

Iceland

REPORT ON

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND
PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1995)
AND THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE 23RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE
ON WOMEN AND THE ADOPTION OF
THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION
IN 2015**

Iceland's response to the Questionnaire on Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000). For preparation of regional review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in the context of preparations for the global Beijing+20 review in 2015.

Part One: Overview analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995

The principle of equality is specifically addressed in a provision in the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland (see Article 65 of the Constitution, No. 33/1944, *cf.* the Constitutional Law Act, No. 97/1995), stating that men and women are to have equal rights in every respect. Iceland has also had a special statute intended to ensure equality between women and men and their equal status in all respects since 1976. In February 2008 a new Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men, (hereinafter 'the Gender Equality Act', No. 10/2008) was adopted by the Althingi (Iceland's parliament). Included in the Act are actions to implement and monitor the policy represented.

A new parliamentary resolution on a four-year gender equality action plan was passed by the Althingi under the Gender Equality Act, No 10/2008, in 2011 (see Annex IV below). This was the fifth such resolution adopted since 1986. The Action Plan is divided into several chapters, each addressing a different focus. In the current Action Plan the chapters are: The Administration, The labour market – the Gender Pay Gap, Gender and Power, Gender-based Violence, Education and Gender Equality, Men and Gender Equality, International Activities and Follow-up and Revision. Each chapter enumerates the projects to be tackled, with a time-frame, the names of the persons responsible and an estimate of the cost involved. Altogether there are 43 projects, each of which is explained in the parliamentary resolution. The Action Plan runs until the end of 2014, and preparations for a new plan have already begun.

Iceland has included the Millennium Development Goals in its developmental work. The Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) has successfully implemented gender mainstreaming in its day-to-day work and has published a gender equality policy that is active in all its missions. Iceland itself has attained the goals put forward in MDG3 and has extensive data available to monitor these achievements. Iceland has been successful in a global context when it comes to gender equality. It ranks number one on a list of countries with the highest levels of gender equality, according to the 2013 Global Gender Gap Index published by the World Economic Forum. This is the fifth consecutive year where Iceland is at the top of the list. While Iceland is proud of these results, it is clear that work remains to be done before complete gender equality will be achieved in all spheres of Icelandic society, as can be seen in Part Two of this response under the headings *Women and the Economy* and *Women in Power and Decision-Making*. Nevertheless, credit must be given for this impressive achievement. The international recession, the collapse of the Icelandic banking sector and the economic difficulties that have followed in their wake have had a range of impacts and implications for women and men, and also on trends in gender equality.

It can be asserted with some confidence that the increased demands made after the economic crisis of 2008 to have women involved to a greater degree in government resulted in an increase in the numbers of women in politics and across the senior levels of public administration. Women now account for 40% of elected representatives both in local government and in parliament, where their numbers peaked at 43% of MPs after the general election of 2009. The outcome of the general election of 2009 was that 36 men (57.1% of the total) and 27 women (42.9%) were elected; this was an increase of 7 women compared with the election results of 2007. Never before had so many women been returned as full MPs; the previous record, after the 1999 elections, had been 35%. The results in the election of 2013 were 38 men (61.3%) and 25 women (39.7%). The gender proportions in the outcomes of recent parliamentary elections in Iceland can be attributed to the fact that it is now more common for women to be placed in the upper seats on political parties' electoral lists than it used to be and more women are now standing for election in the rural constituencies. Thus, women now have far more chance of

being elected than they had a few years ago. As is mentioned in Part One, a new Government led by Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson took over on 23 May 2013. The cabinet consists of nine ministers, six (66.6%) men and three (33.3%) women. The out-going cabinet, the second led by Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, had consisted of ten ministers, four (40%) women and six (60%) men. Until 2006, women had served only as ministers of Social Affairs, Education and Health; since then, women have served as Minister for Foreign Affairs, as Prime Minister, as Minister of Finance and Minister of the Interior; it is to be noted that they have not yet held the portfolios of Agriculture and Fisheries.

While the increased demand following the economic crisis to have women more involved in the governance of the country resulted in larger numbers of women entering politics and being appointed to senior positions in public administration, the same did not apply regarding proportions of women in the control of the business sector. The aim of having women take more part in managerial and influential positions in the Icelandic labour market has long been part of Government policy on gender equality, but progress in this area in the period 1990-2010 was far slower than was hoped. In the light of this fact, the Government introduced a provision on gender proportions in the boards of limited companies in the Limited Companies Act, No. 2/1995, in 2010. The amendment in question took effect on 1 September 2013, with the result that there has been an increase in the proportion of women among managing directors, ordinary board members and board chairmen in those companies that are subject to the Act, i.e. those with more than 50 employees; this indicates that the amendment has begun to have some effect. This is examined further in the section *Women and the Economy* in Part Two.

There are no indications that the incidence of violence against women and girls is any lower in Iceland than in the countries generally chosen for comparison with it. In 2008, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security (now The Ministry of Welfare) commissioned the Research Centre on Child and Family Protection Issues at the University of Iceland to undertake a study of violence perpetrated by men against women in the context of intimate relationships (See below in Annex IV). Preparations for this study were made in the ministry, drawing on specialist advice from a criminologist. The study was divided into six investigative modules, the first of which took the form of a telephone survey, after which studies were made of the situation in the municipalities' social service departments, covering matters including child protection, in kindergartens and junior schools, in the health services, and in the police and non-governmental organisations. The study revealed that of the sample of just over 2,000 women aged 18-80, 22% said they had suffered physical and/or sexual violence in intimate relationships after the age of 16.

The Government of Iceland has tackled the issue of gender-based violence with special campaigns and has entered into far closer consultation with NGOs and the academic community in recent years. For example, the Government approved the first Plan of Action against Domestic and Sexual Violence in 2006; mention may also be made of the National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for the years 2013 – 2016, which was approved by the Government on 26 April 2013, taking over from the plan on the same matters approved in March 2009 and running until the end of 2012. Iceland was among the first states to sign the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) in March 2011. It should also be noted that the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was ratified by Iceland on 23 February 2012 and took effect vis-à-vis Iceland on 1 June the same year. Discussion on these two Action Plans and the two Conventions may be found in Part Two of this response, under the section *Violence against Women*.

More details will be given of results achieved in the past five years in the struggle against violence against women in Part Two of this response in the section *Violence against women*, but as Iceland stated in its response to the questionnaire for the preparation of regional review and appraisals in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010, several amendments had then already been made to the General Penal Code, No. 19/1940, in order to protect victims of gender-based and sexual violence.

In 2006 the Althingi adopted amendments to the provisions of the Code dealing with domestic violence. The bill was part of the campaign by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights against violence in close relationships. The aim of the amendments was to make the legal remedies available in cases of domestic violence more effective. It was considered necessary that Icelandic legislation reflect more clearly the view of the legislature, which was that offences committed between persons in an intimate relationship are of a special nature. The new legislation introduced heavier punishments in cases where it is considered that the close relationship between the perpetrator and the victim has led to gross violations. Furthermore, new provisions were introduced, providing for up to two years' imprisonment in cases where a person insults or vilifies his or her spouse or former spouse, child or another person closely related to the perpetrator and the action is seen as constituting gross defamation. The intention behind the enactment of this new provision was to give a clearer embodiment to the provision for punishment that had already existed in the first paragraph of Article 191 of the Code. The aim was also to give individuals better protection against offences committed by closely related persons through marriage or within the family and to provide better protection against gross defamation so as to make it more realistic to achieve the procedural and political legal aims that it is normal to apply in this context.

In 2007, the Althingi adopted amendments to the General Penal Code dealing with sexual offences. Amendments were made to Articles 194-199 of the Code, covering rape and other offences against the sexual freedom of the individual (*cf.* Article 205) and also Articles 200-202, dealing with sexual offences against children (*cf.* Article 204). One of the reasons for the review of these provisions was the public discussion that had taken place concerning sexual abuse of children and gender-based violence. Increasing criticism of some of the provisions had been expressed, as it was felt that they did not provide the victims sufficient legal protection, and that they embodied outdated attitudes towards women. When the legislation was drafted, attention was given to studies which dealt both with the legislation itself and its application. Secondly, attention was given to surveys of legislation covering sexual offences in other countries, and thirdly, data from various social and criminological studies was taken into consideration. Finally, steps were taken to take note of the experience of various parties who had worked with victims of offences of this type.

One of the innovations introduced into the Code was a broadening of the definition of rape, with the result that "rape" in Article 194 of the Code now includes other forms of sexual coercion and exploitation of the victim's poor mental condition or inability to resist the action or to realize its significance. As a result of the amendment, offences in this category now carry far heavier punishments than before: imprisonment of 1-16 years, instead of a maximum of six years previously.

In 2009 the Althingi adopted amendments to the General Penal Code, dealing with prostitution, making the purchasing of sexual services illegal. Those caught paying for prostitution can face a fine or up to one year in prison. Before this change in the legislation, selling and buying sexual services was legal in Iceland. Selling sex was illegal in the country until 2007, when a change in the General Penal Code decriminalized prostitution. Profiting from prostitution of others continued to be illegal. The actual form of payment or reimbursement – whether it is made in cash, alcohol or drugs, items or some form of assistance, favour or service – makes no difference. Legislation of this type is often referred to as 'the Swedish way' and is based on the view that it is the responsibility of the legislature to stand against the sale of sexual favours as it is unacceptable to regard the human body as a sellable good. It should be mentioned that there was broad support among members of the women's movement for the criminalization of the purchase of the services of prostitutes. In autumn 2003, 14 organisations had sent members of the Althingi an appeal to enact such a prohibition in law. In a statement accompanying this appeal they highlighted the connections between the pornography industry and prostitution and affirmed the view that prostitution was a form of sexual abuse that should be opposed. Making the purchase of prostitutes' services punishable was seen as an active means of protection.

In March 2010 the Althingi passed an amendment to the Restaurant, Guesthouse and Entertainment Act, No. 85/2007, with subsequent amendments, banning commercial displays of nudity (strip-tease acts) in restaurants. This includes an absolute prohibition on the commercial exploitation of nudity of employees or other persons on the premises.

The first legislation aimed at correcting the gender pay gap was passed in 1961; in the new law, dating from 2008, the provisions on equal pay were strengthened. Equal pay has long been one of the main issues in gender equality on the labour market, and in recent years the Government has attached particular importance to reducing the gap. This is seen as a priority issue in labour-market gender equality.

As Iceland stated in its last questionnaire, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security (now the Ministry of Welfare), together with the Confederation of Trade Unions in Iceland and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers, cooperated with Icelandic Standards (IST) to produce an Equal Pay Standard. The idea was to create a system that can confirm that women and men working for the same employer are paid equal wages and enjoy equal terms of employment for the same jobs and jobs of equal value. The completed standard was published in December 2012 (See below in Annex IV). Iceland's Equal Pay Standard is an unprecedented and pioneering step in the sphere of gender equality. Modelled on the international standards ISO-9000 and ISO-14000, the Icelandic standard bears the number IST 85:2012. Adoption of the standard is optional for companies and institutions, but those that wish to receive certification under the standard are required to follow a formal procedure from an accreditation authority stating that they operate in accordance with the demands set in the standard. A special consultative team consisting of representatives of the Government and the accreditation department of the Patent Office prepared a draft regulation during the winter 2013-2014 on the qualification requirements demanded of certification authorities and the procedures to be followed in carrying out certification under the standard. These requirements are now ready, the draft specifying the professional demands to be met by certification agencies in order to award certificates on the basis of the Equal Pay Standard.

A Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages, produced by the Government and the social partners, was unveiled on 24 October 2012 (See Annex IV below). It set forth projects that were intended to promote greater wage equality. On the same occasion, a collaborative declaration was signed between the Government and the social partners' organisations, following which the Minister appointed a task force to supervise the measures set out in the Action Plan. Amongst the duties of the task force are the coordination of studies of gender-based wage differentials, the preparation of a programme to publicise and introduce the Equal Pay Standard, a special campaign and counselling programme for enterprises and institutions to work against gender-based wage differentials and the preparation of materials to reduce it. The Action Plan also stated that the Government was to raise awareness among employers and those active on the labour market regarding ways of facilitating the integration of the demands of family and working life, and that a programme was to be drawn up to reduce gender-based differences in career choice, the aim being to break down gender barriers on the labour market. These projects are, materially, closely related to the campaign against the gender pay gap, and the Minister has commissioned the task force to prepare a plan of action in the relevant areas. A plan of action on the integration of family life and professional life will be based on the report by a task force appointed to examine the matter which was submitted in April 2013 (see Annex IV below). Attention will also be given to models in the other Nordic countries, and the academic community and professional associations will be consulted. It is envisaged that the plan of action will mark out long-term measures with a particular emphasis on raising the numbers of men working in traditional women's professions and of women working in traditional men's professions. The task force has been extremely active; mention may be made of two open seminars on gender divisions on the labour market which were held on 13 and 26 February 2013. The first of these examined the position of men in what are traditionally women's lines of work (care-giving and teaching); the second examined the position of women in what have been traditionally men's occupations (computer science and technical work). The task force maintains a page on Facebook where its activities may be examined: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/launajafnretti>. Further discussion of participation by women in the labour market and the Gender Pay Gap may be found under the section *Women and the Economy* below.

