

UNDP TURKMENISTAN



**Project Evaluation: Social Inclusion through Leadership
Skills for Disabled Women**

Evaluation Report

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The author of this report was impressed to see a strong commitment of Project beneficiaries and Government officials to promote human rights of persons with disabilities. My sincere appreciation goes to women with disabilities who benefitted from the Project and demonstrated their commitment to lead other women and men with disabilities to explore, find and implement actions to exercise their rights and overcome the barriers they face.

The evaluator hopes that this evaluation and its recommendations will help to identify and implement a number of interventions that will advance human rights of persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP Turkmenistan. The author remains solely responsible for any errors that may remain in this paper.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CRPD	International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPOs	Disabled People's Organizations
ECIS	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkmenistan was the first Central Asian country to accede to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in September 2008 and ratified its Optional Protocol in 2010. The Government of Turkmenistan demonstrated its strong commitment to advancing human rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and not only maintained a range of supports and services for PWDs inherited from the Soviet times but also extended them over the last years. In the area of social protection, for instance, the Social Security Code was amended in December 2011 that substantially increased benefits and services for all categories of PWDs.

When the Project was developed, it was clear that despite enhanced social benefits and services, improved healthcare provision and introduction of some elements of inclusive education models, PWDs remain socially excluded. Social exclusion, low educational attainment, unemployment, low self-esteem and limited opportunities to participate in political and social life were frequent parts of PWDs' daily experience. The stereotyping of and prejudice against PWDs were widespread and their families experienced social stigma. In addition to disability-specific biases, women with disabilities faced gender stereotypes when they were seen as being primarily responsible for domestic matters and child care, and men for providing financially for the family.

One of important venues and mechanisms to change such dominant perceptions and eliminate barriers women with disabilities face, is to have women with disabilities in leadership roles in multiple areas of society who would be able to lead the change and affect views of many on disability. When the Project was designed women and girls with disabilities were not involved in decision making regarding planning of different programs and services for PWDs in Turkmenistan. They often experienced informational and communicational isolation and had limited opportunities to be engaged into policy dialogue with the Government.

The Project Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund was implemented by UNDP, CO Turkmenistan together with the Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan (DBST) during January 2014 – June 2015. The overall objective of the Project was to promote engagement of women with disabilities in policy making. Focusing on hearing and visually impaired women in the DBST the Project focused on expanding knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women on democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills. The Project adopted a logical and comprehensive approach of providing substantive knowledge on democracy and institutions, gender and leadership combined with practical exercises during meetings with representatives from different organizations and forum discussions to help the Project beneficiaries to master core leadership skills.

The Project focused specifically on hearing and visually impaired women, with three main objectives:

- Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women has increased in terms of in democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

- Outcome 2: Management capacity and leadership of skills of hearing and visually impaired women raised and number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the DBST increased.
- Outcome 3: Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the DBST and in the policy dialogues with government.

This evaluation took place immediately after the Project completion. It is the expectation that its findings and recommendations will be used by UNDP and key Project stakeholders to inform their future work in advancing human rights of persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan. The consultant followed the guidance provided in United Nations Evaluation Group Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports. A mixed-method design was used for this evaluation to ensure triangulation of data. A large set of different and complementary evidence was collected and analyzed by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods that included:

- desk review of relevant documents;
- consultations with UNDP management and Project team to identify key informants for face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus groups and e-mail exchanges and validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise;
- consultations with DBST management and staff to validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise;
- two focus group of Project beneficiaries;
- semi-structured interviews with pre-determined sets of questions with the staff of DBST who were involved into the Project implementation; national consultants who conducted training on politics, socioeconomics and ICT; staff from selected line ministries, agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses attended by Project beneficiaries; operator of the hot line services for women with disabilities and some of its users; guest speakers who delivered presentations to Project beneficiaries; Project beneficiaries who participated in conferences/regional events; Project beneficiaries who participated in the international study visit to Belarus; and Project beneficiaries who participated in local study visits to government institutions, public organizations and international agencies;
- informal conversational interviews with questions emerging from the immediate context; and
- validation of preliminary findings and recommendations with UNDP and DBST.

Overall, the consultant found that UNDP made a significant positive contribution to strengthening leadership skills of women with disabilities and built foundations for ongoing dialogue between PWDs and Government ministries and organizations.

The Project design and its objectives are relevant and well aligned with the national policies and strategies. The Project supported the Government in meeting a number of its international commitments, including but not limited to:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- High Project relevance was confirmed by Project beneficiaries, trainers, participants in the national forum, ministries and other organizations' staff where study trips were organized.

The collected evidence demonstrates that the Project has achieved almost all of its intended objectives. The announcement about the Project was well received and that about 150 candidate have applied that demonstrates strong need among women with disabilities in such training opportunities. The trainings were conducted on the premises of the Social Rehabilitation Complex of DBST where 44 participants from regions were accommodated (other 11 women leaders were from Ashgabat). The trainings on democracy, the rule of law, processes of social policy formulation, ICT, gender and practice their leadership skills in disability organizations were provided. A series of study visits were organized to ministries, universities, non-profit and business organizations, and municipal departments to meet with top level managers and discuss the roles of managers and functions of different agencies. Guest speakers (top administrators and managers, lawyers, cultural workers, doctors, teachers, etc.) were also invited to meet with the Project beneficiaries and speak about their leadership experience and professional career. One of the most important outcomes is that women leaders learned how to use the knowledge acquired in practical life situations to advance their human rights. Some of them shared the knowledge acquired with other women with disabilities. It helped them to mobilize other women with disabilities and either to communicate their ideas to decision makers or establish their self help groups.

In June 2015, a group of participants visited the Belarussian Society of People with Visual Disabilities. The participants of study tour learned the best practices in the area of employment, adaptation, and rehabilitations of people with visual impairments. One participant shared with the consultant some interesting ideas on how some approaches used to support PWDs in Belarus can be replicated in Turkmenistan.

The Project opened a hot line that provided consultations and assistance to hearing and visually impaired women on different issues, including health services, social welfare, placement of disabled children in the special schools, employment opportunities, etc.

The Project was well managed, with core required documentation in place. The evaluator acknowledges a results-focused character of the Project document that helped to keep it focused. The Project document contains many specific goals and indicators of success, but the evaluator believes that the linkages between some inputs, outputs and outcomes could have been strengthened through better focused indicators.

The evaluator believes that the biggest contribution and impact of the Project is that it managed to achieve dramatic change in mind sets of many decision-makers and women with disabilities on disability. Many individuals interviewed in the course of this evaluation, including Project beneficiaries themselves, indicated that before the Project trainings they viewed disability through the medical lens. The Project helped them to understand and accept the social/human rights model of disability and the consultant was pleasantly surprised when some ministries' staff used the core ideas and principles of human rights model of disability in discussing the plans of their ministries in the area of disability. There was a real change in mind sets of ministry staff and decision makers who met with women with disabilities and heard from them directly about challenges they faced and solutions they proposed. State officials and leaders of diverse organizations learned that persons with disabilities are the same people as persons with no disabilities who would like to study, get good jobs, get married and pursue other opportunities in life and that society has to do much more than it is doing now to help them achieve their goals.

The most important impact of the Project is that it helped women leaders to believe in themselves and built their self-advocacy skills so that many of them are not afraid to advocate for themselves or on behalf of others with decision makers at the national and local levels, business owners, in stores, hospitals, with social service providers and other fields. Learning about gender, leadership, government operations and ICT gave the Project beneficiaries the tools and experience to take greater control over their own lives and engage into multiple level advocacy work. Project beneficiaries acquired the necessary skills to communicate with decision makers in writing and shared their ideas and recommendations through DBST with respective state institutions. Some of them were addressed by respective line ministries.

The consultant finds that the Project is sustainable in the following areas:

- Many women with disabilities who benefitted from the Project are and will be sharing key lessons learned and skills acquired with other women with disabilities and will lead them by example.
- Women beneficiaries established networks with each other to share information and provide support and they will most likely be active and hopefully will expand.
- Many women with disabilities who benefitted from the Project will continue running their businesses and interest groups.
- Some Project beneficiaries have a strong potential to join public service and will be able to promote the disability agenda within the Government institutions.
- Many Project beneficiaries will continue their advocacy work and will communicate their ideas and suggestions to decision makers at the national and local levels.
- Ministries and other organizations attended by the Project beneficiaries are willing and interested in conducting further dialogue and meetings with persons with disabilities and most likely will organize meetings with PWDs themselves.
- DBST will continue using training materials developed through the Project in all its branches and will encourage Project beneficiaries to share their new knowledge and skills with other women. Trained women will have a privilege to be hired first if any job opportunity opens up in DBST.
- Active women-leaders will be invited to participate in the meetings of the Board of DBST and discuss possible interactions with governmental agencies on different matters.

The prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support are questionable. The consultant found that the weakest part of the Project is its financial viability as there is no clear picture on how funding of similar, well designed and needed training interventions will be maintained.

The consultant identifies the following core lessons:

- As the barriers and challenges faced by women with disabilities are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, UNDP was correct in adopting a comprehensive approach addressing multiple barriers faced by women with disabilities, strengthening their leadership capacities and providing them with an opportunity to engage into direct dialogue with decision makers.
- The barriers faced by women with disabilities include in addition to limited access to educational, vocational training opportunities, employment, limited accessibility of buildings also attitudinal barriers, which include low levels of expectations, fear, ignorance, misdirected charity, and pity.

- It takes long time to change mindsets of decision makers from charity to social/human rights model of disability but once key decision makers embrace the concept, the development and implementation of disability-specific policies and strategies will become much easier in Turkmenistan where the availability of budget resource is not an issue.
- Capacity needs of all partners with responsibility for disability agenda are significant. Turkmenistan lacks a national disability strategy, with specific objectives and targets in disability reforms. When Government long-term priorities in supporting persons with disabilities are unclear, it is difficult for donors to design and implement high impact interventions that would have the maximum possible impact on disability reforms.
- Employment of women with disabilities remains significantly restricted and, therefore, low.
- Good education, resilience, confidence and self-advocacy skills are factors that contribute to success of women with disabilities.
- Barriers faced by women with disabilities can be eliminated and reduced if they are active and use any opportunity to communicate their needs and ideas to decision makers.
- UNDP is being respected as trusted neutral agent promoting the goals of social inclusion, with significant expertise in the area of disability and is well positioned to continue supporting reforms in these areas.
- Programs to address disability and gender issues need to be designed for both maximum reach and broad accessibility. Focus on a limited number of beneficiaries will not lead to systemic changes.
- Women with disabilities are not a homogenous group.
- Project document and a LogFrame should be regularly updated to reflect the changing Project circumstances. The main intended outputs, activities, results and objectively verifiable indicators should be adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms.

The consultant offers the following recommendations for the Government of Turkmenistan:

- **Identify priorities and develop a National Disability Strategy to advance human rights of PWDs and ensure compliance with UN CRPD.** The consultant acknowledges a strong commitment of Mejlis, central agencies and line ministries to aligning the legislation and policies of Turkmenistan with the UN CRPD. To improve horizontal inter-ministerial collaboration and make interventions more results-focused, it is advisable to establish a primary body located at the centre of the government responsible for disability agenda, identification of strategic priorities and coordination of ministries' activities. Ideally, such a central body may be located in the Cabinet of Ministers, but pragmatically such a leading role can be delegated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

The consultant strongly recommends the national partners, with UN agencies involvement, to develop a National Disability Strategy. It should be drafted from the perspective of the social model of disability, include a definition of disability aligned with UN CRPD, introduce and mainstream a concept of non-discrimination throughout the whole document and make a specific commitment to modify and abolish any laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against PWDs and engage DPOs into this process. Strategies and tools of effective inter-ministerial coordination to optimize supports and services provided to PWDs and improve effectiveness of collective efforts should be introduced into the National Disability Strategy. The body responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the overall implementation of the National Disability Strategy should be identified and frequency and

nature of its reporting articulated. Given the complex nature of disability and a number of line ministries and central agencies involved into the National Disability Strategy development, approval and implementation, it is necessary to have a clear road map to ensure successful and timely completion of the National Disability Strategy.

DPOs like DBST and PWDs can play an important role in implementation and monitoring the implementation of the National Disability Strategy as well as other government disability strategies and plans. DPOs' representatives should be invited to be permanent members of the body responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the overall implementation of the National Disability Strategy. Line ministries developing their inputs into the Strategy should be required to conduct regular consultations with DPOs and PWDs, record their inputs and take into consideration. Proactive measures should be adopted to consult groups of PWDs that are traditionally excluded or underrepresented. DPOs could play an important role in monitoring the implementation of UN CRPD and the National Disability Strategy as well as other government strategies and plans promoting human rights of PWDs.

- **Develop a comprehensive cross-sectoral policy/strategy supporting employment of PWDs.** For many PWDs, work is key to economic independence, health and well-being and full participation in the community. Employment involves matching potential employees with job opportunities. If a PWD who is looking for a job cannot find one, the reasons may lie with the employee, with the employer, with job opportunities, or with the mechanisms that match the two sides together. PWDs need individualized support that meets their strengths and needs as well as local economic conditions. An individual plan of employment support should be developed for them that takes into account such individual characteristics as age, skills, special needs and the employability of PWDs, and local job market conditions. There is a range of legislative and policy options that UNDP and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection can explore to promote employment opportunities of PWDs in Turkmenistan:
 1. Revise the current quota system by introducing a “quota-levy” provision. Under the existing model, employers have to fill vacancy quotas with PWDs. The employers are required to inform local employment bureaus about vacancies for PWDs but they often do not comply with this requirement or designate only jobs that do not require high skills. It may be beneficial to have a so-called “quota-levy” system, whereby employers can pay a contribution to an earmarked fund in lieu of employing PWDs up to their quota obligation.
 2. Reserve a number of positions in national and local governments and state owned enterprises and businesses for PWDs.
 3. Introduce and pilot test a model of supported employment. Under this model, PWDs work in the open labor market and receive support from an external service provider to ensure that they maintain employment.
 4. Introduce and pilot test a model of subsidized employment where PWDs are employed in the open labour market under a scheme that provides grants to employers.
 5. Revive and extend the sheltered workshop programs.
 6. Critically review the effectiveness of the current incentives for employers to hire and maintain PWDs employed. It may be beneficial to explore if the corporate income tax incentives to employers work and examine a need of extending tax exemptions to imported products, devices or equipment and training materials used by PWDs at work.

The easiest and one of the most effective solutions would be to require ministries and state agencies to procure goods and services directly from DPOs without the tendering procedure. For instance, DBST has the necessary modern equipment and well trained personnel to meet a number of state needs (e.g., produce uniforms for the army, police, railway, oil and gas companies).

UNDP can provide its expert support in embedding evidence-based policymaking principles and practices in developing and implementing policies and programs supporting employment of PWDs. UNDP can strengthen capacity of respective line ministries by providing trainings and seminars on practical aspects of using data and evidence through all stages of disability policy cycle, including development of policy options, implementation and monitoring.

The consultant offers the following recommendations for UNDP:

- **Support the Government with developing of the National Disability Strategy.** Given the complexity of disability policy agenda and strong experience of UN system in implementing UN as One Programs, it may be beneficial to establish a high level Advisory Board with representation from lead Government ministries and agencies, UN agencies and other donors to provide strategic guidance at the critical milestones of the National Disability Strategy development. Capitalizing on UN partners' respective expertise and their comparative advantage, UNDP may advance the coordination mechanism to ensure that supports of disability reforms by the UN system are coordinated, comprehensive and executed in a timely manner.
- **Examine the barriers and opportunities faced by individuals of ALL disability groups and support building mechanism for regular dialogue of PWDs with the Government.** Over the last ten years UNDP has collaborated extensively with DBST that actively promotes the interests of visually and hearing impaired individuals that constitute only a segment of all PWDs. The accurate data on disability is needed not only to capture the real situation in the country but also to assess the real impact of the Government actions advancing human rights of PWDs at the household and individual level. High-quality, comparable data on disability is important for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of disability-focused policies and programmes. One of potential solutions would be to include a block of Washington group questions on disability into the next national census. UNDP should not focus solely on improving the available statistical and administrative disability data but support the Government in establishing mechanisms allowing the diverse disability groups and individuals to be heard. In the short run it is critically important for public servants to learn how to conduct effective consultations with primary focus on identifying the challenges that PWDs face and finding joint potential solutions. Capacity building measures focusing on state officials should demonstrate the value and benefits of consulting with DPOs and PWDs.
- **Implement a range of broad awareness raising campaigns and targeted public servants disability trainings, in partnership with main line ministries.** Changes in public attitudes are necessary to advancing the inclusion of PWDs. The right policies and strategies can be adopted but people's beliefs about individuals with disabilities determine how they are treated in all aspects of their lives. If the public has charity views of disability and believes that PWDs are incapable of full participation in society, these attitudes shape the processes of PWDs' inclusion in society. The consultant strongly recommends implementing diverse awareness-raising campaigns at the national and local levels to reinforce the positive image of PWDs as holders of all the human rights and to break down cultural barriers and prejudices against

persons with disabilities. The media should be encouraged and trained to portray PWDs from the perspective of social and human rights model of disability.

