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#### **Gender differences on sub-national level**

## **Gender Differences on Sub-National Level in the Republic of Moldova**

**Note prepared by the National Statistical Bureau, Republic of Moldova<sup>1</sup>**

### *Summary*

This paper presents information describing the roles of men and women in Moldova in demographic, social, economic and political areas, with details for five development regions of the country and, to the extent possible, for districts. The analysis results in a question of reliability of data on small areas which determines the topic for discussions and development of a set of indicators for monitoring at sub-national level.

## **I. Background**

1. The Republic of Moldova is a country with small area and population which nevertheless has regional differences in social and economic processes, including from a gender perspective.
2. Comparisons of gender indicators with other countries help the country to evaluate its progress, to set out goals and to develop gender equality policies. Comparisons at sub-national level are of a similar value. The demand for such comparisons is high in Moldova.
3. Moldova has adopted the Law on Regional Development setting out main regional development objectives, principles, frameworks and planning instruments. The Law proposes new solutions for the country's development divided into 5 regions: North, Centre

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and South, Chişinău Municipality and Gagauzia Autonomous Territorial Entity (ATE). The purpose of the programme is to achieve balanced and sustainable social and economic development throughout the country; to reduce imbalances in the levels of social and economic development between and in the regions. A particular strategic objective is **to develop and to duly submit regional statistics to support regional development policy making, monitoring and evaluation.**

4. The priority of the Government Programme "European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Prosperity" is to eliminate discriminatory position of women at the labour market, in social, economic, cultural and political areas.

5. Achieving this requires thorough understanding of the severity and depth of the issue which cannot be achieved without systemic studies at all levels.

6. Furthermore, the Government approved by its Resolution No. 768 dd. 12 October 2011 the National Demographic Security Strategy in Moldova (2011-2025). The Programme provides for objective and transparent monitoring of progress in the achievement of goals and objectives, both at the national and sub-national levels, including from a gender perspective.

7. During the recent years the National Statistical Bureau (NSB) carried out additional studies on various gender-related aspects, however, there has not been any in-depth study with regional breakdowns. Based on the available data in 2012 Moldova issued a publication "Men and Women in the Republic of Moldova. Regional Analysis" which was the first attempt to consolidate national practices in gender statistics and to perform analysis at the sub-national level.

8. The data and its analysis from a regional perspective illustrate the situation in Moldova on how the roles in various social, economic and political areas are distributed between men and women, as disaggregated by development regions and, where possible, by districts. The publication contains gender disaggregated statistics and brief analysis of 11 areas: participation in political life, population, demographic processes, labour market, business, living standards, education, health, social protection, crime, and violence against women.

## **II. Main Findings of Regional Gender Equality Analysis**

### **A. Gender Disparities in Politics**

9. Municipalities and district councils are not political bodies per se, they mostly deal with administrative issues and the level of authority here is quite low. Local government, however, has always been considered as an attribute of democracy. The results of the latest local elections in the Republic of Moldova in 2011 demonstrate that there is no gender parity either among candidates or those elected. Gender disparities were evident already at the registration phase: 4,204 candidates to Mayors and Vice Mayors (being local representative authority), including 843 females (20%) were registered and only one in four female candidate was elected.

10. The largest representation of female candidates was in the local administration of the Southern Zone - 25%, and in Cimislia District of the zone almost half of candidates (42%) were women. However, only 7 out of 53 female candidates were elected in the region. No gender parity was either achieved in the elections to the People's Assembly of Gagauzia: 119 candidates, including 12 women (9%) were registered and only 2 female candidates succeeded.

11. Female candidates were mostly successful in the elections of District, Rural and Municipal Councillors: up to 40% women were elected in some regions. However, in some

administrative areas there are less than 20% of female councillors. As for District Chairpersons, only 3 women were recently elected to this position - one in each of three regions: North, Centre and South, which is only 8.8% of the total number of District Chairpersons.

## B. Population size and structure

12. Geographically the population of Moldova is unevenly distributed. About 30% of the population live in each of the Northern and Central Zones, over 15% live in the Southern Zone and the population of Gagauzia is about 5% of the total population of the country. Residents of Chişinău Municipality comprise about a fifth of the total population of the country.

