (it is almost as much as the subsistence level for a child).

319. A monthly allowance is paid at a fixed rate of 810 soms to families with children under the age of 16 years, depending on the family's income, i.e. with targeting, based on the guaranteed minimum income, whose level depends on the financial and economic situation of the country.

320. In the allocation of benefits to families with children, pensions are excluded from the total income used to determine a family's level of need for State support, in order to improve and expand the population coverage of targeted social assistance.

321. In 2018, a Government Decision was adopted on implementation of the State Benefits Act, providing for the targeting of low-income benefits by refining the criteria for determining a family's need of the applicable benefit:

- The standards for income from land plots and gardens were recalculated, based on current prices for agricultural products.
- Agricultural livestock were taken into account.
- Pensions were excluded from family income for determination of a family's need for the monthly benefit (*ui-bulogo komok*).

322. In 2019, a Government Decision was adopted to amend Government Decision No. 307 of 29 June 2018 on implementation of the State Benefits Act, to provide that the payment of personal assistant services for the care of children with disabilities requiring constant care and supervision is not counted as income when determining a family's need for low-income benefits.

323. The 2019 government decision to amend Government Decision No. 307 of 29 June 2018 on implementation of the State Benefits Act was also intended to ensure targeting of low-income benefits by increasing the guaranteed minimum income used to determine families' need for the benefit from 900 to 1,000 soms, as from 1 December 2019. Raising the guaranteed minimum income will improve benefit coverage for children from low-income families.

324. As of 1 January 2020, the monthly benefit for needy citizens and families with children under the age of 16 (*ui-bulogo komok*) was being received by 96,100 families with 308,800 children.

325. The payment of monthly cash compensation in lieu of in-kind benefits is not suited to the active combating of poverty as the group of beneficiaries is extremely diverse in terms of economic status.

326. In accordance with the Act on Veterans of War, the Armed Forces and the Home Front, the Act on Social Protection for Citizens Affected by the Chernobyl Disaster, the Act on Rights and Guarantees for Rehabilitated Citizens Affected by Repression for Political and Religious Beliefs and on Social, Ethnic and Other Grounds, the Act on Rights and Guarantees for Persons with Disabilities and the Act on the Donation of Blood and its Components, cash compensation in lieu of in-kind benefits is currently paid on a monthly basis to 25 categories of citizens, namely veterans of the Great Patriotic War and the Afghan war, persons with a disability acquired in the Afghan war or the Soviet Army, first responders to the Chernobyl accident, rehabilitated citizens, decorated donors and persons with visual and hearing impairments.

327. Cash compensation in lieu of in-kind benefits is paid to every person in the category upon presentation of the relevant documents indicated in the regulations on the procedure for the allocation of monthly cash compensation in lieu of in-kind benefits, approved by a government decision in 2009.

328. The amounts of the cash compensation are set irrespective of the region of residence at between 1,000 and 7,000 soms. This amount covers the cost of utilities, domestic and CIS travel, dental prosthetics, hearing aids, glasses, vouchers for sanatorium treatment and medicines.

329. As of 1 January 2020, the number of beneficiaries of cash compensation throughout the country was 42,018.
330. In accordance with the Children's Code, the placement of children in residential children's homes is considered an exceptional measure to be applied after exhausting all possibilities for placing the child in a family.
331. In 2019, the country had 137 residential children's homes, of which 57 were State-run (50 operated by the Ministry of Education and Science, 3 by the Ministry of Health and 4 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development), 25 were municipal, 41 were private or established by a non-profit organization and 14 were run by a religious organization. More than 10,000 children were staying in these institutions; only 5.4 per cent of them were orphans and the remaining children still had one or both parents.
332. Under the Plan for the Optimization of the Management and Funding of Residential Children's Homes for the period 2013–2018, approved by a government decision in 2012, of the 17 residential children's homes covered (12 run by the Ministry of Education and Science, 2 by the Ministry of Health, 2 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and 1 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development), 10 have been optimized or transformed (1 run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 7 by the Ministry of Education and Science and 2 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs).
333. To improve the deinstitutionalization process, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development has developed a Plan of Priority Measures for the Reform of Residential Children's Homes for the period 2019–2021, which is aimed at the development of social services for children, including the development of alternative forms of care for children, and also provides for measures to regulate the establishment of children's homes.
334. A procedure for use of the automated information and analysis system, for residential children's homes was approved by a government decision in 2019. In accordance with this Decision, the administrations of all residential children's homes must enter the data of the children who are currently staying, newly arrived or have left the institutions. The system allows for real-time monitoring of children's movements, the reasons for their placement, their status, any payments and the number of children who leave.
335. In accordance with the Children's Code, regulations on the accreditation of entities providing services for children living in difficult circumstances were approved by a government decision in 2015.
336. Pursuant to a government decision in 2018, aimed at the provision of high-quality social services in the area of childcare, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development accredits residential children's homes, regardless of the form of ownership, according to minimum standards for the care, education and socialization of children in institutions providing services for children living in difficult circumstances.
337. The National Development Strategy for the period 2018–2040, approved by a presidential decree in 2018, sets out the priority objectives for policy on labour and old age provision.
338. State economic policy is focused on ensuring employment and stable incomes and creating productive jobs, taking into consideration all future labour market challenges.
339. The poverty level by region for the period 2014–2019 is set out in annex 2 to the present report.
340. The respective poverty rates for men and women in the country as a whole do not show a great disparity, with the difference between the two being less than one percentage point (20.1 per cent for women and 20.2 per cent for men).

Paragraph 21

Malnutrition and the right to food

341. In the Kyrgyz Republic a number of measures have been adopted which are aimed at raising the standard of schoolchildren's health by requiring moves to improve their nutrition, especially among children in grades 1–4.

342. A Government decree of 2016 laying down public health requirements with regard to conditions and the organization of teaching in general education institutions established pupils' nutritional requirements.

343. Furthermore, it must be noted that specialists from the Department of Disease Prevention and State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance have been involved in developing a recommended range of food products to be sold in school cafeterias and canteens (including the introduction of hot meals).