UNDP is well positioned to develop and implement on-line and face to face training on UN CRPD and state obligations, including how to mainstream disability into ministry policies and programs. All the current and newly recruited staff in relevant ministries should undertake mandatory courses aimed at raising their awareness on disability. The consultant believes that additional training on how to write effective disability-focused policy papers and other documents can be developed and delivered by UNDP.

- **Collaborate with the architects to develop/enforce accessibility standards.** UNDP is implementing a Project *Improving Energy Efficiency in the Residential Buildings Sector of Turkmenistan*. Through this Project at least 50 architects and/or engineers have been trained on energy efficient building reconstruction. As UNDP established good relations with the architects, it may be beneficial to explore a possibility of implementing a joint Project focusing on developing and enforcing accessibility standards, at least in the area of construction. National building codes were revised to require minimum standards of access and were applied to all buildings at the time they were being built and during major renovations irrespective of ownership. Despite significant progress made in improving accessibility, the consultant finds that Turkmenistan does not have effective mechanisms for overseeing and evaluating compliance with buildings' accessibility legislation. It remains unclear if sanctions for non-compliance are imposed if, for instance, newly constructed buildings do not meet the accessibility standards. The consultant advises to legislate an oversight mechanism and means of penalizing non-compliance, in consultation with DPOs, which should participate in monitoring implementation of accessibility standards.
- **Mainstream disability into UNDP operations, where possible.** Disability-related issues should be considered when designing all UNDP projects and programs. This can be done by engaging PWDs in the project design phase, the design of specific interventions, and/or implementing a quota for beneficiaries who are PWDs in each project. For instance, UNDP interventions in the area of disaster risk reduction can take into account specific needs and circumstances of PWDs and strengthen their resilience and better prepare them for potential disasters.
- **Strengthen focus on outcome and impact in any disability-focused Projects.** The outcomes and impacts of Projects supporting PWDs may be difficult to measure as some changes occur at the levels of mindsets, resilience, self-confidence, and beliefs. It is advisable to be creative and innovative and expand the currently used objectively verifiable indicators to collect evidence pertaining to results. The consultant strongly advises to develop elaborate logframes for all Projects supporting persons with disabilities. The main intended outputs, activities, results and objectively verifiable indicators should be adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND KEY PARTNERS

2.1 Background

Turkmenistan was the first Central Asian country to accede to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in September 2008 and ratified its Optional Protocol in 2010. The Convention is a comprehensive document that contains 50 articles. It is grounded in the premise that public authorities should go further than to just help persons with disabilities (PWDs) to adjust to existing conditions: they should seek to adapt the conditions in order to accommodate everyone, including those with special needs. Although the UN CRPD does not include specific features ensuring strict domestic compliance, governments are required to demonstrate good faith efforts to progressively achieve their obligations, and to demonstrate they use the 'maximum resources available' in this regard. The ratification of UN CRPD makes governments answerable to international bodies for its disabilities laws and policies and demonstrate how the values, principles and rules of UN CRPD are moving countries' laws and policy forward. The governments are also assuming their responsibility to revise all the relevant laws, policies, and practices to ensure that they do not even unintentionally discriminate against persons with disabilities

Turkmenistan's demonstrated significant achievements in the area of human development over the last 7 years that can be attributed mostly to its economic growth. Turkmenistan's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2013 is 0.698— which is in the medium human development category—positioning the country at 103 out of 187 countries and territories. Between 2010 and 2013, Turkmenistan's HDI value increased from 0.687 to 0.698, an increase of 1.6 percent or an average annual increase of about 0.54 percent. Between 2010 and 2013, Turkmenistan's life expectancy at birth increased from 65 to 65.5 years and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita expressed in constant 2011 international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) rates increased from 9,563\$ to 11,533\$. Expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling remained unchanged over this period.¹ The World Bank classified Turkmenistan as an Upper Middle Income country.

To some extent this significant economic growth and HDI increases helped to advance human rights of PWDs. The Government of Turkmenistan demonstrated its strong commitment to advancing human rights of PWDs and not only maintained a range of supports and services for PWDs inherited from the Soviet times but also extended them over the last years. In the area of social protection, for instance, the Social Security Code was amended in December 2011 that substantially increased benefits and services for all categories of PWDs. The Code reiterates that PWDs in Turkmenistan enjoy all social, economic, political and individual rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of Turkmenistan. The Code states that discrimination against the PWDs is prohibited and punishable by law.² It significantly increased state disability allowances, state benefits for disabled children under the age of 16, and other benefits.³ A range of benefits has been extended to cover medical supplies, wheelchairs, prosthetic and orthopedic products,

¹ UNDP, Human Development Report 2014, Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience, Explanatory note on the 2014 Human Development Report composite indices Turkmenistan

² Article 124 of Approving and Implementing the Code of Turkmenistan on Social Protection of the Population, 2012

³ BTI 2012. Turkmenistan Country Report.

prints with a special font, sound-amplifying equipment and alarms and some groups of PWDs can access them for free. A range of free healthcare and rehabilitation services has been extended as well. Turkmenistan provides free natural gas, water and electricity, as well as subsidies for basic foodstuffs. The Code introduces also a requirement to have individual medical, vocational and social rehabilitation programs for PWDs developed by health agencies. The state bodies, local authorities, enterprises, organizations and institutions are required to support the implementation of these individual rehabilitation programs.⁴

In 1996 Turkmenistan joined the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in 2009 ratified its Facultative protocol. Turkmenistan adopted the Program of Beijing Platform for Action of the IV World Conference on Women. A number of laws and regulations were amended to reflect gender equality aspects: the Electoral Code of Turkmenistan, Family Code of Turkmenistan, Social Protection Code, the Law on election of President and on election of members of peoples' councils and local councils, on Political Parties, Drug Addiction or Dependence on Psychoactive Drugs, on State Youth Policy, Laws on Education, on State Pension Insurance, etc.

When the Project was developed, it was clear that despite enhanced social benefits and services, improved healthcare provision and introduction of some elements of inclusive education models, PWDs remain socially excluded. Social exclusion, low educational attainment, unemployment, low self-esteem and limited opportunities to participate in political and social life were frequent parts of PWDs' daily experience. The stereotyping of and prejudice against PWDs were widespread and their families experienced social stigma. There was also a genuine and widespread lack of understanding that most PWDs could in fact function effectively at work, school, and with society, if given adequate support.

In addition to disability-specific biases, women with disabilities faced gender stereotypes when they were seen as being primarily responsible for domestic matters and child care, and men for providing financially for the family. Gender norms that depicted men as leaders and women in supporting roles remained deeply embedded into public thinking.

Due to stigma and lack of accessibility, women with disabilities were often more socially excluded than men with disabilities and women without disabilities. Although unemployment was high among all PWDs in Turkmenistan, the available anecdotal evidence suggested that women with disabilities were less likely to be employed than men with disabilities. This exclusion had ramifications for all areas of life and cut across the domains of time and space, practices and participation, and power and decision-making. As a result, women with disabilities were often denied equal enjoyment of their human rights, in particular by virtue of the lesser status ascribed to them by tradition and custom, or as a result of overt or covert discrimination.

One of important venues and mechanisms to change such dominant perceptions and eliminate barriers women with disabilities face, is to have women with disabilities in leadership roles in multiple areas of society who would be able to lead the change and affect views of many on disability. When the Project was designed women and girls with disabilities were not involved in decision making regarding planning of different programs and services for PWDs in Turkmenistan.

⁴ Article 130, Approving and Implementing the Code of Turkmenistan on Social Protection of the Population, 2012

They often experienced informational and communicational isolation and had limited opportunities to be engaged into policy dialogue with the Government. Women with disabilities lacked advocacy and negotiation capacity within the disability organizations as well. The Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan (DBST) that was a main Project partner, for instance, is a well established disability organization in the country that plays active role in advocating for PWDs. Although about half of its members were women only a few of them occupied management positions that limited their ability to communicate women-specific perspectives and ideas to DBST leadership and Government decision makers.

2.2 Project Theory of Change

The Project Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund was implemented by UNDP, CO Turkmenistan together with the national partner DBST during January 2014 – June 2015. The DBST, which is a non-governmental organization with objective to protect the rights and interests of the hearing and visually impaired people, facilitate social rehabilitation and integration and provision of employment services. The selection of DBST was well justified as this organization had extensive experience on multiple projects with UNDP and other international partners in advancing rights of PWDs and is well positioned to advocate for legislative and policy changes. The DBST was involved in particular in a project championing revisions of national legislation in order to ensure its compliance with UN CRPD.

The overall objective of the Project was to promote engagement of women with disabilities in policy making. Targeting hearing and visually impaired women in the DBST the Project focused on expanding knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women on democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

The Project correctly identified three main barriers that women with disabilities face: lack of management capacity and skills, gender discrimination and lack of access to information in an appropriate format. The Project focused specifically on hearing and visually impaired women, with three main objectives:

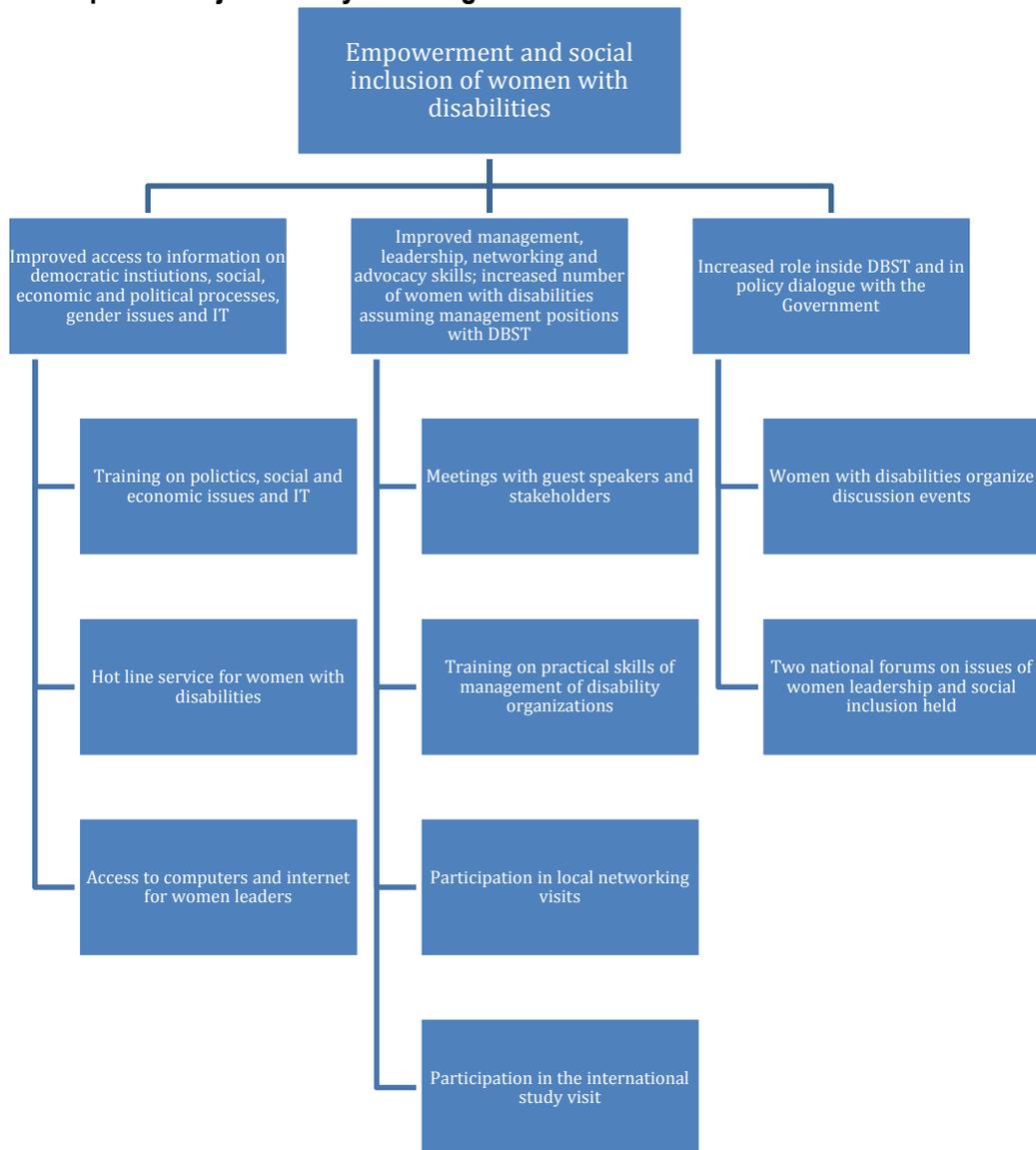
- Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women has increased in terms of in democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.
- Outcome 2: Management capacity and leadership of skills of hearing and visually impaired women raised and number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the DBST increased.
- Outcome 3: Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the DBST and in the policy dialogues with government.

Within the UNDP Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) the Project contributed to the OUTCOME 2.1: The government ensures comprehensive socio-economic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and HIV+ persons.

The Project adopted a logical and comprehensive approach of providing substantive knowledge on democracy and institutions, gender and leadership combined with practical exercises during

meetings with representatives from different organizations and forum discussions to help the Project beneficiaries to master core leadership skills. More specifically, the Project focused on developing the leadership skills of women with disabilities; improving their capacity of advocacy, networking, discussion and presentation, as well as ability to formulate and deliver key messages to stakeholders to promote rights and needs of women with disabilities. They were provided with the necessary training to play an active role inside the disability organizations and be engaged in the policy dialogues with government. The consultant developed a simplified Theory of Change based on the Project document that reflects the underlying rationales and assumptions that define the relationships or chain of results that lead Project strategies and activities to intended results. The Graph 1 below presents a chain describing how the Project is supposed to work and establishes plausible associations between the Project activities and the results sought.

Graph 1. Simplified Project Theory of Change



More detailed discussion of key components and activities is provided below, by outcome.

Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women and their access to information has increased on democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

To achieve Outcome 1, the Project was planning to train 55 visually and hearing impaired women in politics, socioeconomics and ICT. In addition to offering formal training courses comprised of four themes: democratic institutions, modern socio-economic and political processes, gender and women leadership, and computer skills, the Project planned to invite DBST to share information with women leaders about its activities, challenges, perspectives and plans.

Seven training courses (5 for visually impaired women and 2 for hearing impaired women) with one month duration (15 days) were planned to be delivered by local consultants. Specific themes included:

- Democracy and national legislation (Constitution, Social Security Code, etc.), the UN Conventions (e.g. CRPD, UDHR, etc.), the governmental arrangement and institutions, concept of civil society, etc.
- Modern social, economic, and political processes in the country and some international trends.
- Gender issues, women leadership, and famous women and their roles in promoting women rights and development.
- Computer and Internet.

The Project design fully reflected the needs and circumstances of women with visual and hearing impairments and limited the number of participants to 55 individuals as designing and delivering trainings to PWDs require additional time and efforts to address their needs and strengths.

It was planned to open a hot line service for women with disabilities. It had to be available to women 5 days per week starting from the third month of Project implementation. A specialist, experienced in social and legislation areas with a particular focus on disability issues, was supposed to provide consultations to women and answer their questions and it was expected that approximately 10 - 30 women per week would be using this service. Hearing impaired women would be able to access such service by sending and receiving SMS to a mobile number as a hot line service.

To provide women-leaders with access to computers and Internet, it was planned to procure the necessary equipment for the Informational Resource Center (IRC) of DBST and in its branches and provide access to internet for Project beneficiaries. The special computer software to transfer text files into speech for visually impaired users had to be purchased.

Outcome 2: Management, leadership, networking and advocacy skills of hearing and visually impaired women raised and number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the DBST increased.