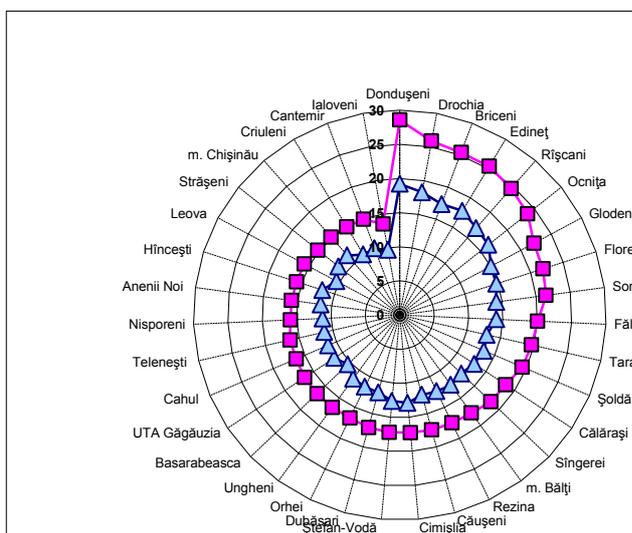
13. In the total population 51.9% are women and 48.1% are men. The largest gender gap is found in Chişinău Municipality where for each 1,000 males there are 1,128 females whereas the smallest gap is in the Northern Zone (1,100 females vs. 1,000 males). However, in two administrative areas of this zone: Bălţi Municipality and Donduşeni District the gender imbalance is significant: 1,176 and 1,142 females vs. 1,000 males respectively.

14. From early 1990-s the population of Moldova has been continuously and slowly reducing. Steady depopulation trends prevail in three regions: Centre, South and especially North. The population of the capital and Gagauzia is increasing.

15. The issue of ageing population is very pressing for the country; the trends in a changing population structure are irreversible. The 'youngest' population lives in the capital: here the ageing coefficient (the number of people 60 years old and over per 100 persons) is 13.5%. The districts of the Northern Zone are at the top of the population ageing scale; here the ageing coefficient is 18.9%.

Figure 1.

**Ageing coefficient, by gender and regions, %**



16. Ageing comes amid feminization. Very high ageing coefficient is found among women living in the North (up to 29%). The ageing process has less affected women living in the capital and in the Centre (average ageing coefficient is up to 16%). The gender gap in ageing is especially large in the Northern districts (up to 7-9 percentage points). In the Centre such gap is smaller (about 4-5 percentage points). In 17 out of 35 administrative units male population is still below the ageing threshold (under 12%).

### C. Demographic Processes

17. Regional differentiation of demographic processes is of particular interest. Gender and regional disparities are especially noticeable in mortality indicators.

Figure 2.

**Total mortality rate by gender and development regions, %**

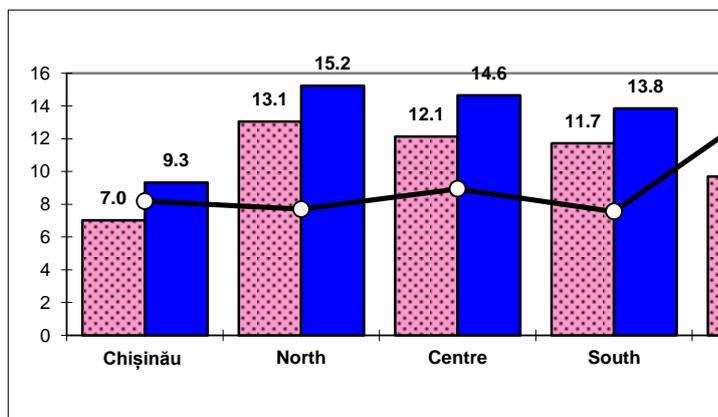
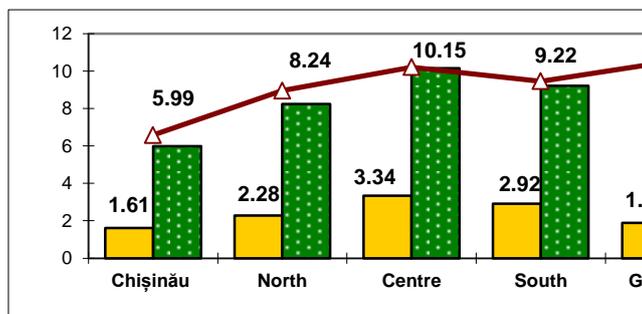


Figure 3.