344. Since the project began, 36 first-course dishes, 52 second-course dishes, 11 beverages, 19 kinds of baked foods and 28 kinds of salads have been devised. During the period in question, 66 per cent of the pilot schools used meat and 80 per cent used milk products in the preparation of the dishes and no less than 38 per cent of the pilot schools offered hot food four to five times a week. One in four schools provided salads every week for primary schoolchildren.

345. Catering methods have been recommended for general education institutions.

346. In practically all of the country's schools, primary pupils are given a bun and a mug of tea, or other kinds of baked goods and drinks (biscuits, gingerbread, waffles shortcake and muffins and hot milk, hot chocolate, coffee, etc.). The menu comprises a standard portion of food costing 7 soms a day, or 10 soms in high-altitude or remote areas.

347. At present, 2,218 school canteens are in operation in the country. They feed a total of 452,864 pupils in grades 1–4. Some 450 million soms of the national budget are allocated annually to the provision of hot meals for pupils in grades 1–4, at a cost of 7 soms per child.

348. In accordance with the Nutrition in General Education Schools Act, a presidential decree of 2006 on the nutrition of pupils of general education schools and a government decree of 2006, school meals are organized in all general education schools.

349. Since 2013 the Optimized School Meals Programme has been run with the technical assistance of the World Food Programme.

350. As a result, the following have been drafted and adopted:

- Government decree of 2014 on guidelines for the wider provision of school meals in the Kyrgyz Republic
- Government decrees of 2014 and 2015 on the assignment of cooking staff to schools in the Kyrgyz Republic, which provided for cooking staff in 523 schools
- Order of the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Health of 2014 concerning the adoption of a programme for the wider provision of school meals in the schools of the Kyrgyz Republic
- Order of the Ministry of Education and Science on the adoption of a healthy diet and lifestyle plan (2013–2014)

351. School farms have been set up in 65 per cent of schools. Specifications for 130 dishes has been drawn up and adopted and new models of school meals have been introduced in 836 schools. They ensure that primary pupils receive affordable full hot lunches.

352. With the assistance of donors such as the World Food Programme, Mercy Corps and local government bodies, hot meals have been organized in 1,146, or 50.9 per cent, of the 2,236 general education institutions, where some 445,000 primary schoolchildren study.

353. In the period 2010–2017, Mercy Corps supported 154 schools and 481 kindergartens and provided more than 2,000 tonnes of foodstuffs (fortified flour, rice, peas and vegetable

oil) and approximately 55 million lunches for more than 32,000 primary schoolchildren and 50,000 kindergarten pupils.

354. All the foodstuffs have a Eurasian Union declaration of conformity. The dietary allowance per child provided by the programme consists of 50 g of flour, 10 g of rice, 5 g of peas and 5 g of oil. Kindergartens and schools top up these products with fresh vegetables, meat and milk financed by the local government budget and additional contributions from parents.

355. In 2017, the programme's funding was extended to cover the period 2018–2021. The start of the new programme makes it possible to provide support for an extra 350 elementary schools mainly located in mountain or inaccessible areas. Thus, in the 2018–2021 period, a total of 430 elementary schools were receiving support.

356. By a government decree of 2010, as from 1 September 2010, 10 soms have been allocated for standard daily portions of food for each pupil in grades 1–4 of general education schools located in mountain, remote or inaccessible areas with severe, adverse, natural or climatic conditions.

357. A government decree of 2015 approved a food security and nutrition programme for the period 2015–2017. On completion of this programme, a government decree of 2019 approved a food security and nutrition programme for the period 2019–2023 and a plan for implementing measures aimed at ensuring national food security, a rapid response to internal and external threats to the stability of the food market and the achievement of strategic priorities for the sustainable development of the country.

358. The programme focuses on a strategy to improve food availability to meet the population's needs by providing for enhanced stability of domestically produced basic foodstuffs and a larger volume and greater sustainability of the food supply on the domestic market.

359. In Kyrgyzstan iron deficiency is prevalent throughout the country with a high level of anaemia recorded among the population. For this reason, the Baking Flour Fortification Act adopted in 2009 requires the fortification of domestically produced and imported superior grade flour. In Kyrgyzstan, 55 per cent of flour is imported, some of which is not fortified.

360. The technical regulations of the Eurasian Customs Union on food safety (TR TS 021/2011) entered into force in 2017. However, no standard for fortified baking flour was included in the regulations. Under the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, the country does not have the right to prohibit the import of products if a business entity has a Eurasian Economic Union declaration of conformity for a product. Hence a product is checked only on being put on the domestic market.

361. In view of this situation, at the beginning of 2019 the Eurasian Economic Commission amended the technical regulations, in particular to include the requirement that superior grade baking flour be fortified.

Paragraph 22

Access to health care

362. In accordance with the Health Act a fundamental objective of State health policy is the realization of citizens' inalienable constitutional right to the protection of their own health and the health and life of others.

363. The rules on registration with family doctors adopted by the Ministry of Health ensure access to primary health-care services and give effect to the right of a free choice of a family doctor, family practice centre or health centre. The rules are predicated on the principles of countrywide coverage, a free choice of a family doctor at the place of residence and the provision of various possibilities for realizing the right to primary health care regardless of social status and type of disease and to the confidentiality of information on registration.

364. The right to receive medical services is realized under the programme of State guarantees relating to the provision of medical and health care, adopted by a government

decree of 2015, which establishes the scope, conditions and types of medical care available. The programme ensures all citizens' access to medical services regardless of sexual orientation, nationality, gender orientation, age, etc.

365. Under the programme, women seeking termination of pregnancy for social or medical reasons belong to the category of beneficiaries who are entitled to free outpatient or inpatient health care on the grounds of having an underlying health issue.

366. In order to improve access to reimbursed medicines, uninsured pregnant women who are registered at their place of residence are covered under the compulsory medical insurance scheme.

367. For example, in 2019, 143,300 prescriptions were written out to pregnant women, who were reimbursed for a sum of 24.2 million soms.

368. Currently work is underway to revise the price list of medical services, including medically induced termination of pregnancy, for health providers working within the single payer system.