To achieve Outcome 2, the Project was planning to organize a number of meetings with guest speakers to provide Project beneficiaries with new perception of the role of different organizations

and demonstrate how disability issues might be interconnected with purpose and tasks of those organizations. Women with disabilities were supposed to apply their knowledge and skills in preparing for these meetings and demonstrate their presentation skills as well as ability to formulate and deliver key messages to stakeholders. Through the meetings and visits, women leaders were supposed to establish new relationships with other leaders, professionals, and researchers, which will be helpful in their career of leaders. It was planned to organize follow up discussions with study visit participants to identify the most important and relevant lessons they learned.

DBST was expected to organize meetings with a central apparatus of DBST, heads of departments and facilities to share information with women leaders about its activities, challenges, perspectives and plans and demonstrate its facilities. It was supposed to result in discussions of activities that would address specific needs and aspiration of women DBST members with DBST leadership.

The Project was planning to support participation of women leaders in regional events and study visits to disability organizations in other countries. Such an international exposure was supposed to provide women leaders with the experience at the international level and first hand experience of activities of women with disabilities' work in other countries and establish connections with other leaders, professionals, and researchers, who would be valuable sources of information and expertise for future cooperation.

Outcome 3: Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the DBST and in the policy dialogues with government.

To achieve Outcome 3, the Project planned to involve women leaders into discussion events (small forums) by identifying short and long term priorities in terms of a) personal development, b) participation in activities of disability or other organizations, and c) the most important issues they are going to discuss during small forums. The Project manager was expected to assist women in selection of a common theme and form of discussion and development an agenda as well as supporting women presenters.

Capitalizing on key findings and lessons learned from small forums, the Project was planning to conduct national forums on issues of women leadership and social inclusion. The forum was supposed to include participants from all regions of the country and, in addition to women leaders, include representatives from companies, ministries, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Women leaders were expected to identify themes for national forums through a questionnaire. Participation in this activity could have both strengthened capacities of women leaders with disabilities in organizing an event at the national level and formulating and communicating their ideas and aspirations to decision makers.

The Project document identifies a number of risks and contains some corresponding mitigation strategies. It was believed that some women would not be able to come for a whole month to Ashgabat and it was planned that DBST would explain the benefits of training course and other Project activities to increase women motivation. It was planned to develop an alternative list of participants to replace potentially those women who would not be able to attend or would change their mind. Another risk was that no qualified trainers would be available. To address it, it was

planned to widely disseminate TORs among high schools and universities and offer flexible schedule of training courses. The risk of limited availability of guest speakers was planned to address by offering maximum flexibility to speakers.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This evaluation took place immediately after the Project completion. It is the expectation that its findings and recommendations will be used by UNDP and key Project stakeholders to inform their future work in advancing human rights of persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan.

The consultant followed the guidance provided in United Nations Evaluation Group Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports. The following guiding principles for the evaluation process and outcomes were adopted so that its outcomes are:

- participatory as it will reflect the views of as many stakeholders, Project's beneficiaries and implementers as possible;
- high quality as it will use triangulation (simultaneous use of perception, validation and documentation to analyze information);
- impartial and balanced;
- credible, clear and easy to understand;
- evidence based and action oriented
- gender responsive; and
- future oriented in its recommendations.⁵

The consultant is committed to providing quality products and services. As a deliverable is being developed, the consultant had at least four check points for quality control:

- A discussion of the inception report and plans of action to ensure that the consultant's understanding of what is required corresponds to project partners' expectations.
- Presentation and discussion of preliminary findings.
- A review of a draft, or mid-point of assessment.
- An acceptance procedure for completed report.

Adjustments were made to reflect feedback at each of these points. More informal communication contributed to the quality of the evaluation report. This process ensured that multiple opportunities are provided to resolve issues and challenges throughout the evaluation exercise.

A mixed-method design was used for this evaluation to ensure triangulation of data. All data gathered was verified through triangulation or ensuring the credibility of data gathered by relying on data from different sources (primary and secondary data), data of different types (qualitative, quantitative and resource information) or data from different respondents (e.g., beneficiaries, stakeholders, DBST and UNDP management and staff, and others). A large set of different and complementary evidence was collected and analyzed by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods that included:

⁵ The evaluator was following the guidance in *UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards*, July 2010 and *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports*, 2010

- **Desk review of relevant documents was conducted.** Quantitative and qualitative information was collected and analyzed. Some of the documents that were reviewed included: Project document and reports, relevant DBST documentation, reports of international organizations and national partners on gender aspects of development in Turkmenistan, with particular focus on women with disabilities. A list of documents examined and used in preparation of this report can be found in Annex 8.3.
- **Consultations with UNDP management and Project team were conducted** to identify key informants for face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus groups and e-mail exchanges and validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise.
- **Consultations with DBST management and staff were conducted** to validate the evaluation methodology, questionnaires, findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise.
- **Two focus group of Project beneficiaries (i.e. hearing and visually impaired women leaders hearing and visually impaired women who benefitted from the training in politics, socioeconomics and ICT, participated in study tors, discussion events and the national forum) were organized.** A focus group tool allows gathering information from people with similar backgrounds or experiences regarding Project's role and impact. A small number of participants (6 to 9) were asked to answer a set of targeted questions. The questions were set in advance in a logical order to elicit participants' opinions and experiences that are directly relevant to project evaluation exercise. The evaluator encouraged participation of all individuals invited and kept a neutral appearance through the focus group. Focus group participants may agree or disagree with each other that reveals different perspective on an issue and allows collecting a range of opinions and ideas.
- **Semi-structured interviews with pre-determined sets of questions were conducted.** The interviews will elicit information describing the processes of Project implementation, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The target audiences was finalized through consultations with UNDP and included representatives from:

- staff of DBST who were involved into the Project implementation;
- national consultants who conducted training on politics, socioeconomics and IT for Project beneficiaries;
- staff from selected line ministries, agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses attended by Project beneficiaries;
- operator of the hot line services for women with disabilities and some of its users;
- guest speakers who delivered presentations to Project beneficiaries;
- Project beneficiaries who participated in conferences/regional events;
- Project beneficiaries who participated in the international study visit to Belarus; and
- Project beneficiaries who participated in local study visits to government institutions, public organizations and international agencies.

The questionnaire for semi-structured interviewees and focus groups can be found in Annex 8.1

- **Informal conversational interviews** with questions emerging from the immediate context were conducted on *ad hoc* basis.
- **Validation of preliminary findings and recommendations with UNDP and DBST.** The consultant made two separate presentations of preliminary findings and recommendations to UNDP and DBST. They validated preliminary findings and provided an opportunity for management and staff of UNDP and DBST to contribute their suggestions and ideas to finalization of the report.

The consultant followed the UNEG code of conduct and ethical responsibilities including guidelines on protection of privacy and conflict of interest.⁶ The evaluator exercised his independent judgement and provided a comprehensive and balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the Project being evaluated, taking due account of the views of a diverse cross-section of stakeholders. The consultant tried to ensure that the evaluation is based on reliable data and observations.

All confidential information obtained by any means was treated in confidence. Personal, confidential and sensitive information was not discussed with, or disclosed to, unauthorized persons, knowingly or unknowingly. The interviewees and others were treated with objectivity and impartiality.

4. EVALUATION LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION APPROACHES

As the Project focused on empowerment and leadership capacity building of women with disabilities, in addition to providing knowledge and building skills in ICT, leadership and contributing to decision making, it contributed to changes in mindsets of Project beneficiaries and stakeholders, and strengthened resilience, self-confidence and self advocacy skills of women with disabilities. To capture changes in these critically important areas that can be attributable to Project interventions, the consultant collected rich evidence from Project beneficiaries and stakeholders to capture the baselines and changes that occurred due to Project activities. Due to time constraints, the consultant could not conduct surveys of beneficiaries and partners to assess multiple actual and potential Project outcomes and impacts or use other time consuming instruments. The consultant was planning to undertake one day trip to Mary to meet some Project beneficiaries who utilize knowledge and skills acquired through the Project and prepare a comprehensive case study of multiple and diverse Project outcomes and impacts, but the trip was not approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Project document in its section 5 where outcome indicators, baseline data and targets were listed did not provide specific indicators for some outputs of the Projects such as Output 1.2: A hot line service for women with disabilities is open and output 3.2: Two national forums on issues of women leadership and social inclusion held. The consultant had to rely on Project reports to assess its progress and achievements vis-à-vis its planned targets.

⁶ United Nations Evaluation Group, Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008

The Project did not systematically capture the levels of beneficiaries' satisfaction with the training and other supports provided and, what is more important, due to short Project duration, the information on how the beneficiaries use knowledge and skills acquired was not systematically captured as such activities would not be possible to complete before the Project completion. These limitations have constrained somewhat the analysis, the drawing of conclusions and the rendering of recommendations.

Table 1. Evaluation Exercise Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Constraints and risks	Mitigation Approach
Time limitation that makes difficult to capture all Project's outputs/outcomes across all dimensions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize effective sampling methodology to ensure that all areas of the Project and diverse beneficiaries are covered. • Utilise skype and e-mail exchanges to obtain rich evidence from multiple project partners and beneficiaries.
Some key stakeholders and beneficiaries may not be available for interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations with main stakeholders/beneficiaries will be planned with enough flexibility to account for their schedules. • Some interviews may be conducted via phone/skype.

5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The Project documents provide the necessary information that allow the Project credible evaluation. The main intended outputs, activities, results and objectively verifiable indicators are adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms, and the majority of results are verifiable. The Project documents provide relatively well defined results, outputs, activities and indicators of progress that are relevant to the context and realities of 2014 when the project was designed. Short Project duration did not warrant any mid-term Project reviews so that major corrective actions were not taken to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

From the outset, the evaluator received support from the Project including full access to Project's documents, publications, work plans, mid-year and final reports, and other resources. UNDP and the Project management and staff were generous with their time and provided multiple opportunities to discuss the Project. UNDP scheduled additional interviewees with partners and stakeholders to obtain additional information.

Overall, the consultant found that UNDP made a significant positive contribution to strengthening leadership skills of women with disabilities and built foundations for ongoing dialogue between PWDs and Government ministries and organizations. The following discussion examines Project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

5.1 Relevance

Relevance deals with the appropriateness of the Project design to the needs of women with disabilities in Turkmenistan.

The Project design is relevant vis-à-vis the overall Project goal. As the barriers and challenges faced by women with disabilities are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, UNDP adopted a comprehensive approach to address them. Specific challenges faced by women with disabilities addressed by the Project include:

- Limited knowledge of women with disabilities of ICT, democracy, gender and leadership
- Limited opportunities for open dialogue of PWDs and DPOs and ministries and other Government organizations.

The Project design and its objectives are relevant and well aligned with the national policies and strategies. The Project supported the Government in meeting a number of its international commitments, including but not limited to:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

High Project relevance was confirmed by Project beneficiaries, trainers, participants in the national forum and ministries and other organizations' staff where study trips were organized. Relevance and usefulness of trainings was confirmed by Project beneficiaries who were interviewed by the consultant. Women beneficiaries indicated that the Project provided them with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage into decision making at the local and national levels and lead women with disabilities.

The representatives of ministries and other organizations where study visits were organized confirmed that the meetings with women with disabilities were very relevant as they helped them to obtain rich information on specific challenges and needs of women with disabilities. They captured suggestions shared by Project beneficiaries and took them into account in their policy and program development work. They also expressed a need in institutionalizing such a dialogue to ensure that policy and programs developed by the ministries address actual needs and aspirations of women with disabilities.

5.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness focuses on results, not processes and the consultant examined if the project was producing its planned outcomes and meeting intended objectives.

The collected evidence demonstrates that the Project has achieved almost all of its intended objectives. The consultant highly praises a logical sequence of Project execution from thorough selection of hearing and visually impaired women, to comprehensive and hands on training, to providing the beneficiaries with an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills acquired. The Project benefitted hearing and visually impaired women of all ages and marriage status from all five regions (Ashgabat city, Ahal velayat, Balkan velayat, Lebap velayat, Dashoguz velayat, and Mary velayat) of the country.

The consultant was impressed to learn that the announcement about the Project was well received and that about 150 candidate have applied that demonstrates strong need among women with disabilities in such training opportunities. The Project had applied a rigorous process to select the best candidates. The selection committee comprised of Project Manager and DBST management team developed selection criteria and traveled to velayats to conduct interviews.

The trainings were conducted on the premises of the Social Rehabilitation Complex of DBST where 44 participants from regions were accommodated (other 11 women leaders were from Ashgabat). The trainings on democracy, the rule of law, processes of social policy formulation, ICT, gender and leadership skills in disability organizations were provided. As both the trainers and the participants indicated, levels of background knowledge and skills of participants varied and some trainers had to adjust their courses, simplify them and emphasize hands on practical discussions of complex concepts such as gender balance.

The consultant highly praises the Project approach of having 6 small groups of women (7-8) to participate in the trainings. Such a small group training design helped the trainers to implement individualized training approaches and engage all participants into discussion. Women leaders highly evaluated all trainers and shared with the consultant some concepts and ideas they have learned. Some of the beneficiaries found particularly beneficial the training on gender, human rights and ICT. One of the most important outcomes is that women leaders learned how to use the knowledge acquired in practical life situations to advance their human rights. Some of them shared the knowledge acquired with other women with disabilities. It helped them to mobilize other women with disabilities and either to communicate their ideas to decision makers or establish their self help groups. Interactive design of trainings provided participants with an opportunity to participate in discussions, share their points of view and experience, and give small speeches and presentations on some themes.

The consultant reviewed selected trainers' evaluations and was impressed to see the progress women with disabilities have made through the training courses. Some more advanced women leaders helped others by explaining complex concepts and training how to work on computers, for instance.

The Project focused on capacity building on communications, advocating and networking of women leaders with disabilities. To strengthen these skills, multiple opportunities were provided to women leaders to practice and improve these skills. A series of study visits were organized to ministries, universities, non-profit and business organizations, and municipal departments to meet with top level managers and in practice discuss the roles of managers and functions of different agencies. Guest speakers (top administrators and managers, lawyers, cultural workers, doctors, teachers, etc.) were also invited to meet with the Project beneficiaries and speak about their leadership experience and professional career. Women leaders greatly appreciated these presentations and study visits as they were able to meet other leaders and strengthened their confidence to communicate with them.

The consultant found that the Project was empowering its beneficiaries by inviting their feedback and participation in organizing such major events as the National Forum. The Project, for instance, contacted 22 most active women who participated in trainings to inform them about upcoming National Forum. Two themes were selected as topics of forums – "Promote opportunities for

employment of people with disabilities” and “Social integration of people of disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations.” The Project beneficiaries decided to organize a highly successful Forum that combined two topics: Promotion of opportunities for employment of people with disabilities and Social integration of people of disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations. The Forum provided women leaders with opportunities to engage into policy dialogues and forum discussions with representatives of relevant ministries and national stakeholders.

The Project opened a hot line that provided consultations and assistance to hearing and visually impaired women on different issues, including health services, social welfare, placement of children with disabilities in special schools, employment opportunities, etc. Although it was widely advertised and a hired specialist is highly knowledgeable and skilful, the demand for this service was quite low. The consultant reviewed the documentation compiled by the specialist that included records on the number of calls and issues raised and found it properly maintained. Overall, the users’ satisfaction with advice and support provided was high.

In June 2015, a group of participants visited the Belarussian Society of People with Visual Disabilities. Former training participants were invited to submit their application forms, where they indicated their current experience, motivation, and future plans to use new experience. The best candidates who demonstrated leadership, strong commitment, good results and feasible future plans were identified by a Selection Committee. The participants of study tour learned approaches and the best practices in the area of employment, adaptation, and rehabilitations of the people with visual disabilities. One participant shared with the consultant some interesting ideas on how some successful approaches supporting PWDs used in Belarus can be replicated in Turkmenistan (e.g., employment support, rehabilitation services).

The following Table 2 provides more detailed analysis of Project effectiveness, by output.

Table 2. Summary of Project Effectiveness: Outputs and Outcomes as of December 2012

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators/targets	Verified targets attainment
Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women and their access to information has increased on democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.		
Output 1.1: 55 women with disabilities have received training in politics, socioeconomics and IT.	Inform visually and hearing impaired women about opportunities to participate in project activities at all velayats. Select women candidates to take a part in the project activities Develop TORs and select national consultants to deliver training courses.	As the consultant indicated in the previous section, some outputs did not have baselines and indicators in the Project document. The analysis is based on the Project reports. The targets were met. About 900 women with hearing and visual impairments were informed about the opportunities. 55 potential women leaders interested to participate in the project activities were selected through interviews with approximately 150 candidates. The consultant was positively impressed to learn that so many women with disabilities decided to apply and commit their time to the course that confirms strong demand for such type of trainings.