The collaborative declaration made by the government which took power in 2009 stated that Gender Budgeting was to be used as a guideline in budgeting and economic management. Accordingly, a

steering committee on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was established in April 2009. This was appointed by the Minister of Finance and included representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Welfare, the Centre for Gender Equality and the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, and also the Government's expert in gender equality. The appointment of the steering committee was the first time an attempt has been made to introduce comprehensive GRB in state financial planning in Iceland. Obviously this will take many years to achieve in full throughout the budget structure. In 2010 an experimental project was begun in all the government ministries and a project manager was engaged to oversee the project. Interim reports were presented in the budget bill for 2012. In April 2011 the Government approved a three-year plan on the GRB implementation (see Annex IV below). This set forth many ways of introducing GRB during the following years. The next stage of the implementation programme emphasises the need for all the ministries to work on one principal topic according to the principles of GRB over the next three years. Each year, reports on the progress of these projects have been published and a summary has been included in the national budget bill. The steering committee has now been enlarged and it currently includes representatives of all the ministries and the Centre for Gender Equality. It is preparing a five-year implementation programme and categorisation of the gender-related effects on individual items in the budget. A bill on public finances is currently before the Althingi in which GRB is to be introduced in legislation.

For some time now, priority has been given to involving men in the debate on gender equality in Iceland. Under the new Gender Equality Act of 2008, the Centre for Gender Equality, as a special institution operating under the supervision of the Minister of Welfare and responsible in the field covered by the Act, was required to "raise the level of activity in equality issues by measures including increasing the involvement of men in work on equality". Under the Government's Gender Equality Action Plan for 2011-2014, a task force was appointed in 2011 to make proposals on how male participation in debate on gender equality issues could be increased and how men could be involved to a greater degree in equality work. The task force was also to analyse the standing of men in society and the scope they had for becoming involved based on new, changed, premises. The aim was to obtain proposals on, amongst other things, how a greater choice of education and employment could be offered to men, and also other choices of roles available to them, and to work against the stereotyped images of the sexes and increase the degree to which men were involved in family life. Attention was to be given to negative aspects of male experience and conduct, such as risk behaviour, violence and suicide. The task force submitted its report to the Minister in April 2013 (see Annex IV) with fifteen proposals on ways of involving men more in the debate on gender equality. In its work, the task force sought to strike a balance between various dissimilar views on the role of men in the debate, and the task force was appointed with a view to creating a basis for discussion between persons from different backgrounds and with different experiences of gender equality issues. The task force chose to restrict the material under discussion to five areas of emphasis. This was seen as facilitating the presentation of the material and providing a clearer framework for discussion within the group. The report, submitted with proposals to the Minister of Welfare, is therefore divided into the following five chapters: Men and Violence – gender-based violence; Men and Caregiving Policy – maternity/paternity leave and custody of children; Men, Health and Quality of Life; Men, Pornography and Prostitution; Men, Education and the Gender-Divided Labour Market.

Part Two: The critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action

Women and Poverty

In Iceland there is no official national definition of an absolute and/or relative poverty line. However, Statistics Iceland (Hagstofa Íslands) participates in the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and has done so since 2004. According to the EU-SILC standard, Iceland has one of the lowest at-risk-of-poverty rates in Europe, or 10.2% in 2009. This rate has been relatively steady over the past years and statistics for 2010 showed that the rate had dropped since 2009 to 9.8%.

Iceland is therefore a country with a relatively minor poverty problem seen in an international perspective. In 2012 the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Iceland was the lowest in Europe. The rate in Iceland was 12.7%, against 25% in the European Union. For those at risk of poverty the proportion was also lowest in Iceland: 7.9% compared to 17.1% in the European Union. The main reason for this is a high level of education, high rate of employment, both for women (79%) and men (84%), and a supportive welfare system. However, poverty still exists and has increased now due to the economic crisis. The groups of concern with regard to poverty, or at risk of becoming poor, have been identified as:

- Unemployed women
- Women with health problems
- Women who receive invalidity pensions
- Women who receive invalidity allowances
- Older women

This applies both to married and single women who have children to provide for. This is of concern and shows that the benefits available through the welfare system are not always sufficient to cover the minimum cost of living. This is regarded as a problem that needs to be monitored, especially now in the economic crisis. The cost of living has gone up in the last few years due to inflation but the benefits available have remained the same. To monitor this problem and other areas of concern the government established in 2009 a steering group called “The Welfare-Watch” (later to be called “The Well-Being Watch”) to monitor the welfare system. This group submitted a report to the Minister at the beginning of 2010 and another one near the end of 2013 (See Annex IV below) containing a discussion of the matters it dealt with and proposals on remedial action in the welfare sphere which the Well-Being Watch considered most deserving of urgent attention in the short term. The Minister has decided that the Well-Being Watch will continue in operation.

At risk-of-poverty rate by age and gender.

	Rate				2010		2011	
	2008	2009	2010	2011	CI	Estimated number	CI	Estimated number
All ages								
Total	10.1	10.2	9.8	9.2	+/- 1.2	29,700	+/- 1,2	27,700
Males	10.2	9.3	8.9	9.0	+/- 1.4	14,900	+/- 1,3	13,500
Females	10.7	11.1	9.8	9.5	+/- 1.5	14,900	+/- 1,5	14,200
18 and over								
Total	9.4	9.9	10.5	9.9	+/- 1.4	27,900	+/- 1,3	26,100
Males	9.5	9.6	10.8	9.8	+/- 1.5	14,400	+/- 1,4	12,900
Females	9.4	10.1	10.2	10	+/- 1.6	13,600	+/- 1,6	13,200
18-64 years								
Total	8.7	9.9	9.6	9.3	+/- 1.2	17,900	+/- 1,2	17,300
Males	9	9.8	10	9.4	+/- 1.5	9,400	+/- 1,5	8,800
Females	8.4	9.9	9.1	9.3	+/- 1.4	8,500	+/- 1,5	8,600
65 and over								
Total	15	12.4	4.6	4.3	+/- 1.7	1,800	+/- 1,8	1,600
Males	9.5	6.1	2.5	3.0	+/- 1.8	500	+/- 1,9	500
Females	19.7	17.9	6.5	5.5	+/- 2.8	1,300	+/- 2,6	1,100

Source: Statistics Iceland.

Education and Training of Women

In Iceland, school attendance is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16. Girls and boys have equal access to education at all levels of education. Girls and boys have attended high school in almost equal proportions since 1975 and in 2011, girls accounted for 57% of matriculated school leavers and boys 43%. The proportion of women graduating at university level has increased over the last decades. In 1975 women accounted for 24% of graduates, in 1985 the figure was 50% and in 2011 it was 64%.

The concern regarding education and training is the gender-segregated choices that boys and girls make. This is not only a problem related to education, as the workforce is, as a consequence, also highly gender-segregated. In some fields of education there are signs that gender segregation is declining. In 2011 women represented higher ratios of students in all faculties of the University of Iceland, with the exception of the Engineering and Natural Sciences Faculty, where they accounted for 40%. Within the departments in the Engineering and Natural Sciences Faculty there were variations in the gender proportions in 2011. Women formed the smallest proportion (13%) in the Electrical and Computer Engineering department, but the largest (63%) in the Biology and Environmental Sciences department. Men were in the majority in Electrical and Computer Engineering. The most even balance was in the Geological Sciences department, where 47% of students were women. In the Faculty of Education, on the other hand, women are in the majority in all departments, forming 82% of the total. The highest proportion of men (27%) is found in the Sports, Leisure Interests and Social Pedagogy department. Women are also in the majority in all departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences, though the proportion of men has risen there in recent years, from 21% in 2008 to 24% in 2011. There is a wide variation from one department to the next. For example, 99% of students in the Nursing department in 2011 were female; in the same year, women accounted for 81% in Pharmacology and 69% in Psychology.

No systematic measures have been taken at the University of Iceland to increase numbers of students of the gender that is in a significant minority in the individual departments. Nevertheless, some departments have, for example, considered designing publicity materials with pictures of both women and men in them. A report which the university commissioned stated that such measures were not sufficient as regards the Social Counselling, Nursing and Electrical and Computer Engineering departments. Other, more effective, means than those that have been used in recent years for increasing the numbers of students of the under-represented gender would be required, as the means used to date appear to have produced practically no results.

Article 23 of the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, states that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is to monitor compliance with gender equality in schools and educational institutions, including sports and leisure activities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is to monitor developments in these areas of society as regards gender equality. A gender equality counsellor is to be employed at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to monitor the application of the provisions of the Article, and give relevant parties advice on gender equality issues, including affirmative actions to promote gender equality.

The Ministry issues the National Curricula (see Annex IV below) for pre-schools, junior schools and senior schools under the statutes applying to the school level in question. These National Curricula are of equivalent status to government regulations, and lay down details on the application of statutes and regulations. They identify the aims and structure of work in the schools, how teaching is organised, what criteria and educational standards are set and the speed at which teaching is to proceed. New National Criteria were approved for all school levels in 2011, containing six fundamentals that are to underpin all teaching. These fundamentals address the ability to “read” society, culture, the environment and the natural world, and also future vision and the ability and will to influence and play an active role in maintaining one’s community, and also to change and develop it. One of the fundamentals is equality. A pamphlet, published in 2013, addresses educational equality at all levels of the school system and how opportunities can be created in school work to allow pupils to develop on their own premises in a spirit of tolerance and equality. The schools have already begun to implement these fundamentals, and it will be interesting to see how this work develops.

Women and Health

For many years, Icelandic women scored highest in the world in terms of life expectancy, but they have now been overtaken by those in certain European countries during this century following rapid rises in longevity in parts of Europe. In 2010, mean life expectancy for women was 83.7 years, which placed Iceland in ninth place in Europe in this respect. Mean life expectancy for women at birth was 83.9 years in 2012. Over the five year period 2006-2010, the average length of women’s lives was 83.3 years.

During 2011, 1,985 people resident in Iceland died (998 men and 987 women). The mortality rate was 6.2 per 1,000 inhabitants, and had fallen slightly since 2010. The infant mortality rate in 2011 was 0.9 per 1,000 live births and 1.1 per 1,000 live births in 2012.

Four thousand, five hundred and thirty-three children were born alive in Iceland in 2012, of which 2,216 were girls. The average age of the mothers has changed little in recent years; in 2008-2012 it lay in the range 29.6 years (2008) to 29.9 years (2011 and 2011). Mother’s average age at the birth of their first child was 26.9 years in 2012. One woman died during pregnancy in 2011; no women died in childbirth in 2010.

During the 20th century, the total fertility rate peaked during the early 1960s. The total fertility rate for the years 1960 and 1959 was 4.27 and 4.24, respectively. Between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s there was a steady decline in the total fertility rate. The rate has remained stable since then, at about 2.0. The total fertility rate was 2.14 in 2008 and 2.03 in 2012. One of the main reasons for this increase in fertility is the parental leave, which is examined in further detail in the section *Women and the Economy*.

The first law that permitted abortions in Iceland dates from 1935, being replaced in 1975 with a more liberal law. Now women have the right to have an induced abortion before the end of the 12th week of pregnancy. In 2011, 969 abortions were performed in Iceland, which was similar to the figures for the preceding years. This represents 216 abortions per 1,000 live births in 2011.

The number of sterilization operations carried out on women has dropped in recent years, and they now account for about 27% of all operations performed. At the same time, sterilization operations on men have increased steadily. In 2011, 192 children were born in 175 births following assisted fertilizations.