369. One of the strategic government priorities established in the national health and health system development programme 2019–2030, entitled “Healthy person – prosperous country” is to improve the quality of life and maternal and child health care. These priorities contribute overall to the health of the entire nation.

370. In order to ensure the physical and financial accessibility of medicines for outpatients, the compulsory health insurance programme is being supplemented by a drug reimbursement programme, under which citizens who are covered by compulsory health insurance receive a 50 per cent discount on the price of medicinal products, including contraceptives, bought at pharmacies.

371. The directory of drugs for which outpatients are reimbursed under the programme supplementing the compulsory health insurance programme and the programme of State guarantees relating to the provision of medical and health care contains 55 generic and more than 200 branded drugs and medical products, including branded contraceptives (intrauterine devices, levonorgestrel with ethinylestradiol, Rigevidon, Triregol, Medroxyprogesteron, Depo Provera) for women of reproductive age.

372. In order to improve the accessibility of reimbursed medicines, pregnant women not covered by compulsory health insurance are defined as persons from socially vulnerable groups when they go to family medicine centres at their place of residence.

373. This category of women receive free compulsory health insurance for 12 calendar months including the postpartum period. Compulsory health insurance enables them to obtain folic acid, Iodomarine and iron preparations at a 50 per cent discount.

374. Persons who have compulsory health insurance and beneficiaries on social or medical grounds (pensioners, children, persons receiving social assistance, pregnant women, persons registered as unemployed, students, etc.) are entitled to reimbursed drugs under the programme supplementing compulsory health insurance. The bulk of reimbursed prescriptions (up to 40 per cent) for insured persons are issued to pensioners for cardiovascular diseases. Most iron preparations and antibiotics are prescribed for children and pregnant women.

375. Under the programme of State guarantees relating to the provision of medical and health care, the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund reimburses up to 90 per cent of the basic price of medical preparations for five diseases (paranoid schizophrenia, various affective disorders, epilepsy, bronchial asthma and terminal cancer).

376. Financial appropriations for the provision of reimbursed drugs under the programme of State guarantees amounted to 264.5 million soms in 2017, 286.4 million soms in 2018 and 334.4 million soms in 2019.

377. Meetings and presentations are organized and broadcast through the mass media in order to raise the population's awareness of its right to medical assistance under the programme of State guarantees and the supplementary drug provision programme, as well as

of discoveries and treatment in the health services provided by the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund and its local branches.

378. For example, 1,968 meetings were organized and held in 2019 (2,057 in 2018, 1,920 in 2017 and 1,807 in 2016). Of these, 1,054 were with the general public (1,044 in 2018, 994 in 2017 and 1,807 in 2016), 796 with health workers (892 in 2018, 800 in 2017 and 718 in 2016) and 118 with representatives of non-governmental organizations (121 in 2018, 126 in 2017 and 100 in 2016). In 2019, 136 presentations were shown on national and local television channels (118 in 2018, 111 in 2017 and 110 in 2016), 63 were broadcast by radio (65 in 2018, 79 in 2017 and 80 in 2016) and 104 were published in the press (95 in 2018, 109 in 2017 and 104 in 2016).

379. Every year national and local television channels in all regions produce and broadcast more than 1,700 public service spots on topics such as free compulsory health insurance for pregnant women, State-guaranteed medical services, the programme of State guarantees relating to the provision of medical and health care and the provision of subsidized drugs to outpatients.

380. In all health organizations under contract with the Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund posters display information about the Fund's hotline. Provincial and local television channels show crawl lines publicizing the Fund's hotline. They have been screened over 16,000 times along with banner advertisements. Over the last year some 150 have been broadcast.

381. In order to investigate the public's opinion about health organizations' performance, in accordance with the Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund's guidance on approval of an online survey of the population, a mechanism was devised and introduced to monitor patients' satisfaction online. By the end of 2019, 115 persons had participated in the opinion poll on the website launched in April 2019.

382. The Fund has published 3,000 copies of a pamphlet about the programme of State guarantees relating to the provision of medical and health care, 27,000 copies of another entitled "Contraceptives at a discount" and 1,000 copies of a public reminder about the diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis by health providers and has distributed them to local branches.

383. Violations of the right to receive health care can be reported to the Fund's 113 hotline.

Paragraph 23

Drug policy and the right to health

384. Under the new Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, which entered into force on 1 January 2019, all violations must be registered in the single register of offences. The register lists all information on the start of pretrial proceedings, the procedural steps taken, the progress of the criminal or administrative case, the complainants and the parties to criminal proceedings (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 5 (9)).

385. Therefore, all police work and steps in the investigation, including detention, are to be carried out only on the basis of a registered complaint with the investigator's authorization.

386. Various unjustified and unauthorized actions on the part of internal affairs officials in connection with the investigations are thus precluded.

387. There were no registered cases of arbitrary arrests of participants in the methadone treatment programme in 2019.

388. The law does not punish drug use. Article 268 (Illegal manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their analogues, without intent to sell) of the Criminal Code, in effect as of 1 January 2019, provides for liability only in cases involving the illegal manufacture, acquisition, storage, transport or transfer of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their analogues, without intent to sell, on a large or particularly large scale.

389. However, the Code of Misdemeanours, No. 18 of 1 February 2017 (in effect as of 1 January 2019) includes article 123 (Illegal manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic

substances and their analogues or precursors, without intent to sell, on a small scale). This article imposes penalties for the illegal manufacture, acquisition, storage, transport or transfer of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their analogues or precursors, without intent to sell, on a small scale in the form of a category II fine and category I restriction of liberty.

390. Given the high level of the fines as compared with the minimum wage and subsistence level, this entry in the Code effectively entails a criminal penalty, as most drug users do not have the ability to pay.

391. The introduction of probation reduces the negative consequences associated with the implementation of sanctions under the Criminal Code and the Code of Misdemeanours and contributes to the resocialization of drug users.

392. The lack of means for effectively treating and rehabilitating drug-dependent persons remains a serious problem. Given the difficult economic situation, the country does not have the resources to establish rehabilitation centres; due to the high cost and low efficiency of the rehabilitation programmes, there is no possibility of attracting donor funds for such purposes.