Project Evaluation: Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators/targets	Verified targets attainment
	<p>Develop and approve training courses schedule, programs, and handouts.</p> <p>Conduct training courses on 4 themes – democracy and institutions, modern processes, gender and women leadership, and Internet and computer</p> <p>Gather evaluation material and feedback from trainers and participants.</p>	<p>Four national consultants to deliver training courses selected through the competitive process and hired</p> <p>7 training courses on 4 themes “Democracy and Democratic Institutions,” “Modern Socio-Economic Trends of Development”, “Computer and Internet Skill,” and “Gender and Women Leadership” were delivered. The consultant reviewed some of the course content and found it relevant and practical. The beneficiaries highly evaluated courses content and consultants.</p> <p>Each trainer organized pre-test in the middle of the training course and after completion of the training. The consultant reviewed some of the assessments done to trainers and found them comprehensive and clear. The trainees’ formal assessments were not available. The focus groups’ participants confirmed that trainers were clear in their explanation and used different teaching methods to make the courses more accessible and relevant to the audience, different teaching methods used by trainers. The Project beneficiaries indicated that trainers were responsive to their feedback and simplified somewhat academic concepts to make them more relevant to the audience.</p>
<p>Output 1.2: A hot line service for women with disabilities is open.</p>	<p>Set up the hot line and advertise about hot line services.</p> <p>Provide consultations and other assistance to women with disabilities through the hot line.</p>	<p>The targets were partially met. The hotline was set up on June 6. Advertisement about hot line services developed and sent to 9 DBST offices.</p> <p>The Project Specialist on Support on Social Integration (PS) was hired. From 5 to 10 women received consultations each week on health services, communal services, social protection, employment, rehabilitation services, administrative law (divorce, housing issues).</p> <p>The consultant believes that the potential of hot line was underutilized. The services had to be more widely advertised to target all women (and possibly men) with disabilities. Over the course implementation only up to 50 women with disabilities used this service.</p>
<p>Output 1.3: Computers and access to Internet will be available for women-leaders.</p>	<p>Provide women with disabilities with access to computers, Internet, library.</p>	<p>The targets were met. The Internet services was available. A special software JAWS was installed to help people with visual impairment having access to computer and Internet. From 2 to 12 people attended the IRC per day.</p> <p>The interviewees and focus groups participants indicated that they learned a lot of useful skills through the ICT course and used internet to search for information on education, news, special devices for PWDs, networking, activities of disability organizations, laws and local regulations, social networks, social rehabilitation, typhlo and sign language –tools. Through social media women communicate with other people</p>

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Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators/targets	Verified targets attainment
		with disabilities across the country and overseas. At the same time the participants of focus groups indicated that they are losing the acquired skills as they are too poor to afford a PC and cannot travel far to use the computer class. It was unclear how the computer class is and will be used after the Project completion.
Outcome 2: Management, leadership, networking and advocacy skills of hearing and visually impaired women raised and number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the DBST increased		
Output 2.1: 28 meetings with guest speakers and stakeholders held.	<p>Identify potential guest speakers and receive their confirmation to meet with women leaders.</p> <p>Conduct 28 meetings for women leaders with guest speakers.</p> <p>Conduct follow up discussion on held meetings with guest speakers.</p>	<p>The targets were almost met. 28 guest speakers were identified and in total 20 meetings were conducted. The consultant met some speakers and can confirm that they were positively impressed with the desire of Project beneficiaries to learn and apply knowledge and skills learned in practice. The Project beneficiaries found the meetings very beneficial as in addition to being inspired, some of them learn about some employment opportunities and obtained them (e.g., garment industry).</p> <p>Follow up discussions were organized to discuss meeting results, follow up steps for future cooperation, etc.</p>
Output 2.2: 55 women with disabilities obtained practical skills in management of disability organizations.	<p>Organize meetings with a central apparatus of DBST and head of units of DBST.</p> <p>Engage women leaders in activities of DBST.</p> <p>Assist women leaders on development and implementation of projects.</p>	<p>The targets were met. More than 20 meetings with DBST management team and visits to units were organized. About 40 women were involved in decision making regarding the new DBS Charter and other internal issues such the structure, planning events, division of responsibilities, etc. Many of them were engaged in planning and implementation of different events. The Project beneficiaries told the consultant how many diverse DBST activities they helped to organize. Some of them include Festival of poetry, contest of pictures, Musical Festival, artisan clubs, etc. Women leaders shared with the consultant their plans to organize knitting clubs, collect and publish a book of poetry written by visually impaired individuals.</p>
Output 2.3: 56 local networking visits organized for women-leaders with disabilities.	<p>Identify local organizations for study visit and develop the program of meetings.</p> <p>Send request letters for arranging study visits to governmental agencies.</p> <p>Organize 56 local study visits</p> <p>Conduct follow up evaluation of study visits.</p>	<p>The targets were almost met.</p> <p>56 organizations for visits were identified based on interests of women, the program of meeting developed and issues. 50 local study visits were conducted and included governmental institutions - Mejlis (Parliament), Democracy Institute, Ministry of Justice (Adalat), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Protection and Labor, Ministry of Culture, State Institute of Economic and Management, State Committee of TV and Radio Broadcast, Transportation Police, Theater, Education - Rehabilitation Center for impaired children, Center for Early Child Development public organizations Trade Union, Women Union, Youth Union, etc. and 3) international agencies UNICEF, UNDP, UNDP, UNFPA, QED, GIZ, etc. The consultant learned that</p>

Project Evaluation: Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators/targets	Verified targets attainment
		<p>women leaders benefitted tremendously from these visits as they helped them to share their concerns and ideas.</p> <p>Follow up discussions of the visits were organized and were found to be very interesting and stimulating by the participants.</p>
<p>Output 2.4: 2 International study visits organized for women with disabilities.</p>	<p>Search for conferences, workshops or and contact possible host organizations for arranging international study visits for women leaders.</p> <p>Develop study visit programs and arrange logistics</p> <p>Collect applications from women leaders</p> <p>Organize international study visits to disability organizations from other countries or participation in conferences for 6 women leaders with disabilities</p> <p>Hold follow up meetings on international study visit results and future plans of women leaders.</p>	<p>The project document contains more ambitious list of activities for this output, including participation in regional events than it is presented in Project reports.</p> <p>The revised targets (2 international study visits) were partially met. Only one study tour was organized.</p> <p>All women participated in trainings were informed and the study visit and interviewed on phone. 22 women were selected for further consideration. The Selection Committee composed of UNDP project staff and DBST Central Apparatus selected 6 candidates for study visit and 2 alternative candidates through a competitive process. A decision was made to send a group of the best 5 visually impaired women leaders with one representative of DBST. They were from 3 velayats (Regions) of the country. One participant whom the consultant interviewed expressed her sincere gratitude for such an opportunity that helped her to learn how women with disabilities are supported in Belarus and what they do for themselves. The participant brought home a lot of ideas that started discussing with DBST and other women with disabilities for potential application in Turkmenistan.</p> <p>Follow up meetings were conducted and were recognized as very helpful as they assisted in identifying interesting practices that work in Belarus that can be applied in realities of Turkmenistan.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the DBST and in the policy dialogues with government.</p>		
<p>Output 3.1: 7 discussion events (small forums) organized by women with disabilities</p>	<p>Identify themes, participants, design the form, content and materials for the small forums.</p> <p>Invite stakeholders from governmental and other organizations to participate in small forums.</p> <p>Conduct 7 small forums with active engagement of women leaders with disabilities.</p>	<p>The targets were almost completely met as 6 mini forums were conducted.</p> <p>The Project beneficiaries who were interviewed and participated in focus groups found the mini-forums very beneficial as they helped them to practice their skills and identify core issues that had to be communicated to decision makers. The documentation on mini forums was scarce and the consultant cannot provide more information on them. For instance, the Project sent invitation to a wide range of stakeholders and partners but it is not clear how many of them participated in small forums.</p>
<p>Output 3.2: Two national forums on</p>	<p>Prepare for the National Forums for women leaders with disabilities through</p>	<p>The target was partially met. The Project combined two different topics in one national forum.</p>

Project Evaluation: Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators/targets	Verified targets attainment
<p>issues of women leadership and social inclusion held.</p>	<p>disseminations of questionnaire and collecting proposals from women leaders with disabilities.</p> <p>Engage women leaders in design of the National Forums and other preparatory activities.</p> <p>Organize two National Forums for women leaders with disabilities</p> <p>Organize follow up discussion for lessons learned and findings.</p> <p>Assist women leaders in developing proposals to government agencies regarding disability issues.</p>	<p>Project beneficiaries were extensively involved into topic identification and Forum implementation, including making their own presentations.</p> <p>Two main topics were “Promote Opportunities for Employment of People with Disabilities” and “Social Integration of People of Disabilities through Participation in Activities of Public Disability Organization”. 45 individuals participated in the Forum. 19 women leaders with disabilities from 5 velayats (Regions), 2 international guest speakers (representative of Society of people with visual disabilities of Belorussia and the President of Society of people with visual disabilities of Kyrgyzstan, vice-president of Asian Blind Union) and 18 representatives of government ministries and public organizations, 5 representatives of UN agencies took part in this Forum. The consultant heard very positive feedback from various ministry staff who attended the Forum who found the presentations were constructive and helpful in informing next disability policy/programs development steps.</p> <p>45 women were engaged in discussion of issues of reasonable accommodation, vocational trainings, accessible environment, social integration, and employment and formulated 12 proposals to relevant institutions</p>

5.3 Efficiency

Efficiency is associated with the resources used to produce desired outputs. The consultant examined the extent to which the Project has produced its planned outputs in relation to expenditure of resources. In addition to exploring efficiency in resource use, the consultant examined what specific steps were undertaken to optimize the Project efficiency.

Efficiency measures how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to results. The Project strived to meet its expected outputs by looking for cost-efficiencies in Project operations and utilizing prudent business practices. The Project contains elements of soft assistance (e.g., trainings, study visits) and these soft elements are embedded into various Project components that make the application of conventional efficiency indicators to these areas not feasible.

The Project was well managed, with core required documentation in place. The evaluator acknowledges a results-focused character of the Project document that helped to keep it focused. The Project document contains many specific goals and indicators of success, but the evaluator

believes that the linkages between some inputs, outputs and outcomes could have been strengthened through better focused indicators. Some indicators and instruments to measure the Project's progress vis-à-vis its goals were not sufficiently elaborated in the Project documentation (e.g., targets for hot line users were undefined). Some important aspects of Project's outcomes were not fully captured (e.g. participants' feedback on training received was not systematically collected, reflections and ideas from small forums and the National Forum were not collected and analyzed).

A strong team of dedicated and competent individuals to implement the Project was mobilized by UNDP that was instrumental to Project's success. To some extent the Project's progress towards targets was negatively affected by late Project start and departure of the Project manager in the middle of the Project.

The following steps were taken to optimize the Project efficiency:

- UNDP open, transparent and value-for-money procurement procedures supported good Project efficiency.
- Location of the project on DSBT premises helped to save on office rent.
- Using of DBS social rehabilitation complex to accommodate trainings participants resulted in savings.
- The Project implementation was run by a Project manager and the Project assistant was hired only after the Project manager resignation that resulted in savings on Project assistant salary.
- Consultants/trainers were involved on short-term as needed basis instead of long-term contracts.
- Competent local experts were engaged instead of international consultants.
- The premises for hot line services specialist and training rooms for ICT training were provided by DBST.

5.4 Actual and Potential Impact

Impact deals with whether the Project's overall objectives have been achieved or are likely to be achieved. The consultant concludes that the Project will make some of its anticipated impact and will have a catalytic effect on the disability reform process.

The Project has met its core expectations as outlined in the Project document. The evaluator believes that the biggest contribution and impact of the Project is that it managed to achieve dramatic change in mindsets of many decision-makers and women with disabilities on disability. In Turkmenistan disability has traditionally been seen from the medical model perspective. The medical model construes disability as an observable physical, mental, psychological or sensory deviation from normality caused by disease or another health condition. Under the medical model, it is believed that the various limitations arising from disability can potentially be prevented or managed by medical treatment. Thus the person with disabilities is viewed as a subject for medical intervention and treatment. Many individuals interviewed in the course of this evaluation, including Project beneficiaries themselves, indicated that before the Project trainings they viewed disability through the medical lens. The Project helped them to understand and accept the social/human rights model of disability and the consultant was pleasantly surprised when some ministries' staff used the core ideas and principles of human rights model of disability in discussing the plans of

their ministries in the area of disability. There was a real change in mindsets of ministry staff and decision makers who met with women with disabilities and heard from them directly about challenges they faced and solutions they proposed. State officials and leaders of diverse organizations learned that persons with disabilities are the same people as persons with no disabilities who would like to study, get good jobs, get married and pursue other opportunities in life and that society has to do much more than it is doing now to help them achieve their goals.

Many Project beneficiaries due to the burden of double discrimination, lack of awareness, and difficult circumstances had low self-confidence and little hope for change before the Project implementation. PWDs are at increased risk for academic failure, social difficulties, psychological problems, prolonged dependence on parents or guardians, and employment difficulties. How to measure the impact of the Project that addressed leadership, self-confidence and communication skills of women with disabilities? Traditional measures such as a number of women who got employed due to Project intervention or a number of recommendations communicated and accepted by decision makers do not capture the breadth of the Project impact.

To unpack other equally important Project impacts, the consultant examined how the Project changed mindsets and life approaches of its beneficiaries. Interviews and focus groups demonstrated that many women with disabilities overcame many challenges they faced and achieve positive outcomes in their lives that is captured by the term “resilient.”

They improved self-awareness or awareness of their strengths and weakness and acceptance of their disability and became proactive (active engagement in the world around them and belief in the power to control their own destiny). Numerous stories demonstrated that many women with disabilities became more persistent in the face of adversity and flexible in pursuing alternate strategies to reach a goal. The focus groups participants clearly identified their specific yet flexible goals and outlined strategies to reach them by relying on social support systems that included some women met through the trainings. The consultant was particularly impressed to see positive temperament and strong self-esteem of women leaders that were built/strengthened through the Project.

The most important impact of the Project is that it helped women leaders to believe in themselves and built their self-advocacy skills so that many of them are not afraid to advocate for themselves or on behalf of others with decision makers at the national and local levels, business owners, in stores, hospitals, with social service providers and other fields. Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions. One women leader told the evaluator that she is not afraid to tell in the hospital that she has the same rights as everybody else and will wait in line but will demand the same services that are provided to non-disabled individuals. The Project provided women with disabilities with opportunities to learn, foster their self-confidence, motivation and leadership skills so that they can exploit their potential and lead other PWDs.

Learning about gender, leadership, government operations and ICT gave the Project beneficiaries the tools and experience to take greater control over their own lives and engage into multiple level advocacy work. One of Project beneficiaries openly communicated her family housing problems to the Mejlis Chairwoman who actively engaged local and city authorities into its effective resolution.

The consultant heard from many women leaders and other partners about one Project beneficiary with visual impairments who was admitted as a full time student to the Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maksim Tanka department of physical training for people with visual impairments. She dreamt about higher education through all her life but faced so many barriers to access higher education at home that had to apply to university in Belarus. The consultant learned that she was a true inspiration for women leaders and other stakeholders.

Women leaders explained to the consultant that they acquired basic skills of making their communication understandable to decision makers, local authorities, employers, etc. They realized that if they want decision makers to listen to them, they have to communicate in a way decision makers can understand. They expressed, for instance, a need to publish books in Braille and the state publishing company ordered a printer in Braille. Project beneficiaries advocated before the local authorities in Mary to improve the area surrounding DBST enterprise in Mary and many of suggested changes were implemented by local authorities (e.g, signage, road improvements). Some Project beneficiaries established their own businesses and mobilized women to pursue various activities (e.g., arts).

Twenty two women initiated from one to three small projects for members of DBST, which varied from knitting and conversational clubs to opening computer classes for visual and hearing impaired people and renovation of DBST premises. The consultant was very impressed to hear enthusiasm and dedication of women leaders to continue with their projects and include more members. Some of them shared ideas about new projects. Many of women leaders continue their communication with the National Society of the Red Crescent of Turkmenistan, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Trade Union, employment departments of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and other organizations. Due to Project support some women leaders managed to find jobs – one participant, for instance, now serves as a procurement and logistics officer at the specialized school for people with disabilities from April 2015.