In January 2012 the Icelandic Parliament passed a parliamentary resolution calling on the Minister of Welfare (now the Minister of Health) to assemble a working group to prepare a parliamentary bill to allow surrogacy for benevolent purposes. The resolution states that the bill to allow surrogacy should firstly satisfy the best interests and rights of the unborn children involved, secondly serve the best interests, independence, rights and welfare of the prospective surrogate mothers and their families, and thirdly, serve the best interests of the prospective families the children would go to. The Minister of Health has appointed the working group to formalise a bill.

The mean annual number of women diagnosed with cancer each year in 2006-2010 was 660, an increase from the corresponding figure of 609 for the period 2001-2005. There has been a considerable increase in the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer. In the period 2001-2005 the mean annual figure was 159, while in 2006-2010 the corresponding number was 194. The mean number of cases of vaginal cancer diagnosed each year in 2001-2005 was 17; for the period 2006-2010 it was 15. Active screening programmes for breast cancer and vaginal cancer are in operation in Iceland and participation levels in them are good. The health authorities began vaccination against HPV (human papilloma virus) in autumn 2011 in accordance with a resolution passed by the Althingi in 2010. Such vaccination is now included in the general vaccination programme for children and covers all girls in Grade 7 in junior school.

By the end of 2012, the Epidemiological Medical Officer had been notified of 300 cases of HIV infection in Iceland. Of these, 66 patients were diagnosed with AIDS and 39 had died as a result of the disease. Ninety women were among the 300 cases of HIV and 10 women had been diagnosed with AIDS. Only 6 of the fatalities following AIDS infection were women. In 2011, 1,283 patients were diagnosed with chlamydia in Iceland, 784 of them women. A breakdown of the last few years' cases by age indicates that women are infected earlier in life than men; this reflects the pattern of sexual activity among the young, as it is known that girls are generally begin sexual activity younger than boys.

More women than men in Iceland are disabled. Figures for persons with 75% disability or rehabilitation assessments show that for 2011, 2012 and 2013, women accounted for 60% of the total.

Violence against Women

As has been stated before, there is nothing to indicate that the incidence of violence against women and girls in Iceland is any lower than it is in other comparable countries (reference is made here to the discussion in Part One of the findings of a survey of violence against women that was prepared for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security – now the Ministry of Welfare – in 2008).

As is stated above, Iceland was one of the first states to sign the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) in March 2011. In autumn that year, the Ministry of the Interior had an examination made of the contents of the Convention and the steps needed to adapt Icelandic legislation (statutes, regulations, implementation and procedures, etc.) so as to be able to ratify the Convention and be confident that the provisions would be compatible with Icelandic law. The Committee on Procedural Law was then commissioned with examining the amendments needed to Iceland's Penal Code in order to ratify the Convention. It is also necessary to ensure appropriate training and retraining for certain professions and promote a change of approach in society to that on which the Convention is based.

The first conclusions of a study of the handling of rape cases in the justice system were submitted to the Minister of the Interior in April 2013. Amongst other things, these showed that the vast majority (98%) of the victims in reported cases of rape are female, and the perpetrators are male. One of the features of these cases is a large age difference between perpetrator and victim. About 40% of the victims are under the age of 18, and are thus children in the eyes of the law. The perpetrators, on the other hand, are generally older, though there are occasional examples of very young perpetrators, even down to the age of 12. This indicates that the cases which are investigated generally involve a difference in standing and maturity. The study also examine factors influencing the handling of these cases by the police and by the Department of Public Prosecutions. The second part of the study was based on interviews with 20-25 specialists who are involved with the handling of rape cases in the justice system, the aim being to establish their attitudes towards the subject and whether changes are needed and if so, what form they should take.

In 2006, the Government at the time approved Iceland's first Plan of Action on Domestic and Sexual Violence, covering the period 2006-2011 (see Annex IV below). The plan was divided into two parts, addressing adults on the one hand and children on the other. In 2010 preparations began on a new Action Plan on Domestic Violence; on 30 June that year, the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Insurance (now the Minister of Welfare) appointed a committee to prepare a new plan for the years 2012-2026. The committee's letter of appointment stated that it was to give particular attention to the connection between gender-based violent offences, their prosecution and their handling in the justice system. The committee was also entrusted with the formulation of a position on implementing the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) and redefining projects in the light of the Convention. The committee decided to examine the findings of studies that had been produced on the basis of the first Action Plan, and also to focus on where the main weaknesses could be identified in the justice system.

The committee submitted its report in June 2012. No action plan was submitted to the Government, since on examination it was found that it would be too extensive and costly. The new Government, which took power in spring 2013, plans to launch a comprehensive review of the handling of violent offences, and the handling of violent offences against women will form part of that review.

As is mentioned above in Part One, a National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings for the years 2013–2016 was adopted on 26 April 2013, replacing the one that had been approved by the Government in March 2009 and ran to the end of 2012 (see Annex IV below). The objective of the last Action Plan was to enhance coordination between parties in dealing with trafficking in human beings in order to prevent human trafficking in Iceland and to study trafficking in human beings further. Furthermore, it specified actions that were aimed at prevention and education regarding this matter and aimed to ensure that aid and protection to victims is provided. Emphasis was placed on actions that aimed at facilitating the prosecution of the perpetrators. At the same time, the intention was to initiate necessary legislative amendments. The priorities included: (a) the ratification of the Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe's 2005 Convention on Action against Human Trafficking, and the legislative amendments the ratifications require; (b) the establishment of the supervisory specialist and co-ordination team; (c) the establishment of a specially trained police unit to investigate alleged cases of human trafficking; and (d) education and training of various professional groups that may encounter possible victims of human trafficking in their work. About half of the measures defined have been completed, and new ones have been allowed for in the new action plan.

Responsibility for these issues was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security (now the Ministry of Welfare) to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (now the Ministry of the Interior) on 1 October 2009, and the Minister of Justice and Human Rights appointed a Specialist and Coordination Team on Human Trafficking on 21 October 2009. The team's role was wide-ranging: amongst other things, it was expected to maintain an overview and knowledge of human trafficking activities in Iceland, to follow up tip-offs about human trafficking, recognise potential victims of human trafficking and guarantee them protection and assistance. Furthermore, the team was expected

to record alleged cases of human trafficking and provide education and awareness-raising concerning human trafficking and act in an advisory capacity to the Government on human trafficking issues. During the period from October 2009 to the end of 2010, the team examined the cases of nine alleged victims of human trafficking: seven women and two men. Seven of these cases involved trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, while two concerned suspicions of trafficking with forced labour as the aim. These cases were of very different types and called for different types of measures, including helping a victim to find support structure in her/his country of origin through the International Organization of Migration and providing extensive social support and health care for rehabilitative purposes. In one of the cases, offers of assistance were rejected. Also during this period, one judgement was delivered in which the court handed down a conviction for a human trafficking offence, while in two cases the defendants were acquitted of charges of human trafficking. Among the changes made under the last Plan of Action against Human Trafficking has been Iceland's ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000 and the Protocol to it to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (one of the 'Palermo protocols'). Iceland ratified the Convention on 13 May 2010 and the Protocol on 22 June the same year. As a measure in preparation for the ratification, Article 227 a of the General Penal Code was amended so as to bring the definition of trafficking in human beings into line with that of the Palermo Protocol, and the Act No. 72/2011, which took effect on 10 June 2011 raised the maximum punishment for offences against Article 227 a, on human trafficking, from 8 to 12 years' imprisonment. Also, under the Act No. 115/2010, which was passed by the Althingi on 9 September 2010, two new categories of residence permit were added to the Foreign Nationals Act, No. 96/2002. These are designed to guarantee the interests of victims of human trafficking in accordance with the European Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005. These are, on the one hand, a six-month residence permit to give victims time for recovery and reflection, and on the other a one-year renewable residence permit. The Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was ratified by Iceland on 23 February 2012 and took effect vis-à-vis Iceland on 1 June the same year, as was mentioned in Part One.

The target of the Action Plan for 2013–2016 is to establish an efficient and permanent system to deal with human trafficking; a system equipped with the knowledge and available measure to respond to the problem and take action against crimes of this type. The plan defines 25 measures, the main priorities being on preventive measures and awareness-raising designed to build up an efficient and permanent system to combat human trafficking more effectively and to aid its victims. These include support and protection for the victims, coordination of approaches and consultation between entities, a regular assessment of risks in connection with cases of trafficking in human beings in Iceland and assessment of the results of measures taken to tackle the problem. Over the past two years, a special allocation has been made to the police forces in the metropolitan and Suðurnes areas for the operation of a special research team to combat organised crime in Iceland. Under a parliamentary resolution passed on 11 June 2012, the team was commissioned with examining, in addition, organised crime connected with prostitution and human trafficking. A detailed analysis and recording of the extent of prostitution and its manifestations has been prepared, and the work of the team in this area has led to several investigations that are currently in progress connected with prostitution, in particular the purchase of prostitutes' services. It is planned to continue this work, and also to examine other types of human trafficking, e.g. in connection with forced labour.

The Exclusion Orders and Ejections Act, No. 85/2011, has now replaced the Restraining Order Act, No. 122/2008. The new Act includes a fundamental change, giving the police power to impose exclusion decisions and eject the accused from homes in cases of domestic violence, following "the Austrian Model". The aim of these changes is to make these resources more effective and more efficient so victims do not have to wait for up to 3 days for a court judgment as the older legislation required them to do. The provision gives victims undoubtedly increased protection since the police are able to arrest the offender right away in the beginning of the case and hold him for up to 24 hours or until formal decision has been made on an exclusion order and the ejection of the offender from the home. The process of these cases is now more efficient and increase protection for those who are victims of offences and seek the assistance of the police. The police experience is the conduct and

procedures of these cases are easier since the decision-making has been transferred to the police right at the beginning, meaning obviously a much shorter procedure than it was under the old law. So far it cannot be said that cases have increased in number due to the change in legislation: there have been fewer than 10 cases since the law entered into force. It must be noted in this context that exclusion orders (restraining orders) under the law are not used solely for the benefit of a criminal investigation: they can also be used even though no charge has been filed or where a charge and a claim of punishment have been filed. So far there has been no criminal case where the offender has violated the exclusion order.

A collaborative team dealing with domestic violence was appointed in 2013. This consists of representatives of the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of the Interior, the Centre for Gender Equality, the Women's Refuge, the Association of Local Authorities, the police and the Child Protection Agency (*Barnaverndarstofa*). Its role is to apply the coordinated policy on measures against domestic violence that was adopted in 2011. It is intended to enter into collaborative agreements on certain services and to oversee the execution of experimental projects. It is also intended to establish permanent collaboration between the social services, the child welfare authorities, the health services, the Centre for Gender Equality, the police and NGOs. The team will strive to have all the local authorities in Iceland set themselves plans of action and also examine where screening will be located in the social and health services.

The 'Men's Responsibilities' project (*Karlar til ábyrgðar*) was revived in May 2006. This is an offer of specialised treatment assistance for men who use physical violence in the home in Iceland. Such treatment programmes have produced good results, both in Iceland and abroad. Psychologists administer the treatment, the aim of which is to cater for men who have employed violence in the home and to assist them if they are prepared to seek assistance. Priority is attached to having perpetrators seek treatment voluntarily and accept responsibility for having resorted to violence. Treatment is based on individual therapy sessions, which may last for periods between six months and two years. Concurrently with these services, a special management committee is in charge of the project with representatives from the Ministry of Welfare, the Centre for Gender Equality and the Women's Refuge; the Women's Refuge's representative is the manager of the project. One of the roles of the above-mentioned collaborative team dealing with domestic violence includes defining the direction in which the project is to be developed in the future in consultation with those who actually provide the treatment, to monitor day-to-day operations and to make assessments of the results achieved. From the time when the project was revived in May 2006 until the end of 2010, 108 individuals had attended one or more therapy sessions. From January to August 2010, 25 new men came for therapy sessions, in addition to which 13 continued with their therapy sessions that had begun the previous year. During this period, twelve women attended sessions in the capacity of spouses/partners. Group therapy sessions were fully booked throughout 2010. In 2011, 32 new men attended sessions and 19 continued with treatment that had begun the previous year. Twenty spouses attended therapy sessions in 2011. The group therapy sessions were fully booked all year (with 6 persons in each group).