393. The Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Government's Anti-Drug Programme, approved by a government order in 2014, is now under way.

394. As of 1 September 2019, there were 24 methadone treatment sites (dispensing points etc.) throughout the country (actual number 1,052/85), including 15 attached to health organizations (666/73) and 9 in the prison system (386/12).

395. All sites have the necessary equipment and a system of video surveillance and panic buttons for the safety of the medical staff.

396. All sites keep an electronic register of patients on methadone substitution therapy.

397. All participants in the treatment sites receive methadone free of charge; in cases of mental health problems, patients receive (inpatient) treatment under the system of State-guaranteed benefits.

398. In order to reduce stigma and discrimination against people who use psychoactive substances and raise awareness about substance abuse, the National Narcotics Centre and Service to Combat Illicit Drug Trafficking have adopted a joint plan to prevent substance abuse for 2019. Public awareness activities are now being carried out under the plan.

399. By a joint order (2014) on strengthening the prevention of HIV infection in conjunction with vulnerable groups, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Penal Correction Service and the State Drug Control Service adopted guidance on HIV prevention for the authorities responsible for internal affairs, drug control and penalties enforcement that work with vulnerable groups. The order prohibits law enforcement officers from making wrongful arrests and carrying out personal searches of persons participating in harm reduction programmes (needle exchange and methadone treatment centres).

Paragraph 24

Maternal mortality

400. Maternal mortality remains high according to the National Statistical Committee (statistical compilation on women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic 2014–2018, published in 2019).

401. In 2018, there were 49 registered cases of deaths of women from complications during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, or 29 female deaths per 100,000 live births. Of the total number of maternal deaths, 67.3 per cent were registered in rural areas (see table 2).

402. In recent years, previous existing disease or disease that developed during pregnancy and was not due to direct obstetric causes has been the leading cause of maternal mortality.

403. In 2019, the maternal mortality rate in the country was 25 per 100,000 live births, or 43 registered female deaths during childbirth and the postpartum period. The maternal mortality rate decreased by 13.8 per cent compared to 2018.

404. There was a 24.9 per cent increase in the number of female migrant deaths: of the 43 cases of migrant deaths in 2019, 9 (20.9 per cent) were female migrants, including 3 international migrants (in 2018, there were 8 female migrant deaths, or 15.7 per cent of cases).

405. In 2019, compared to 2018, there was a 20.0 per cent decrease in the number of deaths of women with a parity of five or more children and a 32.8 percent increase in the number of women with a first pregnancy.

406. In 2019 there was one death at home and one death en route to a health-care facility, while in 2018 there were three deaths at home.

407. Previous existing disease or disease that developed during pregnancy and was not due to direct obstetric causes was the leading cause of maternal mortality in 2019 (14 female deaths, or 32.6 per cent of cases), followed by bleeding (10 cases or 23.2 per cent), pre-eclampsia and eclampsia (7 cases or 16.3 per cent), sepsis (8 cases or 18.6 per cent), blood clots in the lungs and anaphylaxis (4 per cent and 9.3 per cent). The rate of post-mortem examinations has decreased by 15 per cent (30.2 per cent, or 13 cases, in 2019 and 35.3 per cent, or 18 cases, in 2018).

408. In 2019, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Science adopted by joint order the Nursing and Midwifery Development Programme.

409. The following were approved by Ministry of Health orders in 2018:

- The areas of responsibility and skills sets of midwives and code of ethics for midwives
- Five standard operating procedures for midwives:
 - (1) Standard operating procedure for the active management of the third stage of labour
 - (2) Standard operating procedure for routine monitoring of the mother in the early postpartum period
 - (3) Standard operating procedure to assess and stabilize a woman with postpartum haemorrhage
 - (4) Standard operating procedure to assess the condition and stabilize women with postpartum complications
 - (5) Checklist for maternity and newborn counselling

410. Currently, the eHealth Center under the Ministry of Health and the State Registration Service continue to work together on improving the automated information system medical certificate with a view to integrating it into the automated information system of the Civil Registry Office.

411. Family medical centres, groups of family doctors and midwifery centres and general medical practice centres provide ongoing care for pregnant women, including pregnant women with previous conditions, in accordance with the approved clinical protocol of the Ministry of Health (2018) on antenatal and postnatal care.

412. The institutionalization of emergency obstetric care training programme for primary care and obstetric care medical professionals is an ongoing process. Clinical protocols and guidelines on emergency obstetric care have been developed to improve practical skills.

413. When a health professional detects a previous existing disease in a pregnant woman, he or she consults the relevant specialists and, if medically indicated, admits her to hospital.

414. In 2018, the Ministry of Health and the Government's Compulsory Health Insurance Fund streamlined the activities of emergency rooms in obstetric centres in Bishkek (Perinatal Center Bishkek, RD No. 1, KRD No. 2), which improved patient access to diagnostic and therapeutic care. As a result of the activities carried out, an effective system of services for pregnant women, women in labour and new mothers admitted to maternity hospitals has been established.

415. A nationwide emergency obstetric, gynaecological and neonatal care transport service (air medical services) is in operation under the auspices of the National Hospital of the

Ministry of Health. To improve the provision of emergency medical care for pregnant women under the national Den-sooluk programme, eight resuscitation ambulances were purchased and provided to the Jalalabad, Osh, Batken, Issyk-Kul, Talas, Naryn and Chuy provincial maternity wards and the National Centre for Maternal and Child Health under a sector wide approach (SWAP) arrangement.

416. A 182-bed perinatal centre is currently being completed at the National Maternal and Child Health Centre of the Ministry of Health.

417. In order to further develop and improve perinatal technologies, enhance the quality of medical care and reduce perinatal mortality among newborns in the country, the Ministry of Health has introduced a confidential perinatal audit methodology in four pilot health organizations: the Clinical Maternity Hospital of the National Maternal and Child Health Centre and the Perinatal Centre in Bishkek, the maternity department of the Osh Interregional Clinical Hospital and the maternity department of Osh Clinical Hospital, with further implementation in the maternity departments of the regional hospitals of Batken and Jalalabad Provinces, which will help in assessing perinatal indicators and identifying ways of further developing and improving medical services both at the regional level and in individual health care organizations for obstetric care.