Project beneficiaries acquired the necessary skills to communicate with decision makers in writing and shared their ideas and recommendations through DBST with respective state institutions. Some of the most notable ideas include:

- Proposal on sharing information about vacancies was discussed with and accepted by representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection during the small forum. Proposal suggests that the information on the vacancies will be taken by women members of DBS and shared by DBS in each region on monthly basis. It was decided that the information on the vacancies in Ashgabat and in the regions will be available through the Department of Labor and Employment. Women already started to obtain the list with vacancies and share with other DBST members.
- The proposal about increasing the effectiveness of teaching process by applying Braille methods and Braille equipment and strengthening the capacity of teachers of specialized schools sent to the Ministry of Education. The issue of importance of professional education for PWDs also was stressed in the proposal.
- Women drafted and sent letters to the Police Departments of (Ashgabat, Mary, and Dashoguz cities regarding traffic lights and security. In Ashgabat and Mary the requests were accepted

and follow up action taken. Traffic lights near to location of DBST offices ensure save walking for PWDs.

- The sewing training class organized by the Red Crescent Society in Turkmenabat and 4 women from DBST enrolled for this training. This happened as a follow up action initiated by one Project beneficiary after meeting with the Red Crescent Society.
- The letter to Ministry of Education was drafted and composed the proposal to incorporate Turkmen language in JAWS program used by visual impaired people.

Not all ideas and suggestions developed by Project beneficiaries were accepted and addressed by respective state authorities and other stakeholders, but women leaders became confident in communicating with decision makers and advised and encouraged other women with disabilities to share their concerns and ideas with decision makers.

To improve the Project impact, it could have been beneficial to select women with disabilities who demonstrated strong leadership skills and conduct additional in depth training to prepare them to pursue leadership positions in leading state institutions such as Mejlis. The consultant believes also that multiple ideas expressed by Project beneficiaries during the forums had to be consolidated into a single document and shared with the Mejlis and respective line ministries to maximize the Project impact on national disability policies.

5.5 Sustainability

Sustainability deals with being strategic and looking to the future and assessing if key projects elements will be in place and expand beyond the Project completion in 2015. The Project design includes some sustainability strategies.

There is a range of factors that are beyond UNDP control that have negatively influenced the Project's sustainability:

- Absence of a cross-sectoral National Disability strategy. Women with disabilities who strengthened their leadership skills through the Project could have been involved into such strategy development, reflect women perspective and support the strategy implementation and monitoring on the ground.
- Limited number of DPOs/NGOs supporting persons with disabilities where the Project beneficiaries could utilize their leadership skills.
- Too short Project duration that limited opportunities of effective follow up with women beneficiaries to support them to implement their ideas as well as consolidate and communicate their ideas and recommendations to decision makers.
- Insufficient targeted support to women with disabilities with strongest leadership potential to prepare them for leadership positions.

The consultant finds that the Project is sustainable in the following areas:

- Many women with disabilities who benefitted from the Project are and will be sharing key lessons learned and skills acquired with other women with disabilities and will lead them by example.
- Women beneficiaries established networks with each other to share information and provide support and they will most likely be active and hopefully will expand.

- Many women with disabilities who benefitted from the Project will continue running their businesses and interest groups.
- Some Project beneficiaries have a strong potential to join public service and will be able to promote the disability agenda within the Government institutions.
- Many Project beneficiaries will continue their advocacy work and will communicate their ideas and suggestions to decision makers at the national and local levels.
- Ministries and other organizations attended by Project beneficiaries are willing and interested in conducting further dialogue and meetings with persons with disabilities and most likely will organize meetings with PWDs themselves.
- DBST will continue using training materials developed through the Project in all its branches and will encourage Project beneficiaries to share their new knowledge and skills with other women. Trained women will have a privilege to be hired first if any job opportunity opens up in DBST.
- Active women-leaders will be invited to participate in the meetings of the Board of DBST and discuss possible interactions with governmental agencies on different matters.

Some opportunities to influence policy changes were missed, however. To further enhance the Project sustainability, it could have involved women leaders into finalization of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020 issued by the Government in January 2015 that envisions development and implementation of national mechanisms for promoting gender equality in collaboration with UNFPA. The Project could have advocated the inclusion of specific actions targeting women with disabilities into such national gender mechanisms and activities, such as targeting stereotypes and increased participation of women in social, political and professional life and women and employment.

There are a few areas where Project sustainability could have been improved. The Project procured computers and a special software JAWS for people with visual impairment into the computer lab of DBST. The training participants acquired the necessary computer skills and were extensively using the lab. The equipment and software were transferred to DBST after the Project completion but they were underutilized as DBST did not have the necessary funds to run ICT courses for its members.

The prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support are questionable. The consultant found that the weakest part of the Project is its financial viability as there is no clear picture on how funding of similar, well designed and needed training interventions will be maintained.

6 LESSONS LEARNED

The consultant identifies the following core lessons:

- As the barriers and challenges faced by women with disabilities are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, UNDP was correct in adopting a comprehensive approach addressing multiple

barriers faced by women with disabilities, strengthening their leadership capacities and providing them with an opportunity to engage into direct dialogue with decision makers.

- The barriers faced by women with disabilities include in addition to limited access to educational, vocational training opportunities, employment, limited accessibility of buildings also attitudinal barriers, which include low levels of expectations, fear, ignorance, misdirected charity, and pity. For example, some teachers working in boarding schools had so low expectations for the social inclusion of their students with disabilities that did not develop any plans for transition from school to a work setting or higher education.
- It takes long time to change mindsets of decision makers from charity to social/human rights model of disability but once key decision makers embrace the concept, the development and implementation of disability-specific policies and strategies will become much easier in Turkmenistan where the availability of budget resource is not an issue. It is critically important to find champions of disability reforms in the Government and Mejlis and support them with additional training, study visits, etc. A wide range of additional activities have to be implemented to build broader public awareness of social/human rights model of disability as well as to ensure a broad societal buy in of disability reforms.
- Capacity needs of all partners with responsibility for disability agenda are significant. UNDP with DBST made an important contribution to strengthening leadership capacities of women with disabilities, but it may be difficult for them to realize this potential when the institutional and policy environment are not fully supportive of PWDs.
- Turkmenistan lacks a national disability strategy, with specific objectives and targets in disability reforms. When Government long-term priorities in supporting persons with disabilities are unclear, it is difficult for donors to design and implement high impact interventions that would have the maximum possible impact on disability reforms.
- Employment of women with disabilities remains significantly restricted and, therefore, low.
- Good education, resilience, confidence and self-advocacy skills are factors that contribute to success of women with disabilities.
- Barriers faced by women with disabilities can be eliminated and reduced if they are active and use any opportunity to communicate their needs and ideas to decision makers.
- Physical location of the Project office in the DBST helped to build excellent working relations with the national partner.
- UNDP is being respected as trusted neutral agent promoting the goals of social inclusion, with significant expertise in the area of disability and is well positioned to continue supporting reforms in these areas.

- Programs to address disability and gender issues need to be designed for both maximum reach and broad accessibility. Focus on a limited number of beneficiaries will not lead to systemic changes.
- Women with disabilities are not a homogenous group. Women with physical and sensory disabilities often have different needs than women with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Women living in urban areas may have different priorities than women in rural areas. Understanding the individual characteristics of individuals with disabilities is a crucial foundation for supporting them well. Such diverse factors as age, gender, and ethnicity; family background and circumstances, such as parents' education, expectations, and household economic status; and, importantly, the nature of their disabilities and how well they function in a variety of domains should be taken into account.
- Project document and a LogFrame should be regularly updated to reflect the changing Project circumstances. The main intended outputs, activities, results and objectively verifiable indicators should be adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

As the analysis above demonstrates, the Project made an important positive contribution to strengthening leadership capacities of women with disabilities.

The consultant identifies the following constraints in moving forward in the field of disability reforms:

- A highly vertical state decision making model that limits the room for maneuver for ministries and agencies and creates strong incentives to maintain status quo. Hence the focus should be made on core decision makers and building broader societal awareness of disability.
- Lack or limited data on disability to develop effective interventions and monitor their impact.
- Lack of strong centrally positioned state body to spearhead the disability agenda.
- Absence of persons with disabilities in high state bodies such as Mejlis.
- Declining UN and other donors' resources available for such initiatives.

The consultant identifies the following opportunities in moving forward in the field of disability reforms:

- UNDP is well respected by the Government partners and is in position to advance the disability agenda.
- Government has adopted a number of strategic documents (e.g., on gender, human rights) and disability can be a focus of one of the following State Strategies.
- UNDP possesses significant expertise in social inclusion and disability areas.
- Ability to implement "UN as One" approach and coordinate efforts of multiple UN agencies with Government partners to implement a multi-sectoral program focusing on disability.

Given the complex nature of disability, development and implementation of legislation, policies and programs advancing human rights of PWDs is a complex process that requires effective multi-sectoral coordination among diverse partners responsible for the fragmented and diverse disability legislation and policies. UNDP and other UN agencies are well positioned to develop a mutually

agreed plan of actions to promote human rights of PWDs in Turkmenistan that should be aligned with and supportive of ensuring country's compliance with UN CRPD.

The following recommendations should be seen as an agenda of possible topics for discussions between UNDP, UN sister agencies, Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President, line ministries, service providers, and NGOs supporting PWDs. The Government of Turkmenistan demonstrated its strong commitment to disability agenda and advancing the country's compliance with UN CRPD. Unlike many countries of the region that have very limited resources to develop policies and programs supporting PWDs, Turkmenistan possesses significant resources to develop and implement a comprehensive series of policies and programs advancing human rights of PWDs and may benefit from the international experiences of such reforms.

7.1 Recommendations for the Government of Turkmenistan

7.1.1 Identify priorities and develop a National Disability Strategy to advance human rights of PWDs and ensure compliance with UN CRPD.

The UN CRPD is legally binding and by ratifying it Turkmenistan has committed to modify or abolish existing discriminatory laws, customs and practices; take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability by any person, organization or private enterprise; adopt legislative, administrative, policy, programmatic and other measures to implement the rights of PWDs; provide accessible information to persons with disabilities on relevant technology and other assistance, services and facilities; and promote the training of professionals and staff working with PWDs.⁷ Solid central level leadership and stamina is a prerequisite to ensure that well-planned and coordinated implementation and reporting mechanisms are actually put in place to realise the new and forthcoming legislation that comply with the UN CRPD.

The consultant acknowledges a strong commitment of Mejlis, central agencies and line ministries to aligning the legislation and policies of Turkmenistan with the UN CRPD. The Inter-Ministerial Commission was established to ensure the implementation of international commitments of Turkmenistan in the field of human rights and international humanitarian law and is responsible for preparation of national reports. The Commission monitors and develops proposals for improving the current legislation of Turkmenistan in accordance with international standards, promoting adherence to international treaties of Turkmenistan in the field of human rights, including the UN CRPD. The National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan was assigned with the tasks of coordinating the work of the Commission.

To improve horizontal inter-ministerial collaboration and make interventions more results-focused, it is advisable to establish a primary body located at the centre of the government responsible for disability agenda, identification of strategic priorities and coordination of ministries' activities. Ideally, such a central body may be located in the Cabinet of Ministers, but pragmatically such a leading role can be delegated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The central body could be instrumental in improving the inter-ministerial coordination in the area of disability and address such

⁷ Article 4 of the CRPD sets up the general obligations of States Parties to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability.

potential problems as duplication of supports and services, cost ineffectiveness, and inaccessibility of services.

The consultant strongly recommends the national partners, with UN agencies involvement, to develop a National Disability Strategy. The National Disability Strategy and its development should:

- Be CRPD-compliant. The CRPD includes definitions, general principles, and general obligations; 26 substantive rights provisions addressing, from a disability perspective, the full range of civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights; 10 articles on national and international monitoring and supervision; and 10 final provisions. It is essential for the national disability policy drafting committee to understand the implications of the CRPD, including foundational principles that should underpin the policy and strategy, and specific provisions that can guide its different sections as well as implementation and monitoring components.
- Be as participatory as possible and invite persons with disabilities and DPOs to provide their inputs.
- Adopt life long approach to disability that takes into account person's likely needs and aspirations over their lifetime, paying particular attention to milestones and times of transition.
- Define clear roles and responsibilities of key partners.
- Mainstream disability into main government policies and programs so that public services are designed and delivered in ways that include PWDs.
- Recognize that PWDs have diverse strengths and needs and they are not a homogenous group.
- Ensure equal representation of under-represented groups.
- Rely on evidence and data in Strategy development and implementation.
- Have independent monitoring of Strategy implementation, with extensive involvement of DPOs and PWDs.

The National Disability Strategy should be drafted from the perspective of the social model of disability. Whatever the nature of disability, the basic principles of the social approach to disability adopted by the United Nations places responsibility on society to provide an enabling environment by removing the physical and social barriers to participation in everyday life in order for *all* people to exercise their rights. It should include a definition of disability that is based on UN CRPD definition. The definition in the National Disability Strategy, in particular, should adopt a balanced approach and in addition to recognizing the individual's impairments, acknowledge the barriers PWDs face and recognize society's responsibility in eliminating or reducing these barriers. The definition of disability will have fundamental implications for the scope of disability legislation as well as policy and programs development. For instance, the introduction of a cross-ministerial consistent definition along with the government-wide statistical standards for collection and validation of data on PWDs should significantly improve the data on disability that will lead to better policy and programmatic decisions.

The National Disability Strategy should include a definition of reasonable accommodation that could include physical modifications to work premises, such as the construction of ramps, the provision of devices such as visual and hearing aids, as well as job restructuring to suit the abilities of the worker with disabilities. A universal disability assessment mechanism and protocol that is based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) can be included as well.

The National Disability Strategy should introduce and mainstream a concept of non-discrimination throughout the whole document. The commitment to ensure the equality of individuals with disabilities, as well as prohibiting any discrimination on the basis of disability should be explicitly stated. To achieve equality some specific affirmative action measures to achieve equality such as in education and employment support can be introduced.

The National Disability Strategy should make a specific commitment to modify and abolish any laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against PWDs and engage DPOs into this process.⁸ In addition, the Strategy may define a process for screening of all new policies and programs that will ensure in particular that they are aligned with UN CRPD and reflect the objectives of the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities is reflected in all policies and programmes with extensive involvement of PWDs and DPOs.

Strategies and tools of effective inter-ministerial coordination to optimize supports and services provided to PWDs and improve effectiveness of collective efforts should be introduced into the National Disability Strategy. The importance of a coordinated approach among all partners in advancing the disability is universally accepted. For instance, to improve employability of PWDs, a well coordinated set of measures providing education, rehabilitation and training should be provided.

The body responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the overall implementation of the National Disability Strategy should be identified and frequency and nature of its reporting articulated. Performance measures should be identified and embedded into all sections of the National Disability Strategy so that expectations are clearly articulated and progress can be regularly monitored and evaluated, and well coordinated with other strategies and activities across ministries. Continuous monitoring and evaluation is critically important to success of the National Disability Strategy as it helps to evaluate whether policy priorities are correctly identified and whether the policy is achieving its expected outcomes.

Given the complex nature of disability and a number of line ministries and central agencies involved into National Disability Strategy development, approval and implementation, it is necessary to have a clear road map to ensure successful and timely completion of the National Disability Strategy. The roadmap should clearly outline key partners roles and responsibilities, the timetable for developing by-laws, regulations, and instructions and other policies, and outline the resources allocated to the policy including money, skills, and infrastructure. All key elements of the National Disability Strategy should have concrete budget resources to support their materialization. Effective communication plan has to be developed as well as communication the public and stakeholders are critically important as they help to make sure that policy recommendations are understood and supported, improving the likelihood that they will be accepted.

DPOs like DBST and PWDs can play an important role in implementation and monitoring the implementation of the National Disability Strategy as well as other government disability strategies and plans. DPOs' representatives should be invited to be permanent members of the body responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the overall implementation of the National

⁸ UN CRPD, Article 4

Disability Strategy. Line ministries developing their inputs into the Strategy should be required to conduct regular consultations with DPOs and PWDs, record their inputs and take into consideration. Proactive measures should be adopted to consult groups that are traditionally excluded or underrepresented.

Consultations with DPOs would help to test whether the policy options prepared for the National Disability Strategy will really address actual needs of PWDs. The consultant believes that extensive involvement of DPOs into all stages of the National Disability Strategy development and implementation will help to find simple and practical solutions that may have been missed by public servants who are often remote from realities on the ground. A number of regional sessions for the National Disability Strategy drafting committee can be organized with regional/local PWDs and DPOs to identify the needs and develop solutions to eradicate the barriers that PWDs face.

