



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

UN WOMEN IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights worldwide. UN Women supports United Nations Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards.

[http:// www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

UN Women Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA)

is entrusted to operate in twelve countries:

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Despite recent decade economic growth, the EECA sub-region still faces challenges of regional disintegration, large disparities in economic development and widely varied labour markets. Some countries experience dynamic labour migration flows. Social polarization, weakening social protection, limited access of women to decision-making - all this leads to a diversified social, political and economic development landscape and influences the status of gender equality in the sub-region.

These factors and several globally-accepted indicators, determine the focus of UN Women programming choices for the sub-region. All programme areas are aligned with national development priorities and are geared to enhance national ownership and capacity to implement national gender equality commitments.

In addition, 2012-2013 UN Women EECA Strategic Plan is also based on extensive consultations with national partners in several countries of the sub-region as well as lessons learnt from past programming and evaluations. Thus, UN Women unfolds its activities around the following strategic areas:


- **Increasing women's economic empowerment**
- **Ending violence against women and girls and expanding access to survivor services**
- **Increasing women's leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response**
- **Making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.**

INCREASING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Tajikistan. At Khujand market

UN Women promotes rights of women working at city markets, cross-border traders, and refugees.
Photo: Janarbek Amankulov, 2010



Today, women represent **70 per cent** of the **1.3 billion** people who live in absolute poverty - earning less than \$1 a day. The average global gender pay gap for equal work remains important and is around 17%. Globalization is creating new and complex sets of risks and opportunities for EECA countries. The global economic crisis aggravated women's limited access to economic resources, which led to the erosion or loss of livelihoods, labour rights and social benefits. There is a concern over significant gender-driven disparities in access to production assets, including land and capital. Many women in the EECA are denied access to the labor market, and the destruction of welfare systems makes women take on the main responsibility for care duties.

Securing Women's Rights to Land in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

Over recent years, UN Women has been working on securing women's rights during land reforms implemented in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The efforts were supported by the Government of Norway and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The key objective was to drive and boost positive changes in political, legal and public domains through mainstreaming gender in ongoing agrarian reforms and follow-up monitoring.

As a result, over 2002-2006 the number of women running farms in Tajikistan increased from **2 to 14 per cent**, and more than **15,000** women and men benefited from legal advice at **75** specialized consultancy centers. The data on public requests and computed-based case registration were used to analyze the context and formulate recommendations to improve land-related laws from the perspective of human rights-based approach and gender equality principles.

National parliaments in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan reviewed gender-related amendments to specific laws that were further enacted by the Presidents.

Regular legal advice, trainings, launching of cooperatives and community-based self-help groups helped rural women to significantly expand their self-governance opportunities in order to step up their socio-economic security. The project was conducive to developing women's leadership skills, and gave avenues for their participation in local decision-making processes that had literally been inaccessible for them before.

Drawing on the outcomes, UN Women continues to promote and facilitate mainstreaming gender in laws and policies regulating women's access to economic resources, with a particular focus on inheritance and property rights as well as efficient land management, etc.

Protecting Rights of Women Labour Migrants

With rising unemployment and tougher competition in the labour market, labour migration has become the survival strategy for women and men in Central Asia to support their families. In 2010, the cumulative share of three Central Asia countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) exceeded 50 per cent of the overall official labour migration flow to Russia, **having grown threefold** over the last 5-7 years. The 2009 needs assessment of women labour migrants showed that female migration account for **25-30 per cent** of the migrants and they are more often migrating on their own, which makes challenges of their safety, economic and social security increasingly important.

In March 2010, UN Women in partnership with the IOM and the World Bank under the support of UK Government launched the Regional Migration Programme for Central Asia. It is designed to assist states to develop their policies in compliance with international labour migration treaties and human rights commitments and standards. The programme is also geared to provide labour migrants and their families with a wide range of gender-specific services, including counseling, information, and legal advice, at all stages of the migration cycle. It is crucial for bringing down

designed to raise and disburse funds required to start up business. Tajikistan has **1650** migrant families involved in initiatives geared at expanding income-generating activities and opportunities.

UN Women collaborates with local authorities, media and civil society to support their efforts to enhance tolerance towards labour migrants and their families and to combat xenophobia and discrimination in countries of destination of migrants. It also fosters development of concepts to integrate labour migrants and their families into their host communities in four pilot regions covered by the programme.

UN Women seeks to assist the EECA countries in improving their policies and laws to promote social and economic empowerment of domestic workers who make up the most invisible and vulnerable group of labour migrants. It is expected to contribute to the ratification of the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers adopted at the General Conference of the International Labour Organization on 16 June 2011 (the Convention is available at: <http://www.ilo.org>).



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