418. The Ministry of Health has defined the criteria of the risk group and prepared a draft five-year plan for the procurement of contraceptives with public funds for socially vulnerable groups of women.

419. Furthermore, the National Health Promotion Centre, in cooperation with development partners, non-governmental organizations and civil society, continues to increase its ties with local authorities and religious actors on matters such as childhood immunization, family planning, safe motherhood and the prevention of early marriage, abuse and violence.

420. A referral programme (with a system of vouchers) is being introduced to facilitate access to family planning services for women from vulnerable groups in district centres and cities. The purpose of the programme is to raise public awareness and provide safe services to women once they have made an informed decision.

Table 2

Maternal mortality (Number of maternal deaths from complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the postpartum period)

Years	Persons			Per 100,000 live births		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
2013	56	18	38	36.0	33.4	37.4
2014	81	21	60	50.1	37.9	56.4
2015	63	19	44	38.5	36.2	39.6
2016	48	11	37	30.3	21.3	34.7
2017	49	12	37	31.9	22.7	36.7
2018	49	16	33	28.6	25.8	30.2
2019	43	19	24	24.8	28.8	22.3

Paragraph 25

Pollution and ground contamination

421. In order to ensure the safety of uranium legacy sites (tailings storage facilities and waste dumps) and reduce the risk of environmental disasters with radiation hazards, the Ministry of Emergency Situations is implementing several international projects, namely:

- A European Union-funded project to carry out a comprehensive environmental impact assessment and feasibility study for the safe management and remediation of the former uranium complex in Mailuu-Suu, ratified by a law of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2016.

422. Research work, a comprehensive and detailed study of the current state of the environment and an evaluation of radiological hazards and their impact on public health and the socioeconomic situation are under way. Upon completion of the project, it is planned to proceed to phase II: remediation of sites.

423. Within the framework of the Environmental Remediation Account for Central Asia, a European Union project to carry out a comprehensive environmental impact assessment and feasibility study for the remediation of the uranium mine complex in Shekaftar and Min-Kush, approved by a government decision in 2012, was implemented between 2015 and 2017.

424. The long-term goal of the project is the safe management and remediation of the Min-Kush and Shekaftar uranium legacy sites. Comprehensive master plans for the management and remediation of Min-Kush and Shekaftar sites have been prepared, including criteria and standards for remediation work, environmental impact assessment and mitigation, safety and radiation protection measures.

425. The remediation of the sites is planned under the Environmental Remediation Account for Central Asia established under the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development under a framework agreement between the Government and the Bank ratified by law in 2017 for the period of 2017–2029.

426. Priority for rehabilitation projects will be determined by the Donor Assembly, subject to the availability of funds. Ongoing European Union projects will form the basis for the operation of the Environmental Remediation Account for Central Asia. Following a donor conference in November 2019, the European Union and the United States of America, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway and Lithuania have expressed their intention to allocate funding to the account (preliminary estimates are around €17 million).

427. With the European Commission's contribution of €16.5 million at the end of 2016, the account has now accumulated €45 million for Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

428. In addition, in 2013, within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (and earlier the Eurasian Economic Community), the international target programme entitled "Remediation of the territories of States affected by uranium mining industries" was rolled out. The period of implementation, in accordance with the decision of the Commonwealth's Council of Heads of Government of 28 October 2016, Minsk, is 2013–2023.

429. In November 2019, the main reclamation works at the tailings storage facility in Kadzhi-Say were completed, and a State inspection of the site was performed in accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

430. Preparatory works (construction of temporary buildings and structures, haul road) for construction and installation and remediation work is being carried out in Min-Kush.

431. Since 2008, an inventory of obsolete pesticides has been carried out within the framework of various international projects. A total of 42 storage facilities and 3 repositories for obsolete pesticides have been identified, amounting to more than 5,000 tons. A project document has been developed for approval by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the "Demonstration of Non-thermal Treatment of DDT Wastes in Central Asia" project (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan). Within the framework of the project, there are plans for the destruction of obsolete pesticides in the Suzak A repository.

432. Repackaging and storage of obsolete pesticides was conducted in Osh Province and in the At-Bashi and Balykchy storage facilities.

(b) Khaidarkan Mercury Combine cannot be closed at present, as it must be repurposed in order to protect the material and social well-being of the residents of the settlement of Khaidarkan. The following actions are being carried out:

- The combine is working to introduce advanced technology for processing of complex ore, allowing for more than double the extraction rates of antimony, mercury and fluorite compared to the existing technology.
- The combine currently employs around 400 people and plans to increase the number of employees to 600 once it is fully operational.

- It is working with Antimony-Tash LLC, which has already built and launched a small factory to produce antimony metal.

(c) In accordance with the health regulations approved by government decree in 2016, the standards on health protection areas and the sanitary classification of enterprises, structures and other facilities must be observed when planning construction.

433. In the Ala-Too housing estate of the Lenin district of Bishkek, there has been one outbreak of anthrax, registered on 6 November 1940 on the territory of former Red Dawn collective farm in Sokuluk district. This outbreak was reported in a certificate on 20 October 1965, which stated that, from 1940 to 1946, the carcasses of animals with anthrax had been buried in this area (three horses, three heads of cattle and three small ruminants).

434. In 2005, the Bishkek City Kenesh adopted a decision to ban construction in the health protection areas, resettle people to other areas, complete the work on fencing off the cattle burial ground and conduct laboratory tests of water and soil in the Ala-Too settlement and near the cattle burial ground.

435. Sanitization of the sites is undertaken twice a year (spring and autumn) and soil samples are taken for laboratory analysis.

436. According to soil tests, no anthrax pathogen was detected and the quality of disinfection was satisfactory.

437. In order to reduce the risks from the negative impact of mercury on public health, the following actions have been carried out:

- Amendments introduced to the Industrial and Domestic Waste Act were adopted by the parliament on 7 March 2019.
- A Government decision on the management of medical waste and the handling of products containing mercury in health-care organizations was adopted in 2019.