DPOs could play an important role in monitoring the implementation of UN CRPD and the National Disability Strategy as well as other government strategies and plans promoting human rights of PWDs. In Austria, for instance, the Austrian Independent Monitoring Committee consists of seven members nominated by organisations representing the rights of persons with disabilities, and appointed by the Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection for four years. Four of the members represent DPOs, one represents human rights organisations, one represents organisations related to development cooperation, and one represents academic institutions. Delegates from the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection Bureau are non-voting members. In addition, representatives from other ministries may be involved (as non-voting members) for the monitoring of a specific area, which may be outside of the scope of the activities of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. With regard to the Committee's mandate, as required by Article 33(2) UN CRPD for the national framework, the Committee has assumed the following tasks:

- Receive and follow-up on individual complaints;
- Make recommendations to public authorities based on both individual complaints as well as general observations; and
- Support awareness raising actions on the meaningful inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities, by offering support (within its available means) to interested public bodies, implementing the Convention.⁹

The consultant strongly advises to explore a possibility to establish a similar Independent Monitoring Committee in Turkmenistan.

7.1.2 Develop a comprehensive cross-sectoral policy/strategy supporting employment of PWDs.

Through semi-structured interviews and focus groups the consultant learned that employment remains one of the biggest challenges for women with disabilities despite the positive changes introduced into the labour law. The labour laws of Turkmenistan explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability, and this refers to direct and indirect discrimination in relation to getting employment, work conditions, training and professional rehabilitation, advancement in the workplace and termination of the employment contract. A new Labour Code has been approved in 2009, which updates the existing labour law that was adopted in 1993. The Code includes specific

⁹ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/disability/docs/AustrianMonitoringBody.pdf>

provisions regarding the labour rights of persons with disabilities, including the prevention of discrimination against workers with disabilities. For instance, the employers have to fulfil the recommendations of the medical-labour commissions with regard to PWDs such as reduced work hours without loss of wages, reduced workload, and other measures outlined in the individual rehabilitation plans.¹⁰ In accordance with Article 18 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On Employment" employers are required to designate a particular percentage of jobs for PWDs and inform about these vacancies local employment centres.

According to the Social Protection Code, PWDs have the right to be gainfully employed and the employer cannot refuse to enter into an employment contract or promote a PWD, re-assign him/her or terminate the employment contract with the exception of those cases where the individual's health condition prevents the execution of professional duties, or threatens the health and safety of others. The law specifies that enterprises, organizations and institutions are required to establish the necessary conditions in accordance with the individual programs of rehabilitation to enable PWDs to work. Enterprises, organizations and institutions are also required to have quotas of job positions for PWDs.¹¹

For many PWDs, work is key to economic independence, health and well-being and full participation in the community. Under the socialist system after receiving education in segregated specialized schools, many of those who were blind, deaf, or had less serious disabilities were employed in state-funded sheltered enterprises, or in home-based work. Through the interviews and focus groups, the consultant learned that there are significant gaps between the legislation and policies and realities faced by PWDs in the field of employment. Turkmenistan is a society that still considers providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities an act of charity rather than a right governed by international and national law. Employment is not only economically important for PWDs as it helps to increase their incomes but it also a means to improve self-worth and social acceptance and respect. The importance of ensuring access to the job market for vulnerable groups, including PWDs was emphasized during the post-2015 National Consultations in Turkmenistan.¹²

Employment involves matching potential employees with job opportunities. If a PWD who is looking for a job cannot find one, the reasons may lie with the employee, with the employer, with job opportunities, or with the mechanisms that match the two sides together. To promote employment of PWDs, all these areas have to be addressed simultaneously. The consultations with key stakeholders, including PWDs themselves, confirmed that they face multiple barriers to employment.

PWDs need individualized support that meets their strengths and needs as well as local economic conditions. An individual plan of employment support should be developed for them that takes into account such individual characteristics as age, skills, special needs and the employability of PWDs,

¹⁰ Articles 60, 103, 191 of the Labour Code, 2009.

¹¹ Articles 131-134 of Approving and Implementing the Code of Turkmenistan on Social Protection of the Population, 2012

¹² The World We Want Post-2015 National Consultations in Turkmenistan, May 2013.

and local job market conditions.¹³ As international experience demonstrates, individualized approaches are effective in addressing barriers to labour market inclusion that each PWD faces. The plans could contain various rehabilitation and work elements such as the assessment of professional skills, career guidance and counselling, restoration of professional skills and development of new professional skills, as well as benefits in cash and kind.¹⁴ The plan can include specific commitments for the PWD that he or she can sign and include a requirement for periodic follow-up meetings with caseworkers. Individualized approaches can also include a series of activities to help build the self-esteem, confidence and resilience of PWDs. To ensure that the individualized plans work, it is necessary to clearly delineate responsibilities of line ministries for education, vocational training, customized rehabilitation services, etc. so that the supports and services are comprehensive and well-coordinated to prepare PWDs for employment. The focus groups and interviews provided the consultant with substantial evidence that the women with disabilities looking for jobs do not know who to turn to as it is unclear which ministry and respective service provider is responsible for vocational training, apprenticeships, and education of PWDs. As a result, many of the Project beneficiaries had to use their own funds to obtain the necessary training or relied on free training services provided by such organizations as the Red Crescent to acquire the necessary skills.

The focus groups confirmed that often medical-social commissions unnecessarily restrict a range of occupations that PWDs can pursue. As a result, some women with disabilities who were willing to and capable of performing some jobs could not apply for them nor pursue the required educational and professional training opportunities.

Employment on the open market is the ideal option but a lot of factors have to be addressed to make it work for all PWDs in Turkmenistan. There is a range of legislative and policy options that UNDP and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection can explore to promote employment opportunities of PWDs in Turkmenistan:¹⁵

- Revise the current quota system by introducing a “quota-levy” provision. Under the existing model, employers have to fill vacancy quotas with PWDs. The employers are required to inform local employment bureaus about vacancies for PWDs but they often do not comply with this requirement or designate only jobs that do not require high skills. It may be beneficial to have a so-called “quota-levy” system, whereby employers can pay a contribution to an earmarked fund in lieu of employing PWDs up to their quota obligation. If Social Protection Fund is established in Turkmenistan, the employers who do not meet their quota obligations may be required to

¹³ Lynn Elinson, William D. Frey, Tiandong Li, Martha A. Palan and Richard L. Horne, “Evaluation of Customized Employment in Building the Capacity of the Workforce Development System”, *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* No. 28, pp. 141–158, 2008.

¹⁴ On changes in rehabilitation system, policies and practices in Romania which reflect key trends in the ECIS countries, see Eniko C. Rak, “Rehabilitation Policy and Practice in Romania: Implications for Training,” in *Rehabilitation Education*, Volume 21, No. 4, pp. 277-284, 2007.

¹⁵ An excellent and practical review of employment options for PWDs, with an in-depth analysis of vocational skills development is provided in USAID, *Transitions Towards an Inclusive Future: Vocational Skills Development and Employment Options for Persons with Disabilities in Europe and Eurasia*, 2009. Many interesting ideas and models to promote employment of PWDs can be found in Bergeskog A. (2001), Labour market policies, strategies and statistics for people with disabilities: A cross-national comparison. IFAU - Office of Labour Market Policy Evaluation: Working Paper 2001:13.

contribute to it. It is important to clearly outline the processes for using the funds as well as set the necessary accountability and reporting requirements. The funds can be used for such purposes as payments to employers for accommodating PWDs in the workplace, payments for professional training of PWDs that can be provided to training institutions or DPOs with well-established training facilities (e.g., the Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan), direct payments to workers with disabilities, and payments to disability service providers. Although the quota system is not a perfect policy instrument, with significant challenges associated with its enforcement, it should be maintained in the future until new, more effective instruments encouraging employers to hire PWDs are introduced. As a first step of reforming the quota system, it may be beneficial to improve monitoring and ensure compliance with the employment quota for PWDs in the public sector and collect the national level data on compliance with the employment quota.

- Reserve a number of positions in national and local governments and state owned enterprises and businesses for PWDs.
- Introduce and pilot test a model of supported employment. Under this model, PWDs work in the open labour market and receive support from an external service provider to ensure that they maintain employment. Support is gradually reduced as the person with disabilities develops the ability to work independently. Workers have a legal employment contract and receive wages and conditions of employment similar to those received by other similar workers. Under this model, subsidies may be granted to a business for the remuneration, etc., of a personal assistant. Personal assistance can be offered to unemployed people, wage earners and self-employed businessmen who have a need for special personal assistance on account of physical or mental impairment. The objective of the scheme is to offer persons with disabilities the same possibilities of pursuing a trade or a profession as persons without disabilities. The personal assistance is to aid the person with functions following from the job and for which the person concerned has a need for special personal assistance due to his or her functional impairment.¹⁶
- Introduce and pilot test a model of subsidized employment where PWDs are employed in the open labour market under a scheme that provides grants to employers.
- Revive and extend the sheltered workshop programs. The sheltered workshops model was widely used in the socialist system but the transition to market economy undermined it. Sheltered employment provides employment for PWDs in the environment protected from market competition. Traditionally, sheltered workshops are established in the manufacturing sector where all their employees, except the management, are PWDs. This is not the most favourable option as it often does not prepare PWDs to work in the open labour market. To address this limitation, sheltered workshops may be located in host companies as production units.

¹⁶ Government of Denmark, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Denmark's first report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on measures taken with a view to implementing the UN Convention of 13 December 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2011

- Critically review the effectiveness of the current incentives for employers to hire and maintain PWDs employed. It may be beneficial to explore if the corporate income tax incentives to employers work and examine a need of extending tax exemptions to imported products, devices or equipment and training materials used by PWDs at work.

The easiest and one of the most effective solutions would be to require ministries and state agencies to procure goods and services directly from DPOs without the tendering procedure. For instance, DBST has the necessary modern equipment and well trained personnel to meet a number of state needs (e.g., produce uniforms for the army, police, railway, oil and gas companies). Kyrgyzstan, for instance, has a Law on public procurement of products of associations of disabled persons. The Law requires state entities to place their orders for procurement of goods without application of the tendering procedure with associations of persons with disabilities.

UNDP is well positioned to partner with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection on cost sharing basis to review the current employment supports systems, including vocational rehabilitation and training of PWDs, tax incentives for employers, enforcement of the quota system and other mechanisms to increase employment opportunities of PWDs. A joint potential Project of the Ministry and UNDP may follow these steps:

1. Identify the main barriers to employment faced by PWDs relying on the information available from multiple partners. Conduct roundtables and other forms of consultations with stakeholders and PWDs across the country to confirm that the challenges identified require nation-wide interventions.
2. Once the consultations identify main barriers, decide on the policy/program instrument to use to address these barriers. Develop policy/programmatic solution and obtain the Government approval.
3. Decide who will be responsible for its implementation, including eligibility criteria, delivery mechanisms, capacity building interventions, funding and accountability requirements and monitoring of performance mechanisms.

UNDP can provide its expert support in embedding evidence-based policymaking principles and practices into developing and implementing policies and programs supporting employment of PWDs. In Turkmenistan, the evidence is not sufficiently used in the policy development process through its core stages and UNDP can strengthen capacity of respective line ministries by providing trainings and seminars on practical aspects of using data and evidence through all stages of disability policy cycle, including development of policy options, implementation and monitoring. Training can focus on how to assess policy alternatives relying on solid evidence (e.g., measurable effects of policy options on employment of PWDs), identify policy instrument(s) to be used, and outline sequence of implementation steps. Particular attention could be paid to policy implementation, with focus on specific targets, performance measures and indicators capturing policy success.

The consultant believes that one of the main gaps in disability policymaking in Turkmenistan is insufficient attention paid to policy monitoring and evaluation. Often line ministries do not know whether policy priorities are correctly identified and whether the policy is achieving its expected outcomes. Enhanced skills in monitoring and evaluation in such a complex area as disability will help ministries learn lessons and share successful practices in policy development, improve horizontal coordination among relevant ministries and ensure results-focused implementation.

In a case of complex services such as employment support of PWDs where multiple interventions could be implemented depending on beneficiary's circumstances and where multiple partners could be involved, it is advisable for the Ministry to pilot new services to test and fine tune new models. UNDP may help to choose pilot sites that should be representative of the realities of Turkmenistan and reflect such main factors as geography, income levels, unemployment levels, and gender balance. Piloting can test if the targeted PWDs really benefit from new services and more accurately assess the costs of service implementation nation-wide.

7.2 Recommendations for UNDP

7.2.1 Support the Government with developing of the National Disability Strategy.

Relying on extensive UNDP corporate expertise in the area of disability and public administration reforms, it is necessary to provide Government with support in all aspects of the National Disability Strategy development. Given the complexity of disability policy agenda and strong experience of UN system in implementing UN as One Programs, it may be beneficial to establish a high level Advisory Board with representation from lead Government ministries and agencies, UN agencies and other donors to provide strategic guidance at the critical milestones of the National Disability Strategy development. The Advisory Board could engage expertise of UN partners and identify the areas of interest for funding support that will help partners to increase overall effectiveness and impact and ensure complementarity of donors' support of the disability agenda. In addition to strategic and operational alignment and efficiencies, the Advisory Board may contribute to priorities setting and consensus building for all partners involved into disability reforms. Moreover, the Advisory Board would be able to improve the quality of policy priorities debates by relying on evidence and analysis of policy options.

Capitalizing on UN partners' respective expertise and their comparative advantage, UNDP may advance the coordination mechanism to ensure that supports of disability reforms by the UN system are coordinated, comprehensive and executed in a timely manner. UNDP, in particular, may support the Advisory Board by facilitating information exchange among all UN partners, joint planning and monitoring of the National Disability Strategy development and implementation.

7.2.2 Examine the barriers and opportunities faced by individuals of ALL disability groups and support building mechanism for regular dialogue of PWDs with the Government.

Over the last ten years UNDP has collaborated extensively with DBST that actively promotes the interests of visually and hearing impaired individuals that constitute only a segment of all PWDs. People may be disabled by physical, intellectual or sensory impairment or have mental illness. They may have a disability from birth or have acquired it in childhood, their teenage years, later in life, during further education or while in employment. In Canada, for instance, over 11% of adults experienced one of the three most prevalent disability types: pain, mobility or flexibility. Of those who reported at least one of these disability types in 2012, more than 40% experienced all three at the same time. The next most commonly reported disabilities were mental/psychological, 3.9%; dexterity, 3.5%; hearing, 3.2%; seeing, 2.7%; followed by memory and learning disabilities, 2.3% each. Less than 1% of Canadian adults reported a developmental disability.¹⁷ UNDP may support

¹⁷ Statistics Canada, Disability in Canada: Initial findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2013, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2013002-eng.htm>

the Government to establish a mechanism for disability data collection and analysis that will capture ALL disability types and include in particular the prevalence of disability among children, adults and older people, as well as socio-demographic characteristics of the population with disabilities, including their age, sex, ethnicity, marital status, educational qualifications, labour force status, income, and household and family circumstances.

The accurate data on disability is needed not only to capture the real situation in the country but also to assess the real impact of the Government actions advancing human rights of PWDs at the household and individual level. High-quality, comparable data on disability is important for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of disability-focused policies and programmes.

One of potential solutions would be to include a block of Washington group questions on disability into the next national census. As the census covers multiple areas, cross-tabulations on the employment, education and income levels of PWDs can be processed and provide rich information on actual conditions of PWDs in a disaggregated format. In order to optimize the policy and programmatic interventions and supports of PWDs and inform the development of the National Disability Strategy, it may be beneficial to conduct a nation-wide survey that may be linked with regular household surveys to obtain disaggregated data on the numbers of PWDs whose needs are met/unmet/met partially, by demographic profile, level of income, education level, level of disability and ethnicity. Needs can be defined as needs for aids, devices and support with daily activity. If a stand-alone survey is too difficult to conduct, it may be beneficial to explore the possibilities of adding a set of questions on disability or a module into household surveys on such diverse topics as the labour force, poverty, etc.

UNDP should not focus solely on improving the available statistical and administrative disability data but support the Government in establishing mechanisms allowing the diverse disability groups and individuals to be heard. The consultant heard from Project beneficiaries and ministries and organizations that women with disabilities had visited that they greatly valued such opportunities for open dialogue. It is beneficial, however, to institutionalize a mechanism for such ongoing consultations/dialogue to provide opportunities for PWDs to be heard and foster governmental awareness of disability matters. Often the ministries are not fully aware of the barriers that PWDs face and potential solutions how to reduce or eliminate these barriers. PWDs are not aware of services and supports they can access and benefit from, nor DPOs representing them can clearly identify the barriers that PWDs face and articulate recommendations to overcome them to the government.