The findings of a new quantitative study of violence against disabled women by the University of Iceland's Social Science Institute for the Ministry of Welfare were published in May 2013 (see Annex IV below). This was the first study of its type to be carried out in Iceland, and it is seen as giving an important insight into the many manifestations of violence against disabled women, illustrating the circumstances in which it occurs and the consequences it has. It was based on interviews with thirteen women who had all suffered violence in many forms both in childhood and as adults. The aim was to describe the nature of violence against disabled women and to examine the difference between violence perpetrated by individuals against disabled women, on the one hand, and institutionalised violence on the other. It was also designed to illustrate the circumstances in which violence of this type occurs and the consequences it has, how the danger of its occurrence is linked to the standing of disabled women in society and, finally, to propose methods of preventing violence against disabled women.

In July 2013 the Ministry of Welfare and municipalities in the Suðurnes region published a brochure entitled *Is domestic violence a part of your life?* (see Annex IV below), which has been distributed to every home in the Suðurnes region. The brochure is a part of a vigilance campaign in the Suðurnes region to prevent violence against women. It discusses the different types of violence and provides information on where to seek help. The vigilance campaign is managed by the Suðurnes Watch, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare's Wellbeing Watch.

The aim of the organization running the Women's Refuge (*Kvennaathvarfið*) is to provide refuge facilities both for women and their children when the situation in the home makes it impossible for them to go on living there because of domestic violence, whether in the form of physical assaults or mental cruelty, practiced by the husband or cohabiting partner or other persons in the home, and also for women victims of rape. It is also the organization's aim to provide counselling and information and to stimulate publicity and discussion of the problem of domestic violence.

Admissions and interviews at the *The Women's Refuge* 2008-2011.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total admissions	549	605	864	671
Interviews*	419	487	746	546
Stay periods	130	118	118	107
Number women without children	81	74	79	62
Number of women with children	49	44	39	45
Number of children	77	60	54	67
Total number of clients	341	319	375	299

Source: Women's Refuge's Annual report for the years 2010 and 2011

*Interviews during stay are not included in this figure.

The total number of women that sought assistance from the Women's Refuge in 2009 was 319. There was a rapid increase in the number of women staying at the shelter from 2007 to 2008, but the number decreased considerably between 2008 and 2009, or from 130 to 118. The number of children who stayed at the shelter dropped from 77 to 60. In 2009 the women spent an average of 11 days at the refuge, seven days less than the year before. The average number of days that children spent at the shelter was 10 days. On average, six individuals stayed at the shelter every day, four women and two children. The number of admissions in 2006 was a record at that time (712) but a new record was reached in 2010 (864). Many women were admitted more than once, either for interviews or periods spent in the refuge; this figure represents 107 women who sought admission to stay there during 2010, including 54% who had not previously applied to the refuge. The number of women staying at the refuge was the same in 2009 as in 2010. The number of children staying at the shelter declined between 2009 and 2010 from 60 to 54. The average length of time spent by individuals at the shelter in 2010 was 15 days. On average, women with children stayed for longer period than those without children did, and women of foreign origin stayed longer than Icelandic women did. The average number of days that children spent at the shelter was 23 days. On average, there were four women and four children at the refuge every day during 2010. The number of interviews taken during that year was 746, which was a record. On average, each woman that registered at the centre attended two interviews during the year.

One hundred and seven arrivals were registered at the shelter in 2011 and 564 follow-up interviews were taken, making a total of 671 for the year; only twice before in the shelter's history had so many interviews been taken. Many of these represent multiple arrivals by the same women; overall, 299 women sought assistance at the shelter during the year. The arrivals of women had then decreased between years. The number of women staying at the shelter fell from 118 in 2010 to 107 in 2011. The number of children staying at the shelter rose, on the other hand, from 54 in 2010 to 67 in 2011. In

2011 the women spent an average of 15 days at the refuge. The average time that children spent at the shelter was 23 days. On average there were eight individuals staying at the shelter each day, four women and four children.

The number of women applying to the Women's Refuge indicates not so much the extent of gender-based violence in Iceland but rather whether or not the victims know of the services provided by the refuge and whether they are prepared to use them. Studies indicate that the actual extent of violence is far greater than the statistics from the Women's Refuge suggest, and it is therefore seen as a positive thing that the number seeking assistance there should be large rather than small. On arrival at the Women's Refuge, either to stay or to attend a counselling session, the women are asked the reason for their visit. Most give more than one reason; for example, mental cruelty is generally found together with physical violence. In most cases, they are also seeking support to get through a difficult phase in their lives. It is much more commonly the case that women apply to the Women's Refuge because of mental cruelty than because of physical violence; mental cruelty can be no less serious a situation. It can take the form of threatening behaviour, financial dominance, isolation and degradation. More women give mental cruelty, physical violence and sexual abuse as the reasons for their visits to the refuge than used to be the case; in the same way, more now come to the centre because of threats and persecution than before. This is worrying, as it seems that violence is assuming a harsher form, but the reason may also be increased awareness of gender-based violence and the forms that it can take.

In 2010, 526 individuals turned to the Educational and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence (*Stígamót*). The corresponding number was 593 in 2011 and 664 in 2012. On average, 90% of these persons are women. More than half of those who made use of the centre's services for the first time in 2010-2012 were aged 18-39. In September 2011 the centre opened a reception centre, *Kristínarhús*. This is intended specifically for women who are leaving backgrounds in prostitution and/or human trafficking. They are able to stay there in private rooms for short or long stays, and various services are available to them. In 2012 twenty women and nine children lived in the centre for a total of 1,148 nights.

An Emergency Reception Unit for Victims of Sexual Abuse is in operation in the Casualty Department of the National Hospital (*Landspítalinn*) in Reykjavík and at the Akureyri Hospital. The services of nurses, doctors and psychologists are available at these units, and a team of lawyers also provides legal advice to victims and assists them in their dealings with the police and the courts. In 2010, 117 individuals sought the assistance of these emergency units; in 2011 the figure was 118 and in 2012 it was 139. From the time when the unit opened in 1993 up to the end of 2012, 2,187 people had applied to it following rapes. The largest group consist of women aged 18-25, and women account for over 95% of the total. Over 70% of the cases handled by these units are classified as rapes, and in more than a third of cases, the victims say they were drunk or under the influence of drugs when the offence was committed.

Seventy-one cases were referred to the Department of Public Prosecutions in 2007 involving violations of Articles 194-199 of the General Penal Code (No. 19/1940, with subsequent amendments), covering rape and other offences against the sexual freedom of the individual. Forty-nine cases were dropped, but indictments were issued in 19. Acquittals were rendered at the district court level in two cases and convictions in 17 cases. Appeals were lodged against 11 of these judgements with the Supreme Court, which acquitted one appellant and convicted ten. In 2008, 46 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, of which 14 resulted in indictments. Seven of these cases led to convictions at the district court level. Seven appeals were lodged with the Supreme Court and it rendered acquittals in three of them. In 2009, 42 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, of which 14 resulted in indictments. Seven of these cases led to convictions at the district court level, and six in acquittals; one case has yet to be judged, as the accused left the country. Altogether, six cases were appealed against to the Supreme Court, which delivered a verdict of acquittal in one case and convicted in the other five.

In 2010, 49 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. Twenty-three indictments were issued; 24 cases were dropped and investigations were curtailed in two. Sixteen of the indictments led to convictions at the district court level and seven to acquittals. Thirteen cases were referred to the Supreme Court; in nine cases the Supreme Court upheld convictions, rendering acquittal rulings in four.

In 2011, 64 cases were referred to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions. Twenty-seven indictments were issued and 32 cases were dropped. Investigations were curtailed in four cases, and one was sent abroad for treatment. Of the 27 cases in which indictments were issued, acquittals were rendered in 10 cases and convictions in 15; two remain to be judged. Appeals were lodged with the Supreme Court in 14 cases. The Supreme Court rendered convictions in nine cases and acquittals in three; two cases are yet to be judged by the Supreme Court.

Women and Armed Conflict

Iceland has no armed forces and participates in international peacekeeping missions through contributions to multilateral organizations and the secondment of civilian experts, as part of international development cooperation. Peace-building is one of three focus areas in Iceland's Strategy for International Development Cooperation 2013-2016, and gender equality and women's empowerment are defined as cross-cutting issues. Women, Peace and Security is one of four key areas of emphasis in the Gender Equality Policy for Iceland's development cooperation 2013-2016.

Iceland adopted its first National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security on 8 March 2008 (see Annex IV below). The initial NAP was reviewed in 2011 and a new NAP has been adopted for the period 2013-2016. The NAP plays an important role in Iceland's contribution to peace-building. Before deployment, all personnel seconded to peacekeeping missions receive training on gender equality and the implementation of UNSCR 1325, provided by the National Committee of UN Women in Iceland.

Two of the five countries of emphasis in Iceland's international development cooperation are countries with unstable political situations; Palestine and Afghanistan. The implementation of UNSCR 1325 is central to Iceland's support to both countries. In Palestine, Iceland supports UN Women and local women's rights NGOs. In Afghanistan, Iceland supports the UN Women country office and seconds a gender equality expert to the ISAF in Kabul.

The Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST) was established in 2009 as a joint project between the University of Iceland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and became part of the United Nations University in 2013. The objective of the GEST Programme is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries and post-conflict societies through education and training. Its main target group is professionals working for government and civil society organizations in developing countries and post-conflict societies undergoing reconstruction.

Women and the Economy

In Iceland there has been a high employment rate both for women and men. Women have been almost as economically active as men since the 1970s. The number of people in employment in the fourth quarter of 2013 stood at 176,200 and the proportion in terms of the working-age population was 77%. Overall, the number of people in employment rose by 7,800 between the fourth quarter of 2012 and the fourth quarter of 2013, an increase of about 2 percentage points. The proportion of women in employment stood at 78.2%, their numbers having risen by 4,000, and that of men at 79.3%. At the same time in 2012 the proportion of working women was 76.1% and that of men was 81.3%.

Of those in employment in Q4 2013, 144,000 (73.4%) were in full-time jobs and 46,900 (26.6%) were employed part-time. The full-time figure had grown by 2,500 since Q4 2012 and the part-time figure by 5,300. Of women in employment, 61.7% were in full-time employment in Q4 2013; the corresponding figure for men was 84.3%. An average of 8,400 people were unemployed in Q4 2013,

representing 4.5% of the workforce. While the number of jobless people was more or less the same as in Q4 2012, the proportion was 0.2 percentage points higher. The unemployment rate in Q4 2013 was 4.4% among women and 4.6% among men; the corresponding figures for Q4 2012 were 4% and 5.4%. Among those who were employed in a particular week chosen for study in Q4 2013, the average working week was 38.9 hours: 34.2 hours for women and 43.1 hours for men. Average hours worked by those in full-time employment were 44.9 per week: 41.4 for women and 47.2 for men. The average for part-time workers was 21.8 hours per week: 22.5 for women and 21.8 for men. In Q4 2012, the average working week was found to consist of 38.7 hours: 34.3 for women and 46.7 for men. The average for full-time employment was 44.2 hours and for part-time work it was 21.7 hours.

As is stated in Part One, equal pay has been one of the main topics in the struggle for gender equality on the Icelandic labour market. Studies indicate that gender-based wage differentials have not been eliminated, even though some important progress has been made over the past year or two. Many studies of the gender pay gap have been carried out in Iceland, employing various methods. The differential remaining after all other factors have been allowed for and only gender remains is known as the “non-adjusted gender wage differential”. Studies in the past few years have established this figure at 7-18%, depending on the methods used and, not least, on the groups or geographical regions of the country on which the surveys are based. A study made by Statistics Iceland in 2010 at the request of the social partners and covering the wages of 185,000 people in the private sector during the period 2000-2007 showed a gender pay gap of 9%. While there is still a significant difference between aggregate earnings of men and women, it has become smaller over the past decade because women are now, on average, working longer and men are working shorter hours. In the 1980s, women’s aggregate earnings were only just over half of men’s; in the latest surveys, the proportion lies in the range 68-82%. Part of the explanation for this is that women’s participation in the employment market has risen steadily. Even though women are still in a minority in managerial and influential positions, they account for more than half the experts among the specially-qualified workers in Iceland. The ratio of women in specialist positions will probably rise still higher, since over 60% of the graduates emerging from Iceland’s universities each year are now women.

Projects are currently under way to eradicate this persistent problem of the gender pay gap. Chief among these are the Equal Pay Standard and the Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages which are described in Part One.