438. The following laws and regulations have been developed and adopted:

- The bill on the amendment of certain legislative acts (the Act on the Licensing and Authorization System and the Radiation Safety Act) was brought before the parliament for consideration.
- A comprehensive plan to ensure nuclear and radiation safety for the period 2021–2024 was approved by a government decision in 2021.
- The latest (new) version of the Advanced Regulatory Information System (ARIS v2.5) accounting software has been installed with a view to ensuring effective accounting for and control of sources of ionizing radiation. Regulations on the national registry of sources of ionizing radiation have been developed.
- The Agreement on Cooperation between the CIS Member States in the Field of Waste Management of Electronic and Electrical Equipment, signed on 1 June 2018 in Dushanbe, was approved by a government decision.
- The country programme framework for cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the period 2018–2023, signed on 17 September 2018 at the sixty-second General Conference of IAEA, was approved by a government order in 2018.
- The Plan of Action to Implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was signed by a government order in 2019.
- The import and use of pesticides containing persistent organic pollutants in the country is prohibited in accordance with a government decision of 2001.
- The Eurasian Economic Commission Council on Non-Tariff Measures adopted a decision to ban the import of pesticides containing persistent organic pollutants into the territory of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015.

(f) Information on chemical and radiation safety is regularly published on the websites of the State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry, in the press and on the radio, television and Internet.

439. As part of the project entitled “Socioeconomic development of settlements located near radioactive tailing dumps in Kyrgyzstan”, activities were carried out to raise awareness among the local population and create regular monitoring of the environment, and to increase the capacity of local authorities and the community.

440. Appropriate awareness-raising activities are carried out on an ongoing basis among the population living in the vicinity of tailings storage facilities and waste dumps.

441. Efforts have been made to address the disposal of banned and obsolete pesticides and pesticides containing persistent organic pollutants by burying them in repositories.

442. In 1973 and 1980, in the Suzak district of Jalalabad Province, approximately 3,000 tons of pesticides have been buried in the Suzak-A repository and more than 1,000 tons of obsolete pesticides in the Suzak-B repository. In addition, 850 tons of obsolete pesticides were buried in a repository in the Kurgak-Ukok tract in the village of Kochkor, Naryn Province.

443. In both the Suzak-A and Suzak-B repositories, work was carried out to cover the repositories with a special film (to international standards) and put in place fencing, guard posts and warning signs. The risks of these sites to the environment and public health have been reduced to a minimum.

444. Work on the Kochkor repository is also being done to minimize environmental risks.

Suzak repositories

445. Since 2018, the State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry and ministries and departments concerned began developing project design documentation for the GEF project entitled “Demonstration of Non-Thermal Treatment of DDT Waste in Central Asia” (Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan) (GEFID 9421). All methods of non-thermal treatment of persistent organic pollutants will be studied during the development of the project document and a method will be chosen for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. As a result of the project, it is planned to destroy obsolete pesticides and pesticides containing persistent organic pollutants in the Suzak-A and Suzak-B repositories in an environmentally safe way (without incineration). The project is funded by GEF.

446. As part of this project, in 2018, samples were taken from these two repositories and laboratory tests (analyses) were conducted in the Netherlands.

447. The project also includes awareness-raising activities among communities near high-risk sites.

Kochkor repository

448. In 2019, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and GEF project entitled “Life cycle management of pesticides and disposal of POPs pesticides in Central Asian countries and Turkey” (GCP/SEC/011/GFF) was signed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation and FAO.

449. The goal of the project is to reduce persistent organic pollutants and contaminated sites and build capacity for environmentally sound pesticide management. Work is planned within this framework to reduce the environmental risks posed by the Kochkor repository.

450. Stock has been taken of obsolete pesticides and persistent organic pollutant (POP) pesticides. In recent years, the Kyrgyz Republic has started to reduce the total amount of POPs in the environment through stock-taking and repackaging of obsolete and banned pesticides stored in former pesticide storage facilities of the Soyuzselkhozimiya agrochemical services system.

451. In 2012, within the framework of the FAO project entitled “Initiative for Pesticides and Pest Management in Central Asia and Turkey” an inventory was carried out in accordance with international standards set by FAO. All data was entered into the Pesticide

Stockpile Management System (PSMS), a web-based risk assessment tool developed by FAO. The national administrator of the system in Kyrgyzstan is the Department of Chemicalization and Plant Protection under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation.

452. According to the latest data, the amount of POP pesticides in repositories and storage facilities is 2,073.7 tons, including 2,052.5 tons in pesticide repositories (in Suzak-A 1,033.4 tons, in Suzak-B 724.7 tons, in Kochkor 294.4 tons) and 21.2 tons in storage facilities (at the At-Bashi anti-plague station).

453. In the period 2015–2016, the Department of Chemicalization and Plant Protection of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation and the Ministry of Health jointly carried out, within the framework of the European Union and FAO GCP/RER/040/EC project and GEF-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) project entitled “Demonstrating and Scaling Up Sustainable Alternatives to DDT for the Control of Vector Borne Diseases”, carried out repackaging of obsolete and POP pesticides at two priority and environmentally sensitive sites (51.94 tons at the storage facility of the former Kyrgyzselkhozimiya agrochemical company in Balykchy and 17.15 tons at the At-Bashi anti-plague station).

Suzak repositories

454. In 2015, the following environmental risk management work was carried out in coordination with the State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry: fencing was restored; gates were built; the sites were surrounded by drainage ditches; the sarcophagi were covered with waterproof film and filled in with soil; and a guardhouse, warning signs, a solar power station and a video surveillance system were installed. Funding was provided by UNEP.

Kochkor repository

455. Environmental risk management work on the Kochkor repository is planned for the period 2020–2022 within the framework of the FAO-GEF project entitled “Life cycle management of pesticides and disposal of POPs pesticides in Central Asian countries and Turkey”.

Paragraph 26 Access to education

456. Under the Constitution, everyone has the right to education. Basic general education is compulsory. Everyone has the right to basic general and secondary general education, free of charge, in State educational institutions.