Line ministries and government agencies will benefit from such a dialogue as it will help them to identify priorities and specific actions that would be the most relevant to the needs and aspirations of PWDs. In the short run it is critically important for public servants to learn how to conduct effective consultations with primary focus on identifying the challenges that PWDs face and finding joint potential solutions. Capacity building measures focusing on state officials should demonstrate the value and benefits of consulting with DPOs and PWDs. The capacity building of public sector can focus on the following areas:

- Managing policy consultation process, including development of clear and well-focused documents for consultations with stakeholders, working with individual DPOs and groups of PWDs to solicit their feedback, analysis of the feedback received and reflection of public consultations in policy documents.

- Skills to assess, through consultations with DPOs and PWDs, whether the policy options developed by line ministries really address actual needs of PWDs. The training may focus on how to engage DPOs and PWDs, how to structure consultations and gather information on all potential consequences of policy options under consideration. The consultant believes that in Turkmenistan such consultations will help to advance the disability agenda by finding simple and practical solutions that may have been missed by public servants who are often remote from realities on the ground. UNDP may support line ministries with such consultations to pilot test and fine-tune the consultations models, with particular focus on soliciting PWDs' feedback into the National Disability Strategy.

UNDP can support NGOs representing PWDs with the guidance and training on how to have constructive discussions, produce policy and program recommendations and communicate them to decision makers.

7.2.3 Implement a range of broad awareness raising campaigns and targeted public servants disability trainings, in partnership with main line ministries.

The consultant found that the medical model and charity ideology continues to dominate in Turkmenistan. The medical model construes disability as an observable physical, mental, psychological or sensory deviation from normality caused by disease or another health condition. It believes that limitations arising from disability can potentially be prevented or managed by medical treatment of that individual. People are considered disabled on the basis of being unable to function as a "normal" person does. Rehabilitation has an important role to play in bringing the person back or close to the norm. The major concern of the medical model at the policy level is to provide health-care and rehabilitation services. So neither the society nor the environment has to be changed to address the rights of PWDs.

Changes in public attitudes are necessary to advancing the inclusion of PWDs. The right policies and strategies can be adopted but people's beliefs about individuals with disabilities determine how they are treated in all aspects of their lives. If the public has charity views of disability and believes that PWDs are incapable of full participation in society, these attitudes shape the processes of PWDs' inclusion in society.

Many people in Turkmenistan still believe that PWDs cannot be employed. Many parents believe that children with disabilities represent some concern to their children, if mainstreamed into the classroom. Employers often believe that PWDs are unable to work and often even do not want to consider their job applications. PWDs are rarely seen on the streets of Turkmenistan, which is a clear indication that cultural traditions and public attitudes and superstitions based on medical and charity models of disability continue to dominate.

The consultant strongly recommends to implement diverse awareness-raising campaigns at the national and local levels to reinforce the positive image of PWDs as holders of all the human rights and to break down cultural barriers and prejudices against persons with disabilities. Two areas can be prioritized: promotion of inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream education system and inclusion of PWDs into the labour market.

The media should be encouraged and trained to portray PWDs from the perspective of social and human rights model of disability. The media information awareness-raising campaigns about the rights of PWDs should be extended and include participation of PWDs in talk shows, regular television and radio programmes.

The Project beneficiaries and many national stakeholders, including partners in key ministries, demonstrated their knowledge of the social and human rights models of disability. In the social model, disability is seen as the result of complex interactions between a health problem or a functional limitation and the social, political, cultural, economic, and physical environment. These, in combination with personal factors such as age, gender, and level of education, can result in a disadvantage — that is, a disability. Under this approach, the disability focus is no longer how to provide for those deemed "unable" to integrate into mainstream society, but rather how to make society accessible to all, on an equal and non-separate basis. Whatever the nature of disability, the basic principles of the social approach to disability adopted by the United Nations places responsibility on society to provide an enabling environment by removing the physical and social barriers to participation in everyday life in order for *all* people to exercise their rights.

The process of capacity development of line ministries and central agencies in disability and how to develop and implement effective evidence-informed policies and programs advancing rights of PWDs is time-consuming and not amenable to shortcuts. UNDP is well positioned to develop and implement on-line and face to face training on UN CRPD and state obligations and how to mainstream disability into ministry policies and programs. The consultant recommends conducting training needs assessments to improve targeting and effectiveness of training interventions. All the current and newly recruited staff in relevant ministries should undertake mandatory courses aimed at raising their awareness in disability. Greater awareness of responsibilities of public servants towards PWDs in discharging their duties in the provision of public services will improve the delivery of services to them. In addition to that, the public servants may be trained how to mainstream the disability issues and ensure that persons with disabilities benefit from all government policies and programs. Training can be delivered for national and local public servants, both involving persons with disabilities as trainers. The interviews with ministries' staff demonstrated that PWDs should deliver some sections of such trainings and share their challenges and views to help non-disable participants to better understand how they should do their job differently to support PWDs.

The consultant believes that additional training on how to write effective disability-focused policy papers and other documents can be developed and delivered by UNDP. Any good disability policy paper should rely on solid evidence and clearly identify the obstacles/opportunities PWDs face, examine factors that contribute to the issue, develop policy options, explore experiences of other countries, and recommend one option that could be implemented taking into consideration fiscal, technical and human resources realities. It is particularly important in conditions in Turkmenistan where funding is not a main concern but solid justification for particular policy and program supporting PWDs should be provided. If respective ministry staff acquires the necessary skills and would be able to produce convincing policy papers recommending practical and realistic solutions for real-world problems and rely on solid data and evidence, it will increase the chances of adopting disability policies and programs. E-learning training options can be explored to reach diverse audiences.

7.2.4 Collaborate with the architects to develop/enforce accessibility standards.

UNDP is implementing a Project *Improving Energy Efficiency in the Residential Buildings Sector of Turkmenistan*. Through this Project at least 50 architects and/or engineers have been trained on energy efficient building reconstruction. As UNDP established good relations with the architects, it may be beneficial to explore a possibility of implementing a joint Project focusing on developing and enforcing accessibility standards, at least in the area of construction.

Turkmenistan has improved the legislative and regulatory framework with regard to the barrier-free access of government buildings, leisure and cultural facilities and public housings in recent years and embedded the accessibility requirements into the national legislation. The government institutions, local authorities, enterprises, organizations and institutions, regardless of ownership, are required to ensure that PWDs can access residential, public and business buildings, structures and premises, public transport, communications and information. National building codes were revised to require minimum standards of access and were applied to all buildings at the time they were being built and during major renovations irrespective of ownership. Despite significant progress made in improving accessibility, the consultant finds that Turkmenistan does not have effective mechanisms for overseeing and evaluating compliance with buildings' accessibility legislation. It remains unclear if sanctions for non-compliance are imposed if, for instance, newly constructed buildings do not meet the accessibility standards. The consultant advises to legislate an oversight mechanisms and means of penalizing non-compliance, in consultation with DPOs, which should participate in monitoring implementation of accessibility standards.

7.2.5 Mainstream disability into UNDP operations, where possible.

The consultant did not have an opportunity to review all Programs and Projects implemented by UNDP, but believes that disability awareness training can be delivered for UNDP staff as well. It may focus in particular on social/human rights models of disability, UN CRPD and provide practical suggestions on how to mainstream disability into UNDP operations. UNDP interventions in the area of disaster risk reduction, for example, can take into account specific needs and circumstance of PWDs and strengthen their resilience and better prepare them for potential disasters. Preparation for disasters and resilience building for PWDs may focus on such vulnerabilities: special transportation needs complicate evacuation; vision or hearing impairments prevent people from receiving hazard warnings; and emergency shelters and other facilities are often inaccessible to those who are mobility impaired. In practical terms, some preparedness measures may include providing targeted education programs, ensuring facilities are barrier-free, and arranging emergency transportation. Likewise, a similar effort must be undertaken to raise the awareness of PWDs themselves to the hazards of not being proactively involved in disaster planning and decision making at both the personal and community levels.

Disability-related issues should be considered when designing all UNDP projects and programs. This can be done by engaging PWDs in the project design phase, the design of specific interventions, and/or implementing a quota for beneficiaries who are PWDs in each project. A disability analysis should be conducted to ensure that projects are not disability-blind.

7.2.6 Strengthen focus on outcome and impact in any disability-focused Projects

As the consultant mentioned already, the outcomes and impacts of Projects supporting PWDs may be difficult to measure as some changes occur at the levels of mindsets, resilience, self-confidence,

and beliefs. It is advisable to be creative and innovative and expand the currently used objectively verifiable indicators to collect evidence pertaining to results. Surveys of beneficiaries and partners may be regularly conducted to capture the impact at the levels of ultimate beneficiaries. They will help to quantitatively assess levels of changes in the areas that may be difficult to capture through other evaluation instruments. To assess impact of trainings provided, for instance, it may be beneficial to conduct two surveys: one immediately after the completion of training and another some time later to examine if the beneficiaries use the knowledge obtained and skills gained.

The consultant strongly advises to develop elaborate logframes for all Projects supporting persons with disabilities. The main intended outputs, activities, results and objectively verifiable indicators should be adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms.

8 ANNEXES

8.1 Questions used during semi-structured interviews and focus groups that were tailored to each target audience

Assessing relevance

Relevance deals with the appropriateness of the Project design to the goals of promoting engagement of women with disabilities in development policy making.

More specific questions regarding relevance are as follows (the questions will be adapted to interviewees/ focus groups):

- To what extent does the Project address underlying causes of exclusion of women with disabilities from development policymaking and respond to the needs of women with disabilities?
- To what extent is the Project design relevant vis-à-vis the overall Project goal and the achievement of its objectives?
- To what extent are the Project design and its objectives relevant vis-à-vis national policies and strategies in the area of empowerment of women with disabilities?
- Was the Project designed according to international norms and agreements on Gender Equality?
- How and why were the Project areas of interventions selected?
- Was the Project based on a needs assessment? What are its findings?
- Did the priorities of women empowerment and inclusion into development policymaking change since the time the Project was designed? Did the Project adjust its activities to reflect these changes, if necessary?
- How do the multiple partners view the Project's relevance?

Assessing effectiveness

Effectiveness focuses on results, not processes and the consultant will examine if the Project is producing its planned outcomes and meeting intended objectives. The consultant will work with the project log frame and project documents and will use multiple sources of evidence to examine if the Project has achieved its intended objectives.

More specific questions regarding effectiveness are as follows (the questions will be adapted to interviewees/ focus groups):

- To what extent was the Project implemented as envisaged by the Project document? If not, why not?
- Was there a reasonable relationship between Project inputs and Project outputs?
- To what extent have the planned results been achieved (quantitative and qualitative) according to the Project LogFrame?
- What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

- To what extent and how has the Project contributed to strengthening of leadership skills of women with disabilities?
- To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthening capacities of women with disabilities to engage into development policy making?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the Project objectives?
- How many individuals directly benefitted from the Project, by output? What is the geographic distribution of its beneficiaries?
- What is the specific evidence demonstrating that the Project has made a positive contribution to a) increasing knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women on democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills; b) increasing management capacity and leadership skills of hearing and visually impaired women; c) increasing a number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside within DBST; and d) empowering women to play more active role inside the DBST and in the policy dialogues with government.
- The project provided multiple training and capacity building interventions for diverse groups of women with disabilities. How do the beneficiaries assess the relevance, usefulness and applicability of supports received?
- What are the levels of their satisfaction with the trainings received? What is the evidence to substantiate your observations? Which training/capacity building components they found the most relevant and effective?
- How specifically did the Project beneficiaries contribute to development policy making? Please provide examples.

Questions for Project Beneficiaries

- Why did you decide to participate in the Project? Did the Project's supports, trainings and other activities meet your expectations?
- What type of training/support provided did you find the most effective?
- What was the most relevant and interesting training course? Why?
- Were you satisfied with the training courses schedule, programs, and handouts? Do you use the handouts in your work?
- What reasons led you to contact the hot line? Were you satisfied with the guidance/support provided? Did it help you to resolve the problem you had to deal with?
- Did you use the Internet services provided by the Project? Were you satisfied with their availability and accessibility? What specifically were you looking for/doing on the Internet?
- Do you like the presentations delivered by guest speakers? What presentation(s) do you like the most? Why? What did you learn from the presentations (e.g., knowledge on leadership, government processes and decision making)?
- How were you engaged into DBST work? Please describe your involvement.
- What did you learn from local study visits? What was the most relevant and interesting visit(s)?
- Did you participate in the international study visit to Belarus? What did you learn during the visit? How do you apply knowledge acquired through this trip in your work?
- Have you participated in small forums organized by the Project? What did you learn through them? How do you apply knowledge and skills acquired through small forums in your work?

- Have you participated in National Forums organized by the Project? What did you learn through them? How do you apply knowledge and skills acquired through National Forums in your work?
- How do you use the knowledge and skills acquired through the Project work? Please be as specific as possible.
- Did you share your new knowledge with other women with disabilities? How? Please provide some examples.
- What specific skills did you acquire? How have you used them? How do you think you may use them in the future?
- Was the Project training and other supports responded to your need? If not, what else would have been needed?
- Did you communicate your suggestions/ideas to respective Government institutions? What was the response?
- Do you participate in DBST work? Do you think that the Project helped you to assume leadership roles in DBST?
- How do you support other women with disabilities in your locality?

Assessing efficiency

Efficiency is associated with the resources used to produce desired outputs. The consultant will examine the extent to which the Project has produced its planned outputs in relation to expenditure of resources. In addition to exploring efficiency in resource use, the consultant will examine what specific steps were undertaken to optimize the Project efficiency.

More specific questions regarding efficiency are as follows (the questions will be adapted to interviewees/ focus groups):

- Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?
- What was the role of the Project Board? How many meetings were conducted? Can the minutes of the meetings be shared?
- How efficiently have the financial resources been used?
- How flexible was the Project design in adapting to the changing environment, if necessary?
- What was the Project implementation monitoring mechanism? Are there written records of the monitoring activities available?
- Was the beneficiaries' feedback on training, conference, trips and other activities conducted by the Project systematically collected and analysed? Did the Project made any adjustments to address the feedback from participants and stakeholders received?
- Could the costs of Project deliverables be lowered while still achieving Project objectives?
- Did other government agencies/partners deliver the same or similar capacity building interventions and supports for women with disabilities? Could overlap/duplication be removed, if it existed?
- Are there alternative delivery training methods that can achieve the Project objectives more efficiently? What evidence is there to support such methods?
- Did the Project apply cost-saving strategies? Did they work?

Assessing impact

Impact deals with whether the Project's overall objectives have been achieved.

More specific questions regarding impact are as follows (the questions will be adapted to interviewees/ focus groups):

- To what extent has the Project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?
- Is the Project likely to achieve its anticipated impact? Are unplanned effects likely to take place?
- What would be long-term benefits of strengthening leadership skills of women with disabilities and promoting their engagement in development policy making? Please share your ideas and go beyond the most obvious outcomes.
- Have the capacities of women with disabilities to contribute to policymaking been improved? How do you think it will affect the actual policies, especially for persons with disabilities?
- What were the Project contributions to the achievement of the Outcome (2.1 The government ensures comprehensive socio-economic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and HIV+ persons.) of the Country Program Action Plan (CPAP)?

Assessing expected sustainability

Sustainability deals with being strategic and looking to the future and assessing if key Project elements will be in place and expand beyond the Project completion in 2015.

More specific questions regarding sustainability are as follows:

- Did the Project design include an appropriate sustainability strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support continuous leadership capacity building of women with disabilities?
- What is the level of ownership of the Project within the DBST? What are the prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support?
- To what extent has the Project promoted strengthening of already existing partnerships and establishment of new ones? Have the cooperation of DBST and key national and local partners enhanced as a result of the Project activities?
- Will the national partners or donors continue implementing similar activities aimed at building women with disabilities' leadership skills and promoting of opportunities to engage them into national policymaking?
- Which components of the Project are sustainable? Please provide specific indicators of sustainability.
- Are there some components where sustainability remains an issue? What can be done to improve sustainability of these components?
- What actions (risk mitigation strategies) have been taken to improve Project sustainability?