**Mortality rates in working age, by gender and development regions**  
(per 1,000 persons of relevant gender)



18. As the charts demonstrate mortality indicators have regional, gender and age variations. As for total mortality rate, here the Northern Zone is the outsider for both female and male mortality: male mortality rate is 15%, female mortality rate is 13%. The situation changes in working age. Here the highest rates are found in the Central and Southern regions.

19. Gender gaps of different sizes are noted in each region. It is especially noticeable in Gagauzia: total mortality rate among men is 4% higher than among women, and in working age the gap is even larger (7%). Male supermortality indicator (male and female mortality rate ratio) is Gagauzia is 141% vs. 116% in the North. The lowest male and female mortality is found in Chişinău Municipality.

20. Moldova has achieved positive trends in life expectancy. In 2012, life expectancy was 67 years among men and 75 years among women. The largest life expectancy is in the capital and in the Northern districts. The regions with the lowest life expectancy among women are the same as among men: the Centre and the South. The largest gender gap in life expectancy is 10 years found in Gagauzia.

#### **D. Labour Market**

21. The situation at the labour market in all development regions causes concerns. Economically active population is steadily shrinking in all regions apart from Chişinău Municipality where in the analysed period (2007-2010) there was a small increase of this indicator.

22. Regional differences at the labour market depend on the population number and structure. In the Centre and in the South labour force participation rates of both women and men were proportionate to the geographic distribution of the population in these regions. At the same time such correlation is not specific for the North and the capital. Residents of Chişinău Municipality account for 22% of the total population in the country whereas given a younger age structure of the municipality its economically active residents account for 29% of economically active population of the country. An opposite situation is found in the Northern region given its elder age structure: 31% and 27% respectively.

23. The labour force participation rate of persons aged 15 years and over is 41.6% with a higher rate among men (45%) than among women (38.6%). The largest gender gap is found in Chişinău (difference of 15 percentage points) and the smallest gap is found in the north (difference of 2.2 percentage points).

24. In 2010, labour force participation rate among people aged 15 years and over was 38.5% with a higher rate among men (40.9%) as compared to women (36.4%). For years men have been prevailing among employed in all regions, the largest gender imbalance is found in Chişinău Municipality - up to 12 percentage points. Gender equality in employment is typical for depopulating areas characterized by female prevalence in elder age groups, including among employed.

25. Formal employment in all regions is predominantly feminized. Employed women prevail among working women: the indicator ranges from 67% in the Centre through to 95% in Chişinău Municipality.

26. On average, women earn three fourth of what men earn. Such gender pay gaps are found in all regions of the country. The only exception is Nisporeni district in the Centre where average earnings of women were 106.3% of those of men in 2010. The largest gender pay gap (over 1/3) is found in three districts: Ialoveni, Drochia and Rezina.

27. The unemployment rate in the country is 7.4%. Here the ranking of regions is as follows: Municipality of Chişinău, Centre, South, and North with higher male unemployment in all regions. The fact that youth unemployment rate (15-24 years), for both sexes, is higher than the national average is of special concern: in the Centre female youth unemployment rate is 4 times higher and male youth unemployment rate is 3 times higher than the total unemployment rate; in the North and in the South this indicator is 3 times higher among women and 2 times higher among men and in the capital the youth unemployment rate is twice as large as the total unemployment rate, both among women and men.

#### **E. Business**

28. According to the NSB survey data business women (mercenary managers and business co-owners) account for 27.5% of all business persons in Moldova. Most business

persons (59%) live/work in Chişinău Municipality. Among other development regions fairly large shares of business persons are found in the North (17%) and in the Centre (14%). The share of business persons in the South is about 7% and just above 3% in Gagauzia.

29. No significant gender differences were found among the regions. The difference between the largest share of business women in the north and the smallest share in the centre is less than three percentage points. Chişinău Municipality has youngest business persons, and women prevail in the age group of 15-34 years. The lowest youth representation in business is found in the North and South where most active women and men are aged 55 years and over.

30. Most business persons, both women and men, in all regions prefer working in the sectors of wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants and women prevail in these sectors. The Republic of Moldova is an agricultural country, however, agribusiness is underdeveloped and in all regions these are mostly men who are involved in the sector.

## F. Household Living Standards

31. Almost every second household in Moldova consists of one or two persons and the share of such households is increasing. Large families are mostly found in the south and smallest ones are in the north.