As has previously been described, it has long been among the priorities of the government to increase the number of women in managerial and influential positions in the labour market. A survey made in 2013 showed that notwithstanding this desire on the part of the government, change in this area in the period 1999-2012 was slower than had been hoped. Women accounted for 15% of managers in 1999; this proportion rose by 7 percentage points to reach 22% in 2012. Women are more common in managerial positions in small and medium-size enterprises than in large ones: only 13% of managers in Iceland’s 100 largest companies in 2011 were women. The proportion of women on company boards amounted to 22% in 1999 and 24% in 2011; in other words, little change occurred over these 12 years.

In the light of how slow a process it proved to be to increase the numbers of women in managerial positions in the business world, the Government took the step of introducing a provision on gender ratios on the boards of limited companies in the Public Limited Companies Act, No. 2/1995, with subsequent amendments, in March 2010; this applies to limited companies with more than 50 employees on an annualised basis. Article 63 of the Public Limited Companies Act addresses the question of gender ratios and an almost identical provision is to be found in Article 39 of the Private Limited Companies Act, No. 138/1994, with subsequent amendments, the only difference being the general rule that in limited companies there are to be at least three directors on the board while private limited companies may have as few as one or two. This means that all companies with 50 employees or more, on average, must comply with the law regarding gender ratios on their boards. Companies with fewer than 50 employees, on average, do not need to worry about gender ratios on their boards.

Public limited companies with more than 25 employees are also obliged to consider gender ratios when engaging managers and to send the Company Register information on the gender ratios among their managers, staff and board members. The companies to which these provisions apply were given a three-year adaptation period, i.e. until 1 September 2013. Comparable legislation took effect in Norway in 2003, but the Icelandic provisions on gender ratios went further than the Norwegian because, as has been described, they applied both to public limited companies and to private limited companies and pension funds. On the other hand, the Norwegian legislation provides for punishments for violations, while the Icelandic legislation does not. The explanatory notes to the bill which became law in Iceland explained that the aim was to promote more equal ratios of women and men in influential positions in both public and private limited companies; it was assumed that it was important for variety to be represented in the business sector and that certain dangers were implicit in the traditional arrangement by which managers were predominantly of one gender, of similar ages and background in terms of education and experience. The Ministry of Industries and Innovation is monitoring the situation in corporate boardrooms and the changes resulting from the new legislation. The latest figures indicate that the trend is in the right direction, particularly in larger enterprises, though the aim of the law, to ensure at least that at each gender accounts for at least 40% of the board of directors in companies with 50 or more employees has yet to be fulfilled. However, many companies have yet to hold their annual general meetings for the current year (2014), and it will therefore be of greater importance to examine the situation at the end of this year.

It is regarded as a priority in Iceland to ensure that both parents have the same scope for attending to their families and pursuing work outside the home, and experience has shown that one of the key factors in being able to combine professional and family life is that both parents should be entitled to maternity/paternity leave. The Althingi passed ground-breaking legislation on maternity/paternity and parental leave in 2000, which included one of the most generous paternity leave entitlements in the world. The joint leave entitlement was extended from six months to nine, parents who are active in the labour market are paid 80% of their average salaries during leave and the payments come from a specific fund, financed through an insurance levy. Furthermore, parents have equal rights as the leave is distributed evenly between both parents. Fathers have three months' non-transferable leave, mothers have three months and the parents then have three months to share as they wish. The law of 2000 has been a success, as 90% of fathers use their right to paternity leave. Recent studies indicate that the positive effects of the Icelandic paternity leave include a more equal distribution of domestic responsibilities as well as a more equal standing in the labour market in the first years following the leave. After the financial crisis in autumn 2008 it was clear that disbursements from the Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave fund would have to be reduced, and maximum disbursements were cut three times, but were raised again in 2012 and now amount to ISK 370,000 per month. Another consequence of the economic recession was that a planned extension of the total leave period from 9 months to 12 was shelved, but it is hoped to put this into effect as soon as state finances permit.

Another key factor in enabling parents to integrate family life and careers outside the home is access to day care for children following the end of parental leave. In December 2012 there were 265 pre-schools (kindergartens) in operation in Iceland and there were 472 registered "day parents" in the country in 2011.

Women in Power and Decision-making

In 2015, one hundred years will have passed since the acquisition of the right to vote and to stand for election by women in Iceland aged 40 and older; this right was extended to them by an amendment of the Constitution on 19 June 1915. It was not until 1920 that women in Iceland achieved full suffrage on a par with men. Thus, the years 1915 and 1920 are important milestones towards full gender equality in terms of democratic participation in Iceland. Universal adult suffrage and equality in terms of standing for election are part of Iceland's democratic "self-awareness", since they entail the fundamental human right of being able to have an influence on political affairs, which is one of the premises for democratic government.

Over the past three decades the number of women elected has been rising steadily: after the general election of 1979 women accounted for only 5% of parliamentarians; this number rose to 25% after the 1995 election and to 35% following the election of 1999. A slight reversal in this positive trend took place in the election of 2003, resulting in a figure of 30%. In the 2007 election the situation did not change much with 32%. In the election in 2009 women gained 43% of seats in parliament. In 2013 the trend faltered and women were elected to 40% of the seats in parliament.

In 1970 the first woman took a seat in the Icelandic Government. One or more women have been members of every cabinet since 1983. The first year in which more than one minister serving was a woman was 1999. In 2009 women became 50% of the cabinet for the first time and Ms. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir became the first female Prime Minister of Iceland. In the new Government which came to power on 23 May 2013 there are nine ministers, six men (66.5%) and three women (33.3%).

Under Article 15 of the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, care is to be taken when making appointments to state and municipal committees, councils and governing boards to ensure that the proportions between the genders are as even as is practicable, with not less than 40% of seats occupied by each gender when there are more than three members. This also applies to public limited companies and enterprises which are in majority state or municipal ownership.

In 2008 women accounted for 37% of the members of committees, councils and boards within the Government ministries. In 2009 and 2010 this figure was 40%; in 2011 it was 43% and in 2012 it reached 44%. In 2012, 148 new committees, councils and boards were appointed. The composition of each was in conformity with the law in 100 cases, i.e. 68% of the total of new committees, etc., beginning work within the ministries that year. The Centre for Gender Equality sought explanations of the appointments made to 48 committees (etc.), and examination is currently in progress as to whether these appointments were covered by the exemption provisions of the second paragraph of Article 15, which state that deviations may be made from the main rule of nominating both a man and a woman when there are objective reasons why this is not possible. In such cases, the nominating entity is obliged to explain the reasons involved. The examination has revealed that in about half the cases where appointments did not meet the requirements of Article 15, the exemption provisions applied.

The proportion of women as permanent secretaries in the ministries was 17% in 2006, 33% in 2009 and 50% in 2013. The proportion of women among directors of government bodies was 25% in 2006, 29% in 2008 and 33% in 2013.

Local council elections were held in all 76 municipalities in Iceland on 29 May 2010. According to *Hagtíðindi*, the statistical reports of Statistics Iceland, 112,233 men stood as candidates (49.7%) and 113,622 women (50.3%). In 58 municipalities the election was by proportional representation and in them 185 candidate lists were fielded. In four of these municipalities, candidates were elected without opposition as only one list was fielded. There were 2,846 candidates who stood for election in these 58 municipalities; 1,513 (53.2%) were men and 1,333 (46.8%) were women. On the whole, the balance between the genders was more equal in 2010 than it had been before, where the proportion of women fielded by the political parties ranged between 46% and 51%, with 46% on the lists of other entities.

The proportion of women among the candidates had never been greater: in the previous municipal council elections, in 2006, it had been 43.8%. There were both male and female candidates in all 59 of the municipalities where election was by proportional representation. In nine municipalities there were equal numbers of candidates of each gender; in 2006 this had been the case in eight. Of all candidate lists, irrespective of where they were fielded, 56 (30.3%) included as many women as men in 2010, against only 15 in 2006. Men were in a majority among the candidates in 41 municipalities, with women forming 40-49% in 37 of them and 30-39% in the remaining four. In eight municipalities women were in the majority of candidates. There were more women than men on 34 lists (18.4% of the total), and more men than women on 95 lists (51.6% of the total). The ranking of candidates on the lists in the local council elections of 2010 was such that men headed the lists in 139 cases (75%) and women in 46 cases (25%). On the other hand, women candidates occupied second place on 115 lists (62%) and men on 70 (38%).

In the 2010 local council elections, 512 principal representatives were elected to the municipal councils. Of these 308 (60.2%) were men and 204 (39.8%) were women. Never before have so many local councillors been women; the previous record, of 35.9%, was in the 2006 elections. When the statistics are analysed from the point of view of numbers of inhabitants in the various local government areas, it appears that the proportion of women is highest (45%) in areas with 300-999 inhabitants where elections went ahead on the basis of candidate lists. In areas with more than 1,000 inhabitants, the proportion of women is found to be 39%; in areas of 299 or fewer inhabitants, the proportion is 34%. Women were elected in larger numbers where elections in 2010 proceeded on the basis of candidate lists than where all inhabitants are, in effect, candidates unless they specifically decline election. In the 59 areas where such list elections were held, 59.1% of those returned were men and 40.9% were women. In 18 areas, home to just over 1% of the electorate, elections were not based on lists (i.e., all inhabitants were potential candidates). There, 94 councillors were elected: 61 men (64.9%) and 33 women (35.1%). The highest ratios of men were in municipalities with 299 inhabitants or fewer and where everyone was potentially a candidate: 67.1%. Iceland's next local government elections are scheduled for spring 2014.

Iceland's presidents are elected directly by the electorate. The first presidential election was held in 1952, and the most recent one in 2012. Twenty-two people have stood for election, including six women. Five individuals have served as President, including one woman, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, who was elected with 33% of the vote in 1980, becoming the first elected female president in the world. She served as President for 16 years, from 1980 to 1996. In the election in 2012 there were six candidates, three of whom were women. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was elected with 52.8% of the vote. He is currently serving his fifth term as President. The candidate who received the next largest number of votes, 33.2%, was Þóra Arnórsdóttir.

A special Constitutional Assembly was held in Iceland in 2010. Under the Constitutional Assembly Act No. 90/2010, the President of Iceland was, in collaboration with the Constitutional Committee, to call a Constitutional Assembly to revise the Constitution of the Republic of Iceland. Elections to the Constitutional Assembly were held on 27 November 2010 and the assembly was to meet in February 2011. The assembly, consisting of 25 people standing as individuals and chosen by the electorate with the whole country as a single constituency for the purpose of the election, was to work for 2-4 months and prepare a draft revision of the Constitution, taking into account the outcome of a national consultative meeting on the Constitution that had been held on 6 November 2010. That meeting had been attended by 950 people from all over the country, aged between 18 and 91 with almost exactly equal gender balance in the group. Provision was made in the Constitutional Assembly Act for some flexibility in the number of members; if either gender were underrepresented in the election results, the number could be raised from 25 to as many as 31 to secure a better balance. In practice, it did not prove necessary to do so, however. Altogether, 522 people stood for election to the Constitutional Assembly, 364 (70%) men and 159 (30%) women. The average age of all candidates, 47, was the same for both women and men. The oldest man was 80 and the youngest 19; the oldest woman was 66 and the youngest 22. The outcome of the election was that 15 men (60%) and ten women (40%) were elected.

Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women

The Centre for Gender Equality.

The Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008 (see Annex IV below) defines the promotion of gender equality and details responsibility. The Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is in charge of the application of the Act. The Centre for Gender Equality is a special institution under the control of the Minister that handles administration in this field, and its tasks include:

- a. monitoring the application of the Act,
- b. supervising educational and informative activities,
- c. advising government authorities, institutions, companies, non-governmental organizations and individuals on gender equality issues,

- d. making suggestions and proposals to the Minister, the Gender Equality Council and other government authorities on measures to achieve gender equality,
- e. making proposals on affirmative action,
- f. increasing the level of activity in gender equality issues, i.e. by greater involvement of men in gender equality work,
- g. monitoring gender equality developments in society, i.e. by gathering information and initiating research,
- h. providing assistance to gender equality committees, gender equality counsellors and gender equality representatives of local authorities, institutions and companies,
- i. working at preventive measures against gender-based violence in collaboration with other government authorities and organizations specifically involved in such preventive measures,
- j. working against gender-based wage discrimination and other forms of gender discrimination in the labour market,
- k. mediating in cases of dispute referred to the Centre for Gender Equality on the basis of the Act,
- l. changing traditional gender images and working against negative stereotyping regarding the roles of women and men,
- m. carrying out other tasks in accordance with the aims of the Act in accordance with further decisions by the Minister.