8.2 Agenda

**Programme of the Visit
Mr. Arkadii Toritsyn
International Consultant to Conduct Evaluation
of the UNDP Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women Project**

**Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
August 29 –September 5, 2015**

Saturday, August 29, 2015

Arrival and accommodation in Grand Turkmen Hotel

Monday, August 31, 2015

- 09.30 – 10.30 Meeting in UNDP Country Office with Vitalie Vremis, Deputy Resident Representative
- 10.30 – 11.30 Meeting with UNDP Project Management and Staff
- 11.45 – 13.00 Meeting with other UNDP staff (Communications Associate)
- 13.00 – 14.15 Lunch
- 14.30 – 15.30 Meeting with the Chairman of the Deaf and Blind Society (DBS) of Turkmenistan
- 15.30 – 17.00 Meeting with the management staff of Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan who were involved into the Project implementation, including supporting the involvement of Project beneficiaries in decision making regarding the new DBS Charter and other internal issues such the structure, planning events, division of responsibilities, etc.

Tuesday, September 1, 2015

- 10.00 – 13.00 Meeting with beneficiaries of the Project
- Meeting with two women with visual impairment who used a special software provided by the Project to access internet
 - Focus group of hearing and visually impaired women who benefitted from the training in politics, socioeconomics and IT (5-7 individuals, representation from different regions has to be ensured, if possible)
 - Meeting with a Project beneficiary who participated in conferences/regional events
- 13.00 – 14.15 Lunch

Project Evaluation: Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women

- 14.30 – 17.00 Meeting with beneficiaries of the Project
- Meeting with a Project beneficiary who participated in local study visits to government institutions, public organizations and international agencies.
 - Meeting with Project beneficiaries who utilize knowledge and skills acquired through the Project in their work
 - Focus group of participants of the national forums on women leadership and social inclusion (5-7 individuals, geographical representation has to be ensured, if possible).

Wednesday, September 2, 2015

- 9.30:00-11:00 Meeting with a representative of the Youth Union of Turkmenistan named after Mahtymkuli (Italmazaov Shatlyk, Berdimurat Charyyev)
- 11.00 – 12.00 Meeting with a representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (Lale Meredova)
- 12.00-13.00 Meeting with a representative of the Ministry of Healthcare (didn't happen)
- 13.00 – 14.30 Lunch
- 14.30 – 15.30 Meeting with a representative of the National Society of the Red Crescent (Shirin Karliyeva, Guwanch)
- 16:00-17:00 Meeting with a representative of the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan

Thursday, September 3, 2015

- 09.30 – 11.00 Meeting with two national consultants who conducted training on politics, socioeconomics and IT for Project beneficiaries. (Jeren Hakiyeva, Computer trainer and Gaipnazarova Ogulsenem, Gender and Leadership Trainer)
- 11.00 – 12.30 Meeting with the operator of the hot line services for women with disabilities
Meeting with a few women with disabilities who used the hot line services (Maysa Agayevna)
Lunch
- 13.00 – 14.15 Meeting with one of guest speakers - UNFPA (Kemal Goshlyyev)
- 14.30 – 15.30 Meeting with one of guest speakers – UNICEF (Gulalek Soltanova)
- 16.30 – 17.00
- 17.30 – 19.30 Preparation of a power point presentation with core findings and recommendations for Friday presentation to DBS and UNDP.

Friday, September 4, 2015

- 09.30 – 10.30 Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to Deaf and Blind Society Senior Management
- 11.30 – 12.30 Meeting with a representative of the Ministry of Education (Jorayev Allamyrat, Head of Vocational training dept, and Jahan Alamysheva, school dept.)
- 13.00 – 14.15 Lunch
- 14.30 – 16.00 Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to UNDP and Project management and staff. Discussion.
- 16.00 – 16.03 Debriefing with Jacinta Barrins, UN Resident Representative in Turkmenistan

Saturday, September 5, 2015

- 05.00 Departure from Ashgabat

8.3 Literature, project materials and other sources used

Materials in English

- Annual Work Plan (AWP) Monitoring Tool Report, Year, 2014
- Annual Work Plan (AWP) Monitoring Tool – Mid-year report, Year 2015
- Bergeskog A. (2001), Labour market policies, strategies and statistics for people with disabilities: A cross-national comparison. IFAU - Office of Labour Market Policy Evaluation: Working Paper 2001:13
- Denmark, Government of Denmark, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Denmark's first report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on measures taken with a view to implementing the UN Convention of 13 December 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2011
- Lynn Elinson, William D. Frey, Tiandong Li, Martha A. Palan and Richard L. Horne, "Evaluation of Customized Employment in Building the Capacity of the Workforce Development System", Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation No. 28, pp. 141–158, 2008
- Ireland National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015
- Project Quarterly Reports
- Project Final Narrative Report, 2015
- Statistics Canada, Disability in Canada: Initial findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2013, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2013002-eng.htm>
- Turkmenistan, The Code of Turkmenistan on Social Protection of the Population, 2012
- Turkmenistan, Labour Code, 2009
- United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Reports Standards, July 2010
- United Nations Evaluation Group, Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports, 2010
- United Nations Evaluation Group, Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, March 2008
- UNDP, Human Development Report 2014, Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience, Explanatory note on the 2014 Human Development Report composite indices Turkmenistan

- The World We Want Post-2015 National Consultations in Turkmenistan, May 2013
- USAID, Transitions Towards an Inclusive Future: Vocational Skills Development and Employment Options for Persons with Disabilities in Europe and Eurasia, 2009.

Materials in Russian

- Criteria for Project beneficiaries' selection
- Curricula of the courses delivered
- Individual reports about a study trip to Belarus
- Publications in press on the Project in "Neutral Turkmenistan"
- Selected subject specific test questionnaires (e.g., economics, gender, IT)
- Results of tests of women leaders on economics, democratic institutions, IT and other subjects
- List of participants in a study trip to Belarus
- List of participants in the National Forum
- Speeches of participants (in Russian) in National Forums
- Reports on mini projects and other activities conducted by Project beneficiaries after the training completion
- Reports of the Project Specialist on Support on Social Integration
- Report about a visit to the National Carpet Museum

8.4 Terms of References

I. Position Information

Position title:	Expert to conduct the evaluation of the project
Type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Project Title:	Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women
Duration of service:	15 working days in July-August (tbc)
Duty station:	Home based with 1 missions to Turkmenistan
Reports to:	Democratic Governance Portfolio Specialist, UNDP Turkmenistan

II. Background and context

The project Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women supported by the United Nations Democracy Fund was implemented by UNDP, CO Turkmenistan together with the national partner Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan (DBS) during January 2014 – June 2015. The overall objective of the project is to promote engagement of women with disabilities in development policy making. Focusing on hearing and visually impaired women in the Turkmenistan Deaf and Blind Society (DBST) which is one of the one of the few established disability organizations in the country and a leading organization advocating for people with disabilities, the project will expand knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women in democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

The project focused on the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Knowledge of hearing and visually impaired women has increased in terms of in democratic institutions, modern socio-economic-political processes, gender issues and computer skills.

Outcome 2: Management capacity and leadership of skills of hearing and visually impaired women raised and number of women with disabilities taking managerial positions inside the DBST increased.

Outcome 3: Hearing and visually impaired women play an active role inside the DBST and in the policy dialogues with government.

Within the **UNDP Country Program Action Plan (CPAP)** the Project contributed to the OUTCOME 2.1: The government ensures comprehensive socio-economic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and HIV+ persons.

The overall idea was that a gradual approach from receiving substantive knowledge on democracy and institutions, gender and leadership to practical exercises during meetings with representatives from different organizations and forum discussions will increase leadership capacity of hearing and visually impaired women.

The project focused on developing the leadership skills of the women with disabilities; improving their capacity of advocacy, networking, discussion and presentation, as well as ability to formulate and deliver key messages to stakeholders to promote rights and needs of women with disabilities.

They will be encouraged to play an active role inside the disability organizations and be engaged in the policy dialogues with government.

The project strategy took a three-prong approach by focusing on capacity building on communications, advocating and networking of women managers with disabilities, providing them opportunities for practicing leadership skills, and expanding knowledge of women with disabilities. First, the project activities created opportunities for hearing and visually impaired women that were selected from the 5 regions of the country to obtain new knowledge on democracy, the rule of law, processes of social policy formulation, gender and practice their leadership skills in disability organizations. Secondly, the project focused on capacity building on communications, advocating and networking of women managers with disabilities and promoting more women with disabilities to take managerial positions inside the disability organization. Thirdly, the project created opportunities for hearing and visually impaired women to practice their leadership skills in disability organizations and for to increase their engagement in policy dialogues through organizing meetings and forum discussions with representatives of relevant policy makers and national stakeholders. During the project 6 small groups of women (7-8) were selected from the different regions (provinces) of Turkmenistan including Ashgabat to participate in 1 month training sessions on the above mentioned topics. For this purpose, trainers on each of the topic were hired. This approach filled the knowledge gaps and helped build women's capacity and confidence for realizing their leadership roles and expanding opportunities for them to be a part of mainstream society and promote the rights of women with disabilities.

Interactive design of trainings provided participants an opportunity to participate in discussions, share their points of view and experience, and give small speeches and presentations on some themes. The training programs were designed by local professionals to increase women's knowledge about democratic principles, the rule of law in practice, policy making processes. Training courses focused on the following topics: a) democracy and national legislation, the UN Conventions, the governmental arrangement and institutions, concept of civil society; b) modern social, economic, and political processes in the country and some international trends; c) gender issues, women leadership, and famous women and their roles in promoting women rights and development; g) computer and Internet. Trainees were provided with special computer programs for visually impaired people to communicate through Internet.

A series of study visits were organized for women to ministries, universities, non-profit and business organizations, and municipal departments to meet with top level managers and in practice introduce with the role of managers and functions of different agencies (the schedule of meetings will be provided to the expert). Guest speakers (top administrators and managers, lawyers, cultural workers, doctors, teachers, etc.) were also invited to meet with the training participants and speak about their leadership experience and professional career. Besides conversation about their experience, guest speakers will give a short presentation of some topic related to their professional sphere of activity.

In June 2015, a group of participants also visited the Belarussian Society of People with Visual Disabilities. The purpose of the visit was to learn approaches and the best practices in the area of employment, adaptation, and rehabilitations of the people with visual disabilities.

After completion of the training course, training participants organized a Forum on Promotion of opportunities for employment of people with disabilities: Social integration of people of disabilities through participation in activities of public disability organizations.

The project also opened a hot line that worked 5 days per week providing consultations and assistance to hearing and visually impaired women on different issues, including health services, social welfare, placement of disabled children in the special schools, employment opportunities, etc. In accordance with the **Article 9, part c) Evaluation** of the Project Document signed jointly by UNDP, UNDEF, and Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan: The UNDP in Turkmenistan is responsible for conducting an evaluation at the end of the project. ... This evaluation should be carried out by an independent and external entity. UNDEF will also liaise with the EA, as necessary, to determine the best course for conducting evaluations.

III. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of the evaluations is to undertake in-depth analysis of the project in order to determine whether the project has achieved its planned outcomes. The evaluation should also focus on determining whether all planned outputs were delivered and whether they were delivered in an effective and efficient manner.

Evaluation, even when critical, needs to be constructive. As much attention is to be paid to positive points and conclusions as to identified weaknesses and failures. This point is not only a question of objectivity; it is also a basic condition for the evaluation report to be accepted by all concerned parties. The basic goal of an evaluation is a balanced set of conclusions and recommendations by which all stakeholders will be willing to stand in the interests of advancing the broad goals that gave rise to the project. Evaluation is not just an audit of past performance. Thus, one of the major purposes of the evaluation is to identify the lessons learned that provide the information for the future projects in the same area.

IV. Evaluation Scope and Objectives

The evaluation should cover the project Social Inclusion through Leadership Skills for Disabled Women implemented by UNDP during the period of January 2014 – June 2015 based on the Project Document signed by UNDEF, UNDP, and Deaf and Blind Society of Turkmenistan.

V. Evaluation questions

The preparation of evaluation questions should be based on analytical work conducted by the expert during the preparation phase, when the project's objectives and strategy are reconstructed from project documentation.

The evaluation questions should include, but not be limited to the following:

- To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?
- Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?
- Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?
- What progress toward the outputs has been made?
- Were stated outputs achieved?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended outputs?
- What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?

- To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?
- What contributions to the achievement of the Outcome (2.1 The government ensures comprehensive socio-economic integration of all vulnerable groups including women, disabled and HIV+ persons.) of the Country Program Action Plan (CPAP)?

VI. Methodology

All experts applying for this position are required to provide brief (1-2 pages) description of the methodology for the evaluation. However, the specific design and methods for the evaluation will be determined from consultations among UNDP Turkmenistan Democratic Governance program unit, the evaluator, and the national partner (DBS) about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives and answer the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and extant data.

VII. Evaluation Deliverables and Timeframe

The following deliverables should be produced in the process of evaluation:

Deliverable 1: Evaluation inception report - An inception report should be prepared by the evaluator before going into the full fledged evaluation. It should detail the evaluator's understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables. The inception report provides UNDP and the evaluator with an opportunity to verify that they share the same understanding about the evaluation and clarify any misunderstanding at the outset.

Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report - UNDP DRR, Democratic Governance program unit, and DBS evaluation should review the draft evaluation report to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria.

Deliverable 3: Final evaluation report.

The overall time and specific timeframe allocated for the evaluation should be determined through consultations between the evaluator, UNDP, and DBS.

VIII. Evaluation ethics

The evaluation should be conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system that could be found at the following address: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

IX. Implementation arrangements

The evaluator shall report directly to UNDP Democratic Governance Portfolio Manager in Turkmenistan. UNDP is responsible for organizing of all necessary meetings for the evaluator, the logistics of the evaluation, and providing of all necessary documentation related to project planning, implementation, and monitoring.

X. Payment conditions

This is an installment-based contract that should cover the costs of consultancy required to produce the above deliverables. The travel expenses will be covered separately from the honorarium based on the UNDP rates. The final schedule of payments will be agreed upon in the beginning of consultancy.

Payment will be released in three installments: 30% (Deliverable 1), 20 % (deliverable 2), 50% (for deliverable 3) – upon timely submission of respective deliverables and their acceptance by UNDP Turkmenistan.

VI. Competencies

Corporate Competencies

- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism;
- Fulfills all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

Functional Competencies

- Good knowledge of and experience working with UN;
- Excellent interviewing, facilitation, and communication skills;
- Results driven, ability to work under pressure and to meet required deadlines;
- Good understanding of project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation practices;
- Diplomatic skills.

VII. Qualification and competence requirements

Education:	Advanced university degree (master's or higher) in a relevant field, such as public administration, business administration, economics, or any other relevant field.
Experience:	Experience of conducting at least 5 similar evaluations of the projects. Knowledge and experience of work in the CIS or Central Asia is an advantage. Good knowledge of the UN mandate in the area of social inclusion is an asset.
Language Requirements:	Excellent spoken and written English. Fluent spoken Russian is desirable.

VIII. Submission of applications

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

- (i) Cover letter explaining why they are the most suitable candidate for the assignment
- (ii) Filled P11 form including past experience in similar projects and contact details of referees
(blank form can be downloaded from

http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/hrforms/P11_modified_for_SCs_and_ICs.doc; please upload the P11 instead of your CV.

(iii) Financial proposal: All applicants shall submit a detailed, carefully considered and justified financial statement based on a lump sum specifying (1) a daily fee for the tasks and an estimated duration as specified in this announcement and (2) any other possible costs (including vaccinations, travel to and from the mission, dwelling, etc.);

(iv) Proposed methodology of the evaluation.

IX. Evaluation Criteria

The consultant will be evaluated against a combination of technical and financial criteria. Maximum score is 100. Out of the maximum score, the score for technical criteria equals 70% - maximum 70 points, and for financial criteria 30% - maximum 30 points.

The technical evaluation (70%, or max 70 points) will take into account the following as per the scoring provided:

- Education – 10 pts
- Experience in conducting similar evaluations 10 pts
- Proposed methodology – 20 pts
- Results of the Interview – 10 points
- Knowledge and experience of work in the CIS or Central Asia – 5 pts
- Fluency in English – 10 pts
- Fluency in Russian – 5 pts

Financial proposal – 30% of total evaluation - max 30 pts

Only the highest ranked candidates who would be found qualified for the job will be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

X. Additional requirements for recommended contractor

Recommended contractors, if the travel is required, shall undergo a full medical examination including x-ray, and obtain medical clearance from the UN-approved doctor prior to taking up their assignment. The medical examination is to be cleared by the UN physicians, and shall be paid by the consultant.