

**Additional Written Information by Sri Lanka to the
Questions Raised during the 9th Periodic Review of
CEDAW – 13 February 2025**

Information on measures taken to combat primary and secondary school dropout rates

Primary and secondary education is provided free of charge and is compulsory. Several welfare measures are provided in the form of free morning meals, text books and uniform materials, school shoe vouchers, sanitary napkin vouchers, medical supplements upon medical inspections and monetary assistance for students of low-income families for stationery.

School infrastructure facilities are upgraded to cater to a student friendly learning environment, providing teacher training on guidance and counselling and promoting extra-curricular activities.

With the introduction of Advanced Level vocational studies, girls' participation in secondary education has seen a marked increase from 32% in 2021/22 to 37% in 2023/24.

This has resulted in an increasing trend in the participation of girls in studies relating to tourism, metal fabrication, welding, machine operation, automobile engineering and maintenance, electronics, plantation sector (tea factory assistants and tea field assistants) and ICT courses which were previously not popular among girls.

The Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) employs 410 Child Rights Promotion Officers [CRPO] at the divisional level. Their primary responsibility is to identify vulnerable children and safeguard their rights. These officers actively track school dropouts and facilitate their re-enrollment. Rural Child Development Committees can also refer information to the CRPO and provide assistance to obtain legal documents including birth certificates and school leaving certificates.

Addressing girls' low representation in IT innovation structures and STEM education.

In order to encourage girls' participation in STEM education, the 'All-Island School Robotics and Invention Competition' offers special skills awards to girls in each category such as robotics technology, production industry and environmental studies, engineering technology and production, entertainment and health and medical fields.

250 'Sujatha Diyani' scholarships are awarded annually to girls from low-income families who pursue Advanced Level Technology studies.

Activities adopted by the government to ensure that girls from minority groups' access to education alongside their freedom of religious beliefs without exception is guaranteed

In terms of Article 12(2) of the Constitution, "No citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any one of such grounds...". Therefore, no discrimination is permitted on the grounds of religion in respect of school admission and access to education.

Plans to extend paid maternity leave to at least 14 weeks in line with ILO standards in the private sector.

Sri Lanka has ratified the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103). The ratification of the ILO's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) is under consideration.

In Sri Lanka, private sector maternity leave is governed by the Maternity Benefits Ordinance (No. 32 of 1939) and the Shop and Office Employees (Regulation of Employment and Remuneration) Act (No. 19 of 1954). Female employees of private sector are entitled to 84 working days of paid maternity leave.

Public sector employees are entitled to paid maternity leave of 84 working days. Thereafter, optionally, 84 days [including holidays] on half pay and a further 84 days [including holidays] of no-pay maternity leave is available.

In the private sector, a maternity insurance scheme to replace the existing employer-responsible maternity benefit scheme is under consideration with technical assistance of the ILO. An actuarial study has been undertaken to explore the possibility of extending maternity benefits to 14 weeks. The government will make a decision in consultation with employers and trade unions once the report is submitted.

Measures in place to protect migrant domestic workers from abuse by their employers

Sri Lanka has implemented several measures to protect its migrant workers from abuse by employers, both in Sri Lanka and abroad. These measures are designed to ensure fair treatment, safe working conditions, and the protection of workers' rights.

Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act (No. 21 of 1985) regulates the recruitment of Sri Lankans for employment outside Sri Lanka. The Act imposes a license requirement on all foreign employment agencies, under the supervision of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment [SLBFE] and determines the conditions and modalities for obtaining such a license.

The SLBFE provides pre-departure training, counseling and rights education, cultural and legal sensitization pertaining to the destination country.

Sri Lankan diplomatic and consular representations offer critical support to migrant workers. They intervene in dispute resolution, repatriation and facilitate legal aid as required. The SLBFE provides support for workers who experience abuse, illegal wage deductions, or human trafficking and a 24-hour help desk and complaints hotline is operative. There is also provision for complaints lodged by the next of kin to be inquired into.

Workers are required to sign a contract, detailing wages, working hours, living and working conditions and job responsibilities. This helps prevent arbitrary deviations from the contract conditions and exploitation by employers. Recruitment agencies must be duly registered with SLBFE.

Outcome of the assessment of the ‘Well Women Strategic Plan 2019- 2023’ [Referred to during the review as ‘National Strategic Plan for the Healthy Women’s Programme 2019/2023’]

Following the assessment done in 2024, a new strategic plan for 2026-2030 is being developed.

Measures taken to prevent forced or coerced sterilization and ensure informed consent in all reproductive health services.

All the reproductive health services including family planning (including sterilization) are provided free of charge in the preventive health sector. All family planning methods are offered facilitating an informed decision. Following family planning counselling a written informed consent form is signed before sterilization.

Measures taken to reduce early pregnancies

Age appropriate sexual and reproductive health [SRH] education with a special focus including life skills on assertiveness and avoidance of risk have been introduced in the school curriculum.

The following services are provided for youth through field health services delivered by Medical Officer of Health and field and hospital based services;

- Life skill development for protection from abuse
- Preventing teenage pregnancy
- Care of pregnant mothers
- Care during delivery
- Care for lactating mothers including post-natal care
- Provision of contraceptives
- STD prevention services
- Prevention & management of gender based violence

Measures taken to support female athletes to overcome structural and practical barriers in sports.

Female athletes are given equal opportunity to participate in sports events in the country. They are given equal access to sports facilities, training and equipment.

Coaches are given gender sensitive training through coaches’ development programmes conducted by National Institute of Sports Sciences.

A female official responsible for the welfare of female athletes is assigned for every sporting event involving female athletes.

Opportunities in sports administration are available irrespective of gender.

Request for Disaggregated Data

The GoSL acknowledges the lack of disaggregated data and strives to address this issue which requires attention.