Institutions, enterprises and non-governmental organizations are obliged to provide the Centre for Gender Equality with all types of information necessary for its operations. If the parties concerned do not comply with a request for information by the Centre for Gender Equality within a reasonable time limit, the Centre may decide that they are to pay *per diem* fines until the information and materials have been provided. If the Centre for Gender Equality considers that the information and materials in question further substantiate the suspicion that a violation of the Act has taken place, it shall request the Gender Equality Complaints Committee to examine the matter, and consequently inform the institution, enterprise or non-governmental organization concerned in writing of its decision to do so.

The Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality

A Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality has been functioning in accordance with a Government resolution passed on 15 September 2009. The Prime Minister is the chairman of the committee; other members are the Minister of Welfare, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of the Interior. The aim of the committee is to strengthen the framework for gender equality issues in the Government ministries in order to ensure that they will be discussed by a broad group of ministers. Following the change of government in 2013, the following now form the committee: The Prime Minister (chairman), the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Minister of the Interior.

The Gender Equality Complaints Committee

The Minister of Social Affairs and Housing appoints three members of the Gender Equality Complaints Committee for periods of three years at a time in accordance with nominations by the Supreme Court. They shall all be qualified lawyers, and at least one of them shall have expert knowledge of gender equality issues. The chairman and vice-chairman shall meet the conditions set for serving as a district court judge. The task of the Gender Equality Complaints Committee is to examine cases and to deliver a ruling in writing on whether provisions of the Act have been violated. The rulings of the Complaints Committee are binding for the parties to each case. The parties may refer the Committee's rulings to the courts.

Individuals, enterprises, institutions and non-governmental organizations, either in their own name or on behalf of their members who consider that they are the victims of violations of the Act, may submit their case to the Gender Equality Complaints Committee. The Centre for Gender Equality may request that the Gender Equality Complaints Committee examine a case.

Cases shall be submitted to the Complaints Committee in writing within six months of the date when the alleged violation of the Act was known, or from the time when a situation regarded as an infringement of the Act came to an end, or from the time when the person concerned became aware of the alleged violation. If reasoning is sought on the basis of the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, the period for submission shall be reckoned from the time when the reasoning has been obtained. In special circumstances, the Complaints Committee may decide to examine a case even though the time limit defined above has passed, though in no case exceeding one year later.

The Complaints Committee may, after consulting the plaintiff, send the case to the Centre for Gender Equality for mediation.

The Complaints Committee received eight cases in 2011, four of which involved engagement in employment; one involved pay and terms of service, one involved dismissal, one involved a refusal to allow the applicant to take part in a trip for housewives and one involved the granting of a 10% discount to women. In three cases, the committee considered no violation of the Gender Equality Act had taken place; in two, it found that violations had taken place. One case was dropped and two were dismissed.

Twelve cases were submitted to the Complaints Committee in 2012. Four concerned engagements in employment, one involved appointment to an official position, one involved a situation in which women, and not men, were offered employment, two concerned wages and terms and four involved discrimination in registration in the National Register. The committee's conclusion was that in four cases no violation of the Gender Equality Act had taken place; in three, violations were considered to have taken place. Two complaints were withdrawn and three were dismissed.

Five cases were submitted to the Complaints Committee in 2013. Three of them concerned engagement in employment; one concerned both dismissal from employment and engagement in two positions and one involved wages and terms of service. In three cases, the committee found that no violation of the Gender Equality Act had taken place; in the other two, violations were found to have taken place.

The Gender Equality Complaints Committee received two cases by April 2014, which are still under examination.

The Gender Equality Council

After each parliamentary election, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is to appoint a Gender Equality Council consisting of eleven representatives. The Minister appoints the chairman without nomination; two representatives are nominated jointly by the employees' associations; two are nominated jointly by the employers' associations; two are nominated jointly by the Icelandic Feminist Association, the Federation of Icelandic Women's Associations and the Icelandic Women's Rights Society; one is nominated jointly by the Women's Refuge, (*Kvennaathvarf*) and the Educational and Counselling Centre for Victims of Sexual Violence (*Stígamót*); one is nominated by the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Iceland (RIKK); one is nominated by the Association for Parental Equality and one is nominated by the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland. Alternates are to be appointed in the same way.

The Gender Equality Council works in close contact with the Centre for Gender Equality and advises the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing and the Director of the Centre for Gender Equality on professional policy-making on gender equality issues. Particular emphasis is placed on promoting gender equality in the labour market and on the integration of work and family life.

The Gender Equality Council prepares the Gender Equality Forum in consultation with the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing and present a report on its work to the forum.

The Gender Equality Forum

The Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is to call a Gender Equality Forum within a year of parliamentary elections, and again two years thereafter. The Gender Equality Forum discusses gender equality issues; at its beginning the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing presents a report on the situation and developments in gender equality issues. The Minister's report includes an assessment of the status and success of the projects covered by the current gender equality action program adopted as a parliamentary resolution and a review of the situation and developments in gender equality issues in principal spheres of society. The Gender Equality Council prepares a summary of the discussions at the forum, and delivers it to the Minister. Other tasks of the forum are set by the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing after receiving proposals from the Gender Equality Council.

The forum is open to all; the Gender Equality Council invites members of the Althingi (the Parliament of Iceland), representatives of national and local government institutions, including their gender equality representatives, and representatives of the social partners and non-governmental organizations with gender equality issues on their agenda.

The last Gender Equality Forum, the third since the commencement of the Act in 2008, was held on 1 November 2013. At it, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing presented a report on the situation and trends in gender equality issues (see Annex IV below) as she is obliged to do according to the law.

Parliamentary Resolution on a Gender Equality Action Plan.

Within one year following a general election, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is to present to the Althingi a motion for a parliamentary resolution on a four-year gender equality action plan after having received proposals made by the ministries, the Centre for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Council. Discussions at the Gender Equality Forum are also to be taken into account. The Gender Equality Action Plan is to include projects intended to secure gender equality in Icelandic society. The actions planned, and the estimated funding for projects, are to be itemized in the programme. The above-mentioned report presented by the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing on the situation and developments in the field of gender equality to the Gender Equality Forum is to accompany the proposed parliamentary resolution. Further discussion of the current Action Plan can be found in Part One.

The local authorities' gender equality committees

Following local government elections, the municipalities are to appoint gender equality committees to examine gender equality issues within their municipality. These committees advise the local governments on matters with a bearing on gender equality, and monitor and take initiative on measures, including affirmative action, to ensure the equal status and equal rights of women and men within their municipality. Each gender equality committee is to supervise the compilation of a four-year gender equality programme stating, amongst other things, how work on the integration of gender equality considerations in all spheres is to proceed, together with an action plan on how to redress imbalance in the positions of women and men within the municipality. The gender equality programmes are to be submitted for approval by the relevant local council not later than one year after local council elections.

Gender equality representatives

Each ministry is required to have a gender equality representative with an expert knowledge of gender equality issues. The gender equality representative deals with, and monitors, gender equality work in the policy areas of the ministry in question and its institutions, i.e. the expert is required to work on the integration of gender-equality considerations in the fields administered by the ministry. Each year, the gender equality representatives send a report on the status and developments in gender equality issues in the policy areas of their respective ministries to the Centre for Gender Equality.

Gender equality counsellors

The Minister of Social Affairs and Housing may engage a gender equality counsellor to work temporarily on gender equality issues in a specific field and/or in a particular region of the country.

Also, a gender equality counsellor shall be employed within the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and shall monitor the application of the provisions of the article on education and schooling in the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008, that gives relevant parties advice on gender equality issues, including affirmative action to promote gender equality.

Participation in government and municipal committees, councils and boards

When appointments are made to national and local government committees, councils and boards, care shall be taken to ensure as equal representation of men and women as possible, and not less than 40% of either gender when there are more than three representatives in a body. This shall also apply to the boards of publicly-owned limited companies and enterprises in which the state or a municipality is the majority owner. When nominations are made to national and local government committees, councils and boards, a man and a woman shall be nominated. The nominating party may deviate from this condition when, due to objective circumstances, it is not possible to nominate both a man and a woman. In such cases, the nominating party shall explain the reasons for this.

Executive Committee on Gender Wage Equality.

In December 2011 the Minister of Welfare (now the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing) appointed an Executive Committee on Gender Wage Equality, the role of which is to supervise and coordinate measures designed to reduce gender-based wage discrimination in accordance with item 1 of Point 12 in the Four-year Plan of Action on Gender Equality which was passed by the Althingi on 19 May 2011. Amongst other things, the committee was entrusted with coordinating measures to reduce gender-based wage discrimination and to work on the production of a plan of action, including a time-scheme for its implementation. The plan was presented on 24 October 2012, and is discussed in further detail in Part One.

In accordance with the Action Plan, a committee is in operation in the Ministry of Finance; it consists of two representatives from the Association of University Graduates, two from the Union of State and Municipal Employees and the same number from the Association of Heads of Public Institutions and two from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. The committee is charged with four main functions. Firstly, it is to examine data in the state's wage system and identify the explanatory variables that can be regarded as relevant in explaining the gender pay gap. Secondly, it is to examine the structure of collective wage agreements with a view to establishing how far the gender pay gap can be attributed to features in the system. Thirdly, the committee is to prepare guidelines for heads of state institutions on how to respond if an examination of wages paid reveals a gender pay gap, and fourthly, it is to act in an advisory capacity to the Ministry of Welfare in preparing a schedule for publicising the Equal Pay Standard.

One of the aims of establishing the committee is to have an examination made of the registration of jobs, educational qualifications and length of working experience recorded in ORRI, the state human resources and data system and assess the explanatory variables that may be recognised as relevant, and also whether other relevant explanations should be given consideration when analysing the gender pay differentials. Work on classifying jobs in the public sector is not yet complete, but over the past year or two the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs has, in collaboration with the National Financial Management Agency and Statistics Iceland, worked on the ÍSTARF classification system, registering the jobs worked in state entities, which has also improved registration in ORRI. The ÍSTARF registration system is a prerequisite for undertaking a comprehensive and coordinated study of wages in the public and private sector in Iceland; it is planned that civil servants will be included in the surveys by Statistics Iceland in future. Categorisation in the ÍSTARF system is also necessary in order to be able to make international comparisons regarding jobs and wages.

Other institutional mechanisms

Mention should also be made of the following centres/institutions.

EDDA – Centre of Excellence is a forum for contemporary critical studies in the fields of sociology, politics and culture with an emphasis on equality and variety. It is one of three projects that were granted financial support under a programme of the Science and Technology Council in 2009. A review of its activities for the years 2009-2012 was made by a group of overseas experts at the end of 2013, as a result of which it was decided to extend the support grant for another four years. EDDA has made a priority of multi-disciplinary studies and has established a broad network of contacts with universities and research institutes both in Iceland and abroad. EDDA has also organised conferences and other events and sought to exert an influence on public policy-making. Over the past three years, EDDA has supported many research projects in the field of gender equality and has organised more than 40 events in the fields defined as its focus, including conferences, seminars and lectures. Further information about the centre and its gender equality studies can be found at www.edda.hi.is

MARK, a centre for research into variety and gender studies, is a forum for study and awareness-raising in the field of human rights, discrimination, equality, gender studies and variety in the University of Iceland's Faculty of Social Sciences. MARK was established in 2011 for the purpose of carrying out, and encouraging studies in these fields, establishing contact with academics and research centres both in Iceland and abroad, training students in research techniques, forging closer links between teaching and research, providing counselling and research-related services and improving awareness of the fields under study. The centre also encourages policy-making, discussion and development in the field through collaboration with public bodies, the private sector and other fora in public life in Iceland. MARK organises lectures, seminars and conferences, both in its own name and in collaboration with other entities both within and outside the University of Iceland. MARK has a five-man committee which works together with a consultative council composed of interested persons and players in the centre's fields of interest who provide advice and support to the board. The centre's homepage is: www.mark.hi.is

RIKK, the Centre for Women's and Gender Research at the University of Iceland is a multi-disciplinary institution that has been in operation since 1991 and is a leader in the field of women's studies, gender studies and equality issues in Iceland. Its main aim is to promote research in the field of gender studies and to publicise and disseminate research findings. It does this by means of holding courses, lectures and conferences and by issuing publications. RIKK is intended to provide information and advice on women's and gender studies, cultivate contact with research bodies both in Iceland and abroad and support and encourage the pursuit of women's studies in the various departments and faculties of the University of Iceland. For further information, see: www.rikk.hi.is

Women and the Media

The media have been a male-dominated field for a long time. The number of female members of the Association of Icelandic Journalists has been growing in the last decades. Women accounted for 18% of its membership in 1980 and 30% in 1995; in 2007 the figure was 36% and in 2011 it was 37%. Despite this increase, few women have held the positions of News Editors and Chief Editors of daily newspapers. No woman has been the manager of a TV station and only a few women have been TV News Editors.