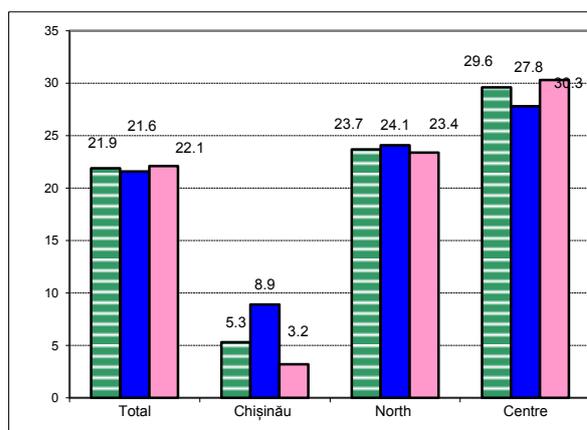
32. Every fourth household head has no reliable source of income and at the same time has to maintain other household members. For most population salaries and pensions are major sources of income. Women's dependence on social benefits is stronger than men's: each fifth woman and 17% of men say that pension is a major source of income.

33. Major sources of income for capital residents are salaries and here most vulnerable are residents of the Northern zone. Remittances are important sources of income for the country's population. On average, remittances account for 16.8% of household income. Residents of the South where there is the largest share of labour migrants have even stronger dependence on remittances.

34. The well-being of a household is subject to sociodemographic, occupational and social status of its members.

Figure 4.

**Absolute poverty rate, by sex of household head, by development regions, 2010, %**



35. The poorest people live in the Centre where poverty rate is about 30%. The situation in the North is marginally better; here one in four residents is poor.

36. The best situation is in Chişinău Municipality where only 5% of the population live below the poverty line. In the same region poverty feminization is most noticeable with a difference of 5.7 percentage points. In the Centre there is an opposite form of inequality because male poverty rate is 2.5 percentage points higher than female poverty rate.

## G. Education

37. No gender inequalities are found in education in the regions of Moldova. Nevertheless, feminization of education staff remains a serious issue: 84% of teachers are women. On the other hand, considering male and female distribution in administrative staff, the shares of men and women at management positions are quite proportionate to the representation of men and women in total teaching staff. Male representation at management positions ranges from 12.5% in Chişinău Municipality to 16.8% in the Centre.

## H. Health

38. In Moldova health care sector faces the issues which are typical for most CIS countries and Western Europe; first of all, these include unequal regional distribution of health care staff, shortage of health care personnel in rural areas and excessive personnel in urban areas. On average, there are 35 physicians per 10,000 population. The most disadvantaged are the Centre and the South with a maximum of 15 physicians per 10,000 population. The capital is the region which has the highest physician density.

39. The labour market in health sector is feminized. Nevertheless, regional differentiation in male to female ratio in some administrative areas is completely opposite. A noticeable female prevalence among physicians is found in the capital (75%) and in Gagauzia (63%). At the same time, male physicians prevail in Bălţi Municipality and four districts: here male physicians are 60-70% of total physicians.

40. Living conditions, behavioural factors (mainly alcoholism) and low educational attainment among the population are the key drivers of regional and gender differences in the incidence of main diseases:

- Moldova is in the zone of the highest incidence of tuberculosis in the European region of the World Health Organization and remains to be a source area of the disease. The highest incidence is found in the Centre (106 new cases per 100,000). The lowest incidence is found in the South and in Gagauzia (66 new cases per 100,000). Gender differences are stable and typical for all zones: men are more susceptible to this disease, on average the gap of 2.6 times is found in all regions.
- The incidence of cancer is steadily increasing. In 2010, the highest incidence was registered in Chişinău Municipality (234 cases per 100,000 with almost no gender imbalance). The lowest incidence was registered in the Centre (202 cases per 100,000 with a 13% gap towards men). In Gagauzia where cancer incidence is 228 cases the gender gap is larger, almost 20%. And only in the South there are more women with cancer.
- Wine trade is essential for the country's economy. However, the traditions and customs related to alcohol consumption sometimes are above civilized standards. Due to these determinants the South is the region with the highest incidence of alcoholism and chronic psychosis, both among men and women: in 2010, there were 2,702 registered cases with such diagnoses per 100,000 men and 505 cases per 100,000 women.
- The incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) depends on a region. The largest number of cases is registered in Gagauzia (731 per 100,000) and the smallest number is registered in the South (370 cases). Gender specifics are about high

incidence of infections registered among women in Gagauzia (3.5 times higher than among men).