457. In 2017, a government decision was adopted to introduce an updated system for keeping records of school-age children and adolescents in order to reduce child neglect and develop an integrated approach to the compilation of statistics on children not attending general education institutions (2017).

458. In addition to general education day schools, the functioning network of schools with evening and correspondence courses, in which minors and adults who do not have a basic general education for various reasons continue their studies, facilitates the return of young people to the school system.

459. There are currently 1,245 children who do not attend school, including 789 children with disabilities, 258 children aged 8 who have not enrolled in the first year of basic education because of illness and 198 children who are not in school because of social and family problems (children from deprived backgrounds, children in an irregular situation, working children).

460. Studies have shown that personal, family and social factors are the main reasons for children not attending school, such as the need to earn money, parents being away for work, which results in adolescents having to look after younger siblings left in their care, various childhood illnesses, disability and different forms of juvenile delinquency.

461. However, it should be noted that, in March 2019, Kyrgyzstan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The country thereby undertook to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability.

462. In July 2019, the Government approved the Framework and Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education for the period 2019–2023.

463. Under the Guardianship Council Act, a guardianship council may be established in institutions that provide social services in the field of education, whose members are elected by parents of students of the educational institution in question from among parents, public figures and sponsors.

464. The main purpose of their work is to assist in strengthening and improving school facilities and educational resources, make capital improvement to buildings and grounds, provide the right environment for the educational process, protect legitimate rights and interests, safeguard the life and health of students and ensure that sponsor support and scholarships are used in a targeted and proper manner.

465. Parents' sponsorship of students in general education institutions is provided on a voluntary basis, and school staff may not demand financial or other material assistance from students or their parents.

466. The Ministry of Education and Science issued an order in 2018 on measures to stop the practice of informal charges and gifts for teachers during ceremonies and State examinations in schools in the country.

467. The Ministry and the Bishkek Mayor's Office issued a joint order in 2017 to prohibit admission tests and admission fees on entering the first year of primary school with a view to eliminating such fees in the capital.

468. To do away with admission fees in general education institutions, the Ministry has developed instructions entitled "Electronic enrolment in general education institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic" and introduced the project to schools in Bishkek, which has had positive results in eliminating admission fees.

469. In order to switch the school record system to an electronic format, data on schoolchildren was digitized (introducing a certification system for children) between April and June 2016 within the framework of a joint project of the State Registration Service and the Ministry. The Service registers the data received in the automated information system of the Civil Registry Office and assigns the information personal identification numbers linked to their parents' tax identification numbers.

470. January, May and August registers of school-age children are taken annually.

471. At present, the system of electronic registration for admission to the first year of primary school has been introduced in five cities in the country (Bishkek, Osh, Jalalabad, Kyzyl-Kyya and Kara-Balta).

472. Vocational training institutions are operating rather smoothly, with an increase in the enrolment of young people aged 15–17 in primary vocational education (from 9.4 per cent to 10.1 per cent) (70 per cent are men and 30 per cent women) and an increase in secondary vocational education (from 20.3 per cent to 23.1 per cent) for young people aged 17–20 years (43.8 per cent are men and 56.1 per cent women). This has had a positive impact on reducing the proportion of young people (aged 15–24 years) not in employment, education or training (NEET), from 22.1 per cent to 20.5 per cent.

473. Enrolment in higher vocational education among the population between the ages of 17 and 24 years declined from 24.3 per cent to 19.8 per cent (47.1 per cent of whom are men and 52.8 per cent women), because young people are more frequently choosing to attend vocational technical colleges and professional lyceums, which should have a positive impact on the development of a stable average working class in the country.

Paragraph 27

Cultural rights

474. Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic State made up of some 100 ethnic groups. According to the National Statistical Committee, in 2019, the Kyrgyz Republic had a population of 6,389,500, 14.7 per cent of whom were Uzbeks, 5.4 per cent Russians, 1.1 per cent Dungans, 0.9 per cent Uighurs, 0.8 per cent Tajiks and 3.9 per cent members of other ethnic groups.

475. A legal framework for the protection of the rights of members of ethnic groups is now in place, as reflected in the relevant articles of the Constitution and in a number of laws providing for administrative and criminal penalties for disrupting inter-ethnic relations.

476. The basic principles of ethnic policy are laid down in the Constitution, which states: “In the Kyrgyz Republic, all persons are equal before the law.” The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, language, disability, ethnicity, religion, age, political or other opinion, education, origin, property or other status, or other circumstances. Furthermore, the constitutional principle of non-discrimination applies not only to State bodies, but also to political parties and voluntary associations.

477. It is worth noting that the State is striving to implement a balanced language policy, i.e. to form a new generation of trilingual Kyrgyz nationals speaking the State language, the official language and a foreign language, while setting in place the necessary conditions for the preservation of the first languages of the country’s ethnic communities.

478. Pursuant to a Zhogorku Kenesh decision on 30 June 2016 on the introduction of multilingual education in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Programme to Introduce Multilingual Education for 2017–2030 was adopted.

479. In the Kyrgyz Republic in the 2018/19 school year, there were a total of 2,265 schools, including those providing instruction in one language – 1,395 in Kyrgyz, 234 in Russian, 31 in Uzbek and 3 in Tajik – and others in two or more languages – 50 in Uzbek and Russian, 49 in Kyrgyz and Uzbek, 2 in Kyrgyz and Tajik and 1 in Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Russian.

480. The Textbook Publishing Centre attached to the Ministry of Education and Science produced more than 147 titles with a print run of more than 2 million copies between 1998 and 2018. This has meant that 70 per cent of schools with Uzbek as the language of instruction have been provided with textbooks and study guides at all stages of the education process. The Government, acting through the Ministry of Education and Science, has consistently provided financial support for the staff of Textbook Publishing Centre with respect to the production and provision of textbooks to schools with Uzbek as the language of instruction.

481. In recent years, the creative team of the Centre has been strengthened with highly qualified specialists. There is currently one member of the Academy of Sciences, three Doctors and four Doctors of Sciences and a large team of contributors made up of experienced specialists.