Great changes have taken place on the Icelandic media market since the economic crisis which struck in 2008. The number of days on which newspapers were published was reduced, many journalists lost their jobs, changes occurred in the ownership of the media and their operations were restructured. A study made in 2012 showed that seven of every ten journalists and news broadcasters were male, and that the typical Icelandic journalist/news journalist was 42 years old, male, with just under 14 years' working experience in the profession. Female journalists, on the other hand, were typically seven years younger, with just over eight years' experience on average. Male journalists had slightly higher wages, though the difference was not significant, but female journalists were twice as likely to hold a master's degree and far more likely to have pursued specialised studies in Journalism in the course of their education.

Another study, carried out in 2013, showed that female journalists wrote far fewer news items than did their male counterparts. Only 23% of the news items examined were written by women, and news reports by women were less likely to appear on the front page. It was also found that there was a substantial difference regarding what men and women wrote about. Reports on sport, business and politics were written almost exclusively by men: 97% of sports news reports, 95% of business and economic news and nearly 92% of coverage about politics. Women, on the other hand, wrote just over half of the reports examined that dealt with cultural issues and health during the period under study and 66% of the items that were classified as “entertainment” and “gossip”. Thus, women’s presence in the media seems not to have made any advances in recent years: as was described in the last report on the status and trends in gender equality in February 2011, the *Global Media Monitoring Project* (GMMP) made a study of the shares contributed by each gender to the world’s media on one particular day. One hundred and eight countries participated in the study, in which the news media were scrutinised on 10 November 2009. The outcome of this study in Iceland was published in October 2010, and the conclusion was that women were in a minority (27%) in the media both as regards the personnel of the media and the persons with whom journalists spoke or whom they wrote or spoke about.

As has been established in studies, female journalists are more likely to interview, and write about, other women and consequently, women as a part of society will automatically be less conspicuous if few journalists working on the media are women. With less equal coverage of the sexes, and by creating and maintaining stereotyped gender models, the media play their part in maintaining the gender imbalance in society.

Women and the Environment

In international negotiations on measures to combat climate change, Iceland has argued for gender equality and increased participation by women in decision-making and response measures, and it has achieved considerable success in this area. For example, at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha, Qatar, at the end of 2012, a theme day dedicated to gender equality was held for the first time. A special decision was approved at the session covering gender equality, dealing, amongst other things, with improved gender balance in the institution involved in the Convention, and gender equality issues were established as a permanent feature of the agenda of future sessions of the Conference. The European Union submitted the draft proposal for the decision, but Iceland played a large part in its subsequent handling. At the Doha session Iceland, together with Norway, Denmark and Uganda, mounted a successful side event designed to integrate gender equality considerations with governmental work on climate change. The aim is, primarily, to include gender equality considerations in measures to combat climate change and in measures to adjust to climate change and improve people’s ability and skills in order to tackle challenges in the spheres of gender equality and climate change.

Iceland is only just beginning to examine issues related to climate change from the point of view of gender equality. In the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, the Government’s Action Plan on Climate Change of 2010 was analysed in the light of gender equality and it was found that the measures proposed tended to create employment opportunities primarily in traditionally male-dominated spheres such as agriculture and work with various types of machinery and equipment. It was also found that women’s ecological footprint is shallower than that of men owing to their living a far more environmentally-friendly lifestyle. Women use more environmentally-friendly modes of transport than men and generally live a more sustainable lifestyle. These are among the findings of a new interim report on gender influences on climate-change issues.

The report notes that the measures adopted by the Government of Iceland to combat and adapt to climate change are intended to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, which would eventually be of benefit to all, i.e. both men and women. On the other hand, most of the gender-equality aims of the plan are based on the present standing of the sexes. The difference in their standing frequently reflects the lack of equality in their status on the employment market, gender-based wage differentials and the unequal burdens they carry as regards caring for children and running the home. The report stresses that in

order for both genders to be able to make their contribution towards environmental protection and measures to combat climate change and change consumption to a more sustainable pattern, particular attention must be given to men and their lifestyle and consumption habits. The report is a part of the programme of gender-responsive budgeting that has been discussed above.

The Girl-child

Under the Legal Competence Act, No. 71/1997, a person becomes legally competent on attaining the age of 18 years. The Child Protection Act, No. 80/2002, and the Children Act, No. 76/2003, also identify “child” as an individual under the age of 18. Iceland has furthermore ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child under Act No. 19/2013, in which children are identified as persons under the age of 18.

Infant mortality is very low in Iceland. Female foetuses are not aborted in greater numbers than male foetuses, child marriage is not practised and girls have the same access to education as boys. In 2005 the Althingi adopted amendments to the General Penal Code prohibiting circumcision of women or girls in childhood.

The main legal provisions that aim at protecting children from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation are the following:

- (i) The General Penal Code, No. 19/1940.
- (ii) The Child Protection Act, No. 80/2002.
- (iii) The Children Act, No. 76/2003.
- (iv) The Act on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, No. 19/2013, which made the UN CRC an integral part of the Icelandic legal code.

As is stated in Part One, a prerequisite for the ratification of the Lanzarote Convention was the passing of the amendments to the General Penal Code in June 2012 regarding child prostitution, pornography and trafficking in order for the statute of limitation only to begin to run when the child reaches the age of 18, irrespective of the child’s age when the violation takes place. The amendments also aimed to strengthen the penalization of sexual violence against children, and included heavier penalties when violence involves children under the age of 15.

The first part of the plan of action on violence in homes and sexual abuse, which was approved by the government in September 2006 and is discussed in the section *Violence against women* above, covered measures that the government intended to take in order to prevent violence against children, and also to assist those who have suffered violence and abuse. The fundamental assumption is that it is always the adult who is responsible if a child suffers violent treatment, and that the perpetrator should suffer the consequences, since this type of conduct cannot be tolerated. The projects in the plan of action are based on this, and are therefore primarily concerned with adults. The action plan also embraces measures aimed at providing individually-tailored treatment for children who have suffered violence in the home or sexual abuse. These include an emphasis on supporting and developing the work of the Children’s House (*Barnahús*), publicizing its services and seeking ways to do more to meet the needs of children who have suffered violence or abuse of any type. Last but not least, emphasis is placed on enabling the perpetrators of violence against children to undergo treatment in order to break the pattern of repeated violence, and on treatment services for children with inappropriate sexual behaviour.

In April 2012, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Ministry of Welfare signed a 3-year agreement on a collaborate project aimed at increasing awareness and developing competence in dealing with sexual offences against children. The main goals of this project, referred to as the *Awareness Awakening (Vitundarvakningin)*, are to promote interdisciplinary cooperation and to launch social awakening by dissemination of information about sexual offences against children amongst children themselves as well as among people who have direct contact/communication with children in connection with their work. This is managed by a Task Force with representatives from the respective Ministries which has received separate budget for this purpose. It should be noted that this effort is directly inspired by the Council of Europe’s “*One in five*”

Campaign and the ratification of the Lanzarote Convention. The main components of this project include the following.

An educational puppet theatre called “The Kids on the Block”, for children in the early years of elementary school. This is an interactive programme that is designed to educate children about personal safety, sexual abuse, the importance of telling someone they trust about it, and services available. A school counsellor, a social worker, a nurse or a psychologist is present at every performance. Following the show, a letter is sent to parents or guardians of all the children in the audience with information on how further preventive material and information for grown-ups can be obtained. The letter has been translated into the six foreign languages that are most common in Iceland. The programme has been implemented in collaboration with *Blátt Áfram* (“Straight Forward”) an Icelandic grassroots child sexual abuse prevention organization and the plan is to present it for 7-year-old children in all elementary schools in the country. Already 320 performances have taken place; typically three shows are needed for each school.

A short film, “*Get a Yes,*” for children in secondary schools. This film addresses the line between healthy sex and sexual violence as well as the harmful effects of pornography. *Get a Yes* was premiered on the 30 January 2013 in all Icelandic schools for 15-18 years old pupils. The previous day it was featured on television at prime time and followed up in the media over the following days. A teacher’s guide was produced to accompany the film. It can also be used as instruction for adults on how to discuss these issues with young people. The film is available with subtitles in seven languages. The film is available for everyone on the website <http://faduja.is> which contains information and guidelines for teachers and guardians, to be used in discussion about the main themes in the film. The impact of the film has already been evaluated and the results are very positive.

A short film, “*Stand-by-yourself,*” for children in the middle classes of elementary school. (This is still in the making). The target-group and aims of the film are similar to those in the films mentioned above.

In April 2013 the Government approved a multi-dimensional Action Plan on the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation and on services to child victims of these offences. This Action Plan contains 27 defined actions of which 15 are defined as priority actions. These actions are aimed at further coordination and collaboration between the various agencies working in this field including the child protection services, the police, the prosecution and the medical services. Included in these actions are new facilities and increased number of staff in *Barnahús*, an increase in allocations to the police and the prosecution to deal with sexual abuse cases and the establishment of a national council, and also regional mechanisms, for coordination between the child protection services, the police and the prosecution to improve response and work procedure in child sexual abuse cases.

Section Three: Data and statistics

- a. Iceland is cognizant of the importance of effective data collection and has a number of indicators on key issues related to gender equality such as political participation, labour market participation, violence against women, etc. As has been described above, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing is required to present a report on the situation and developments in gender equality issues to the Gender Equality Forum. By law the Minister's report is to include an assessment of the status and success of the projects covered by the current gender equality action plan and a review of the situation and developments regarding gender equality issues in principal spheres of society. In preparing these reports, the ministry gathers statistical information from other institutions in a single location under the relevant topics. All institutions approached by the ministry are required to maintain statistics on their operations, these being open to analysis by gender as well as other factors. Among these institutions are Statistics Iceland, the Directorate of Labour, the National and University Hospital (Landspítali), the University of Iceland, the Judicial Council, other government ministries, etc.

Iceland has established a system of social indicators which throw light on the circumstances of various groups in society at any given time. The aim of this is to have such information available and accessible in one location, so enabling the authorities and the public to keep abreast of changes and developments in society. All data in these social indicators are broken down by gender and it is therefore possible to obtain information on the standing of the sexes with short notice when necessary. The social indicators were developed by the Welfare Watch, details of which are given in the section *Women and Poverty* above. At the beginning of 2009, the government also established a steering group to monitor the impact of the crisis on people, with regard to gender. The group was called the Gender Equality Watch and worked alongside the Welfare Watch. The Gender Equality Watch published a report in March 2009 (see Annex IV below) which includes the indicators that Iceland considered should be monitored in connection with gender equality. The first comprehensive report on the matter appeared in October 2013, presenting statistical data without any assessment of the situation.

- b. Iceland is still reviewing the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013, and their implications on our current data collection and indicators. To ensure consistency and comparison across time, Iceland will attempt to use, to the extent possible, the current indicators, modifying them if need be, in line with the recommendations of the Statistical Commission.
- c. See answers a and b.

- d. See answers a and b.

Section Four: Emerging priorities

- a. Iceland has come a long way, but there are challenges ahead. It must find way to bridge the gender pay gap and it is hoped that the new Equal Pay Management System and the Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages (described above) will move these issues in the right direction. The aim is to break the boundaries on the gender-segregated labour market, change gender stereotypes and change the way jobs are evaluated and paid for. Iceland must strengthen its social services for families and make efforts to support the integration of family life and professional life. Work is currently in progress on Iceland's family policy for the period up to 2020. This is based on the Government's Policy Statement regarding a family-friendly society in which all citizens have access to equal opportunities and security and enjoy legally-enshrined rights. Formulation of the policy will include, amongst other things, allowance for various family structures. Social equality, access by all types of family to equal rights and the avoidance of discrimination on grounds of race, disability, religion or sexual orientation are to be guaranteed. Ways must be sought to ensure economic security of the family and security regarding housing. Work will be done on ensuring a balance between working life and family life and even out the responsibilities borne by parents for housework and care of children. Emphasis is to be given to ensuring measures to protect people against violence in intimate relationships and to provide support to combat alcohol and substance abuse.