## **I. Social Protection**

41. Social protection is an important criterion of security in situations when due to objective reasons a person is unable to provide oneself with other livelihoods. Apart from Chişinău Municipality, persons who worked in agriculture prevail in the structure of pensioners in all regions. Ranking of regions by size of monthly pension benefit is as follows: Municipality of Chişinău Municipality, Gagauzia, South and Centre with a 1/3 difference between minimum and maximum size of benefits.

42. In the regional differentiation two factors can be identified that increase gender disparities in the size of pension benefits: 'agrarian' and 'non-agrarian'. In the capital, the gender gap is the largest one and is 33%. In all other agrarian regions women receive less than 90% of men's pension benefits. In some regions gender gap is smaller (94% or higher).

## **J. Crime**

43. As in many other countries, most crimes are committed in urban areas, especially in the capital. In 2010, there were 1,468 registered crimes per 100,000 population in Chişinău Municipality. A high level of crimes is also found in Gagauzia (766 crimes per 100,000 population). The difference between the two regions is that the highest level of grave crimes is also registered in the municipality whereas Gagauzia has the lowest level of such crimes. The safest region is the South (691 crimes per 100,000).

44. Men dominate in such social and criminal phenomenon as crimes. Women account for a small share of offenders, about 10%. Gender profile in the crimes by regions is as follows: in Chişinău Municipality male crime is 8 times higher than female crime, in Gagauzia - 11 times, and in the North it is 5 times higher. Drug-related crimes are the only type of crimes where women sometimes are more involved than men: in some regions of the country the drug-related crime rates among women are higher than among men, e.g. in Briceni (2 times higher).

## **K. Violence Against Women**

45. Regional differences in social and economic development result not only in different living standards of the population but also shape the culture and certain behavioural patterns. The NSB survey has demonstrated that on average, 6 out of 10 women aged 15 years and older were subjected to, at least, one form of violence by present or latest partner. Regional estimates of domestic violence rate demonstrate that women in the Centre (73%) are more subjected to violence, the lowest rate is found in the capital (58%).

46. Sixty per cent of women suffered from psychological violence. Women living in central districts (68%) suffer more from this form of violence, whereas in other regions on average 56% of women were subjected to this form of violence.

47. Forty per cent of women reported physical violence by their husbands/partners, and again the likelihood of major physical violence is higher for women in the Centre.

48. About 19% of women were subjected to sexual violence by their husbands/partners. As compared to other types of violence this type is mostly spread in Chişinău Municipality (23.5%). One of the explanations can be that women differently perceive sexual actions of a husband/partner, specifically in some cases they consider this as 'marital duties' rather than an act of violence. Another reason can be that as compared to women living in the capital, rural women are more reluctant to report about sexual violence.

### III. Major Conclusions

49. The analysis concludes that in education there are no gender gaps in Moldavian regions, there is vertical occupational discrimination and barriers for participating in politics but other components of gender disparities tell a confusing story. Comparison of Chişinău Municipality and four other development regions is revealing. This brings us to the main conclusion which is quite obvious: regional and gender disparities are interrelated and meaningful analysis of gender issues is impossible with considering regional specifics. A deeper analysis will help to devise constructive practical solutions for addressing regional gender disparities, approximating the regions by levels of development and for overcoming disintegration trends.

### VI. Issues Identified

50. The following methodological issues were identified during the analysis:

- Incomparability of statistical samples. Specifically, it is the issue in sections on Labour Market and Household Living Standards, where the data for Gagauzia were analysed together with the South, as opposed to other sections where Gagauzia is a separate area because according to the Law on Administrative System Gagauzia is an autonomous development region. According to the information on the Population Census that is to take place in Moldova soon, a new sample is planned to be built for the Labour Force and Household Budget Survey. This will ensure that the data in the development regions is representative.
  - The reliability of regional data can be sometimes challenged. Thus, for instance, in population estimates for underpopulated areas, the small number of population events (deaths and number of persons in specific age groups) affects reliability and accuracy of estimates. Nevertheless, due to a strong demand for such comparisons, the data was included into the analysis. Therefore familiarization with new methodological developments in this area is of great importance in order to improve the current estimation procedures at the national and regional levels. It is very important for future studies.
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