482. The team of contributors and specialists from the Centre are actively involved in the testing and translation of new textbooks for years 5 and 6 of schools with Uzbek as the language of instruction. There has been a particular focus on the development of the new textbooks *Uzbek tili* and *Uzbek adabiyoti* for years 5 and 6. These textbooks have now been published and are widely used in schools with Uzbek as the language of instruction.

483. In the 2018/19 school year, 74.3 per cent of general education institutions were provided with textbooks, including schools with the following languages of instruction:

- Kyrgyz – 84.9 per cent
- Russian – 62.2 per cent
- Uzbek – 74.5 per cent
- Tajik – 63.4 per cent

484. The creative teams of the Centre have completed the preparation of new textbooks and teaching aids, *Uzbek tili* and *Uzbek adabiyoti*, for years 7 and 8. These materials have

been successfully vetted by the expert commission of the Ministry of Education and Science, and a trial version is expected to be released.

485. Every three years, the Centre for Dungan and Chinese Studies conducts advanced courses for teachers of Dungan studies. The Dungan language study room at the Aleksandrovka Y. Shivaza Secondary School is fully equipped. The study room for the development and preservation of the Dungan language, in conjunction with the Centre, regularly holds courses, seminars, open classes, literary contests and events marking the anniversaries of writers and poets. The study room also houses the world's largest library of books in the Dungan language written in Latin and Cyrillic.

486. It should be noted that certain measures are taken by the State. For example, the Dungan Association of Kyrgyzstan has twice been awarded a grant, under a national programme of the State Agency for Local Government Affairs and Inter-Ethnic Relations, to fund the reprinting of textbooks in the Dungan language: 3,500 copies of the book *Dungansky yazyk – Grammatika* (The Dungan Language – A Grammar), which is aimed at younger children, have been produced, along with 1,400 copies of the textbook *Nasha literatura (chetenie)* (Our Literature: A Reader), for children in secondary schools, and 1,800 textbooks on the Dungan language, for upper secondary students. The books have been distributed to 14 schools in Chüy and Ysyk-Köl Provinces.

487. The State has taken broad measures to create the right conditions for all citizens to preserve and learn their native language and to maintain diversity in society.

488. Since gaining independence, the Kyrgyz Republic has remained a leader among Central Asian countries in terms of freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

489. Freedom of speech, freedom of the media and freedom of expression remain key areas of the human dimension. The Kyrgyz Republic offers a good example of the development of the media and freedom of expression in the languages of ethnic groups.

490. The Media Act contains no restrictions on the development of media in the languages of the ethnic communities. The Kyrgyz Republic has created sufficiently liberal conditions for the preservation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, representatives of ethnic groups in the Kyrgyz Republic have a sufficient understanding of Russian and Kyrgyz to make full use of the national media, to be informed about major events and processes in the country, to obtain and share knowledge, and to communicate and keep in touch with other cultural communities.

491. Radio Dostuk operates out of the offices of the National Public Broadcaster. Its main purpose is to promote the unity of the people and inter-ethnic relations in the Kyrgyz Republic.

492. It was opened on the basis of the policy framework for strengthening the unity of the people and inter-ethnic relations in the Kyrgyz Republic, approved by presidential decree on 10 April 2013. This radio network covers topics related to culture, history, art and literature.

493. With the launch of Radio Dostuk, a platform for a broad exchange of cultural values between various ethnic groups living in the Kyrgyz Republic has been created. The radio is now running a Kyrgyz language study project.

494. The radio is broadcast online on weekdays and on weekends (Saturday, Sunday) on Birinchi Radio. The editorial staff of the radio closely cooperates with the ethnic voluntary associations that make up the People's Assembly of Kyrgyzstan.

495. The *Most druzhby* (Bridge of Friendship) radio programme is aired weekly in different languages: Kyrgyz, Russian, Dungan, Ukrainian, Polish, Tatar, Turkic and Uighur.

496. In addition, the broadcasts of the regional branches of the Yntymak television and radio company are made in Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek. The daily programming of the company is as follows: 360 minutes (6 hours) in Kyrgyz, 68 minutes (1.5 hours) in Russian and 180 minutes (3 hours) in Uzbek.

497. There are State-funded newspapers in the country: 3 in Uzbek; 3 in Russian; 7 in Kyrgyz and Russian; and 23 in Kyrgyz.

498. The following media in the languages of ethnic groups operate with government support:

- (1) Yntymak national public broadcasting company, in Uzbek
- (2) Piramida Media Holding LLC, in Russian
- (3) *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* newspaper, in Russian
- (4) *Ush Sadosi* newspaper, in Uzbek
- (5) *Radio Druzhba* of the Public Broadcasting Corporation, in the languages of ethnic groups
- (6) *Jalalabad Tongi* newspaper, in Uzbek
- (7) *Chuyskie izvestiya* newspaper, in Russian

Other recommendations

1. *Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is under consideration.*

2. *In order to promote the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and enhance their participation in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural life of society, the Kyrgyz Republic became a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force on 15 June 2019.*

499. In order to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the State is working to improve social services for persons with disabilities and older persons by improving the legislative framework, taking measures to improve the quality of social services for persons with disabilities and the effective use of available resources to ensure access to social services for persons with disabilities.

500. An interdepartmental working group on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been established by government order (2019).

501. Work on approval of the draft plan of priority measures for implementation of the Convention for the period 2021–2023 is under way. Work on approval of the “Accessible Country” programme to create an accessible living environment for persons with disabilities is also in progress.

502. Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Council for Persons with Disabilities under the Government was established to ensure cooperation between State bodies, local authorities, voluntary associations and academic and other organizations in addressing issues related to the social protection of persons with disabilities and the effective, vocational and social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in the Kyrgyz Republic.

3. *The Kyrgyz Republic continues to cooperate actively with the Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations.*

503. The Human Rights Coordination Council of the Government regularly considers and decides whether to allow Special Rapporteurs to visit the Kyrgyz Republic based on their requests.

504. There are currently no requests from special rapporteurs to visit the country.

505. At the same time, we wish to point out that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has instructed the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations Office in Geneva to issue a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

506. The move will bolster the country’s international image as an open country willing to cooperate effectively with the special procedures of the Council.