To be able to continue the road to gender equality, Iceland must find a way to involve more men in the debate about gender equality. Gender equality is not about women alone: it is about both women and men and the economic, social cultural and political structures of society. We must convince men that gender equality is a win-win situation, not a loss. As has been stated previously in these replies, a men's task force on gender equality has been at work and submitted proposals regarding priorities regarding men and gender equality, and it is important to continue with that work.

Iceland's Government must address the growing problem of hate speech against women, not least feminists, on the internet; this is a threat to democracy and freedom of speech. The interface between freedom of expression and the prohibition of hate speech must be examined and discussed, and the question of a possible need for legislative review in Iceland to address hate speech and offensive discourse must be examined. The Government must adopt a comprehensive policy to tackle this problem. Hate speech is an extreme manifestation of stereotypes in which the individual is shown disrespect as part of a strategy of dehumanising him or her. Icelandic society must be awake to the need to prevent prejudice and intolerance from becoming established as habitual features of life in this country; derisive comments and offensive language should not be allowed to become so common that they cease to be noticed. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture leads a multi stakeholder participation in the Council of Europe No hate Speech Movement campaign. The domestic campaign is rolled is wide cooperation between NGO's such as the Icelandic Human Rights Centre, the National Parents Association and the Federation of Icelandic youth organizations.

Amendments to the Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008, lie ahead. At the beginning of November 2013, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing introduced a bill which, after passing its first reading, was then passed to the Judicial Affairs and Educational Committee on 20 November 2013; as of April 2014, it is still being examined by the committee. One of the proposals in the bill is the validation in Iceland of Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services. It is also proposed that a new paragraph, which would be the fourth paragraph, be added to Article 19 of the Gender Equality Act (on equal

wages), authorising the Minister to issue regulations on the further application of the article, including the implementation of an equal-pay policy and on qualifications required for accreditation agencies and the accreditation procedure.

Furthermore, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing aims to submit to Althingi in its 144th legislative session in 2014-2015 bills that will reflect in Iceland's domestic legislation the contents of Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation and Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. The purpose is, amongst other, to ensure equal treatment in the labour market regardless of person's race, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or transgender identity. The administration regarding all the above mentioned factors and gender will be combined in one legislation.

As has been described above, a new four-year governmental action plan which will contain concrete actions by all governmental ministries is being compiled, and it is important that it will be prepared carefully and thoroughly. It should also be mentioned that this year (2014) Iceland is chairing the collaboration between the Nordic countries. Nordic collaboration on gender equality issues is now 40 years old, and the occasion is to be marked by a conference in Iceland on the results achieved and the future aims of the Nordic countries in this sphere. Concurrently with the conference, there will be a meeting of the Nordic and Baltic ministers who deal with equality issues. The priorities to be addressed by the Government of Iceland in the sphere of equality during this year when Iceland is leading Nordic collaboration are: equality on the labour market, participation by men in gender-equality work, methods of reducing gender-based violence, collaboration within the West-Nordic region and collaboration in the sub-Arctic area. Work will proceed on surveys and research projects and conferences will be held on the above mentioned topics. In addition, a third Nordic Forum conference on women's affairs will be held in Malmö, Sweden, in June 2014. This is to be held under the auspices of NGOs in the Nordic countries.

- b. In the Post 2015 Agenda, Iceland's priority is that there will be a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment in the new development framework. Furthermore, Iceland also aims to make it a priority to have gender equality considerations integrated throughout the framework with gender-specific targets and indicators under each of the goals. Without the full and equal participation of women, it will be impossible to make real and lasting progress in addressing sustainable development challenges, such as climate change and food security, or in building peace and accountable institutions.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of Iceland's focus areas in the discussions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It is important that the new framework address persistent gender gaps and take a transformative approach that addresses the structural causes of gender inequality and tackle issues that were overlooked in the current framework, such as violence against women, early marriage, women's leadership and economic rights. It is furthermore of crucial importance that the new framework includes Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as a fundamental part of women's human rights and a precondition for general health and well-being and for the realization of sustainable development.

Therefore, Iceland feels very strongly that there must be a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment followed by gender mainstreaming throughout the SDG's/post 2015 development agenda with gender-specific targets and indicators. A stand-alone goal should:

- ensure women's equal political representation and participation;
- ensure women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls;
- eliminate gender disparities at all levels and forms of education; and finally

- eliminate gender disparities in access and control over economic resources, including land.

Annexes:

Annex I

The Centre for Gender Equality prepared the first draft of the national review. The Centre for Gender Equality consulted the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources and the Permanent Mission of Iceland in New York on the preparation of the response. The Centre for Gender Equality submitted the response to the Ministry of Welfare for final processing which submitted it to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Annex II Statistical information:

Women and Men in Iceland 2014 (English):

http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/W_and_M_2014_Ice.pdf

Statistics and ratios of men and women in various fields of society 2013 (Icelandic):

http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/2013_tolur_og_hlutfall_Jafnrettisstofa.pdf

Social Indicators 2013 (Icelandic):

http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Felagsvisar_18102013.pdf

Report on Gender Equality in Committees, Councils and Boards (Icelandic):

2010: <http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Skyrsla%20Jafnrettisstofu%20um%20nefndir%202010.pdf>

2011-2012: <http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/nefndaskyrsla2012.pdf>

Annex III Case studies/good practice examples:

1. Equal pay management system. See the discussion in Part One and Annex IV.
2. Cooperation between the police and social services on domestic violence - "*Keeping the window open*". This is a police pilot project between Sudurnes Police district and Sudurnes social services on domestic violence. The project started on 1 February 2013 and is already considered to be a success. The start of the project was the notion that too few domestic violence cases came up for examination in the justice system, not enough investigations were brought to completion and very few perpetrators were convicted. The primary reason for this was that the victims did not want assistance from the police. The police concluded that this was due to a lack of support for victims and perpetrators. All changes made to the day-to-day work of the participants in the project, were made within the frame of the Icelandic law and have not involved any additional cost for the participating institutions; it was a matter of priorities.

The pilot project is based on cooperation between police and social services. When the police respond to a call and there is a suspicion that domestic violence is involved, the police always request additional assistance from social workers from the social services to establish solid contact and give the victims all the assistance they need. They also provide a lawyer for the victims. With this approach, victims are more likely to consider leaving the violent relationship. Legal protective measures, such as restraining (exclusion) orders and the ejection of the perpetrator from home are employed more frequently and the perpetrators are informed of possible therapy options. See the report on the project from February 10 2014 in the attachment.

3. The implementation of Gender-Responsive Budgeting. See the discussion in Part One and Annex IV.
4. A programme in which men who employ violence against their partners are offered specialist treatment has been in operation in Iceland since 2006 under the title *Karlar til ábyrgðar* ('Men's Responsibilities'). For a discussion of the project, see the section *Violence against Women* in Part Two of this report.

Annex IV List of legislation, policies, strategies, action plans and publications, with links to their location.

Gender Equality in Iceland: Information on Gender Equality Issues in Iceland (English):
[http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Gender Equality in Iceland 2012.pdf](http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Gender%20Equality%20in%20Iceland%202012.pdf)

Legislation:

The Gender Equality Act, No. 10/2008 (English):

http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Act-on-equal-status-and-equal-rights-of-women-and-men_no-10-2008.pdf

Act on Catering Establishments, Guesthouses and Places of Entertainment, No. 85/2007 (Icelandic):
<http://www.althingi.is/lagas/140a/2007085.html>

Public Limited Companies Act, No. 2/1995, Art. 63 (English):

<http://eng.atvinnuvegaraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/nr/nr/7336>

Act on Exclusion orders and Ejection of Perpetrators from the Home, No. 85/2011 (Icelandic):
<http://www.althingi.is/altext/stjt/2011.085.html>

Act No. 72/2011 amending the Criminal Code, no. 19/1940, as amended (trafficking) (Icelandic):
<http://www.althingi.is/altext/stjt/2011.072.html>

Act No. 58/2012 amending the Criminal Code, no. 19/1940, as amended (the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse) (Icelandic):
<http://www.althingi.is/altext/stjt/2012.058.html>

Act No. 37/2013 amending the Criminal Code, No. 19/1940, as amended (sexual offenses against children in the family and other confidential relationships) (Icelandic):
<http://www.althingi.is/altext/stjt/2013.037.html>

Action Plans:

Parliamentary Resolution on a Gender Equality Action Programme 2011-2014 (English):
<http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Gender%20Equality%20Action%20Programme%202011-14.pdf>

Plan of Action on Gender Equality Regarding Wages, April 2013(English):
<http://jafnretti.is/D10/Files/Plan-of-Action-on-Gender-Pay-gap.pdf>

Plan of Action to deal with Sexual Violence and Violence in Close Relationships 2006-2011 (English):
[http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Plan of Action to deal with Domestic and Sexual Violence.pdf](http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-enskar_sidur/Plan_of_Action_to_deal_with_Domestic_and_Sexual_Violence.pdf)

Plan of Action against trafficking 2013-2016 (Icelandic):
<http://www.innanrikisraduneyti.is/frettir/nr/28544>

National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (English):
<http://www.mfa.is/media/fridargaeslan/UT-WomenPeaceSecurity-2013.pdf>

Reports and other information:

A study on violence against women. Experience of women aged 18-80 years in Iceland (Icelandic):
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/ritogskyrslur2011/26012011_ofbeldi_a_konum.pdf

The Minister's report on the situation and developments in gender equality issues (Icelandic):
2013: http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Jafnrettisskyrsla_2013.pdf

2011: http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/ritogskyrslur2011/18022011_Jafnretti_i_tolum.pdf

Equal pay management system - Requirements and guidance (Icelandic):
<http://www.stadlar.is/verslun/p-45590-st-852012.aspx>

Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Fact Sheet, 2012 (English):
http://www.ministryoffinance.is/media/utgafa/GB_in_Iceland_Fact_Sheet2012.pdf

Implementing Gender-Responsive Budgeting Three Year Plan, 2011 (English):
http://www.ministryoffinance.is/media/utgafa/Implementing_Gender_Budgeting_2011.pdf

A Performance Report of the Task Force on Wage Equality 2014 (Icelandic)
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/rit-og-skyrslur-2014/Adgerdahopur_vinnuskyrsla_LOKA300114.pdf

Link to the facebook page of the Task Force on Wage Equality:
<https://www.facebook.com/#!/launajafnretti>

Social Indicators (Icelandic):
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Felagsvisar_18102013.pdf

Welfare Watch report 2010 (English):
http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/velferdarvakt09/29042010The-Welfare-Watch_Report-to-the-Althingi.pdf

Welfare Watch report 2013 (Icelandic):
<http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/rit-og-skyrslur-2014/Lokaskyrsla-Velferdarvaktarinnar-desember-2013.pdf>

Gender Equality Watch report 2009 (Icelandic):
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/09FrettatengtFEL09/Afangaskyrsla_jafnrettisvaktarinnar.pdf

Women in Crisis? Summary of official statistical data on the effects of the financial crisis on women 2011 (Icelandic)
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/ritogskyrslur2011/Konur_i_kreppu_22032011.pdf

National Curriculum (English):
<http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/publications/curriculum/>

Integration of family life and work: (Icelandic):
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/Samraeming-fjolskyldu--og-atvinnulifs-lokaskjal.pdf

Men and gender equality (Icelandic):
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/karlar_og_jafnretti_skyrsla_m_tillogum_18ap2013.pdf

Violence against disabled women, 2013 (Icelandic):
http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Rit_2013/ofb_fatladar-konur-skyrsla_mai2013.pdf

Climate change and the gender impact (Icelandic):
http://www.umhverfisraduneyti.is/media/PDF_skrar/14_UMH_KHF_afangaskyrsla1_2012.pdf

Is domestic violence a part of your life?- A brochure that the Ministry of Welfare and municipalities in Suðurnes published 2013. (Also in Polish)

<http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/newsinenglish/nr/33972>

Your rights – Important information for foreign women in Iceland. (The pamphlet is printed in Icelandic, English, Spanish, Thai, Russian and Arabic and has useful information regarding the Icelandic Justice system and Icelandic society).

<http://eng.velferdarraduneyti.is/Reports/nr/32533>

“Keeping your window open” – Cooperation between the Police in Suðurnes region and Social services on Domestic Violence (Icelandic). (Attachment).