**Questionnaire on women's and girls' human security in the context of poverty and inequality**

**Introduction**

The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, in preparation for its thematic report to be presented at the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council in June 2023, will be examining the topic of women’s and girls' human security in the context of poverty and inequality. Human security can be understood as the protection from severe and critical threats encountered by persons and communities, and it encompasses economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. The human security approach means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival. Livelihood and Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. dignity.

Human security is comprehensive, multidimensional, context-specific, and prevention- oriented. The common understanding of the concept reached by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 2012 (A/Res/66/290) affirms that human security includes the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair, stressing that all individuals, in particular those living in situations of vulnerability, are entitled to an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights, and it specifically asserts that human security 'equally considers' all human rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural. As such, the scope of this questionnaire will cover the various aspects of risks experienced by women and girls living in poverty and inequality in relation to the enjoyment and fulfilment of their human rights.

In this regard, the Working Group would like to seek inputs from Member States to inform the preparation of the report in line with its mandate to maintain a constructive approach and

dialogue with States.

The specific objectives of the thematic report are to:

* Identify the causes of structural discrimination in the realization of human rights, especially lack of access to economic and social rights, due to cross-cutting risk factors stemming from both gender inequality and socioeconomic inequality;
* Deepen the understanding of the implications for women's and girls' multiple human insecurities and vulnerability to experiencing human rights abuses primarily in the socioeconomic dimension of their lives, leading to a series of other violations, including lack of access to justice and undue/disproportionate/excessive criminalization;
* Reveal the opportunities for strengthening women's and girls' human security and socioeconomic equality (e.g. obligations of prevention of human rights' violations by identifying risk factors and addressing known risks; norms and policies for countering women's and girls' poverty; norms and policies for reducing economic inequality, such as taxation, debt and redistribution measures, gendered perspective in free trade agreements, and gendered budgeting in economic and social policy);
* Identify promising approaches and make recommendations for promoting and protecting women's and girls' human security, through addressing their condition of poverty and socioeconomic inequality due to systemic gender-based discrimination.

***Relevant data***

1. **What are the general levels of poverty in your country and those specifically of women and girls?**

The poverty rate in the Maldives, as measured by the international poverty line, is 1.7% and the poverty rate based on the national poverty line is 5.4%. As highlighted in HIES 2016, income poverty is **marginally higher for female-headed households** at 8.8% compared to male-headed households (7.8%).

The multi-dimensional index report from 2020 indicates an incidence of multidimensional poverty of 28.4%. The MPI value for female-headed households is 0.156 compared to 0.136, however the data using overlapping confidence intervals indicate there is no significant difference in multi-dimensional poverty in male-headed households compared to female-headed households.

1. **Which are the levels of economic inequality in your country? Could you present disaggregated data concerning women and girls?**

Per the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2019, there is high income inequality with only 5% share of income in the hands of the poorest 20%. In Male’, the poorest 20 percent earned only 1% of the total income compared to 58% earned by the richest 20 percent. In the atolls, the share of income between different per capita quintiles is equally distributed among the mid three quintiles, with less share among the bottom 20 percent.

Unfortunately, there is no sex-disaggregated data on this particular aspect.

1. **Also, please present if available, disaggregated data on the specific conditions of such women in poverty (e.g., whether they belong to an ethnic or religious minority, are indigenous, migrants, asylum-seekers, stateless or refugees).**

Data not available.

***Risks and structural barriers***

1. In which way are girls and women living in poverty or experiencing a situation of economic and social marginalization/disadvantage exposed to threats or risks in your country? In particular, in terms of:

* having difficulty with accessing social security, health care, housing, water, food, education, employment.
* being in a situation of homelessness or experiencing social exclusion and economic 'unfreedom'
* facing violence or discrimination, or stigmatization due to living in poverty lacking access to justice and reparations for violations of their rights
  + The Demographic and Health Survey (2016/2017) indicates that tendency to experience violence decreases as wealth quintile increases.
* facing undue/disproportionate or excessive criminalization for different causes

1. What is the legal and policy framework in your country to address such risks and prevent human rights violations affecting women and girls in poverty?
   * There are social protection schemes in place that, while not specifically catered to women and girls, do have women as majority of beneficiaries including Single Parent Allowance.
2. Are there any particular groups of women and girls most at risk or conditions that especially determine barriers for women and girls to access such rights and why (such as by living in poverty, working in the informal labor market, unpaid care work or domestic work, migrant, asylum-seeker, refugee or stateless status, race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation).
   * Women in the informal labour market are often vulnerable due to lack of social protection such as pension. 44% of women in the labour force are those who are in the informal labour market, meaning a high proportion of women are at increased risk especially in situations where an external shock such as Covid-19 may occur.
3. Are there laws and/or practices in your country which differentiate between persons on the

basis of sex or gender, 1.e., between girls and boys to access education, ability for men and

women, both inside and outside marriage, to enter into contracts, own/administer property,

purchase land and/or housing, own/administer business, and gain access to credit? If so, what are they?

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1. How would you say that structural obstacles, and ongoing phenomena or threats in your country (such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, ongoing conflict, etc.) impact on risks for women and girls, particularly in the way women and girls access economic and social rights?

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1. Are there any specific actors, such as business corporations, or macroeconomic norms or policies in your country -such as trade agreements, taxation, debt and redistribution measures- that create particular or disproportionate risks or concrete human rights violations for women and girls?

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1. Is there any legal framework or policy, program or part of your work, that focuses on the role of men in preventing economic risks or vulnerabilities of women and girls and/or ensuring the human rights of women in the context of poverty and inequality? Is there any that makes visible or emphasizes the benefits for the whole of society of a gender-equal and inclusive economy?

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***Promising practices***

1. What are the concrete ways in which the State - at the executive, legislative or judicial branch - addresses the situation of women's and girls' structural disadvantage in relation to economic and social rights? Are there any particular issues and platforms in which the State protects them from the systemic threats they face due to poverty and inequality?

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1. How does your Government contribute to ensuring girls' and women's access to their basic economic and social rights in your national context? Are there particular issues, platforms or levels in which the State/your institution encourage their participation, inclusion and engagement and what role does it play?

* Ensuring women’s economic empowerment is one of the five key policy goals under the Gender Equality Action Plan. This includes actions to mainstream gender institutionally across agencies, including the Ministry of Economic Development and financial institutions. Some of the actions outlined in the GEAP include activities to increase women’s access to financial credit via loans, protecting or paving the way for women’s increased property/asset ownership via amendments to social housing schemes and pre-nuptial agreements, increased training including financial literacy skills, and measures to eliminate barriers that prevent women from entering the labour force.

1. Could you refer to legal norms and policies for eliminating poverty, as well as for reducing economic inequality, such as taxation, debt and redistribution measures, or specific economic or social policies, and could you specify fi they adopt a gendered perspective and/or if there are any specifically directed to women and girls?

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1. Could you refer to any good practice or innovative measure or initiative that has helped advance women's and girls' socioeconomic human security?

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1. How can women and girls participate in decision-making in this area?

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***Recommendations/ the way forward***

1. What concrete measures should States adopt and implement to eradicate poverty and tackle in particular the situation of women and girls living in poverty and the disproportionate impact poverty has on them?

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1. What concrete measures should States adopt to address systemic gender-based/age- based/socioeconomic-based discrimination and challenges affecting women and girls living in situation of poverty?

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1. What would be your main recommendation to advance women's and girls' socioeconomic human security?

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