STATE OF ISRAEL

Ministry of Justice

Annex No. I - Additional Information

Attached to the Fourth Periodic Report by the State of Israel

Concerning the

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

(ICESCR)

Compiled by the Office of the Deputy Attorney General (International Law),
Ministry of Justice

2018

General

Implementation of the U.N. Human Right Committees' Concluding Observations

Below are four (4) main examples of the implementation of U.N. Human Right Committees' Concluding Observations:

Raising the marital age from 17 to 18 - In its 2011 Concluding Observations the CEDAW Committee called upon Israel to "**Take effective measures to enforce adherence to the minimum age of marriage, and, in this respect, take measures to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both women and men."** In December 2013, the Knesset amended the *Marital Age Law* 5710-1950 in order to raise the minimum marital age from 17 to 18.

Increased Penalty for Obtaining the Service of an Act of Prostitution from a Minor - Following the recommendation of the CRC Committee, an amendment to Section 203C of the *Penal Law* increased the penalty for the offense of obtaining the service of an act of prostitution from a minor from three years to five years imprisonment. The amendment changes the status of the offense to a felony, reflecting the gravity of the act.

The Inspector for Complaints Against the Israeli Security Agency (ISA) - This position, which had previously been a role within the ISA, became part of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), subordinate to the Director General of the MoJ. This significant reform, which was finalized in 2014, establishes an external and independent inspector to examine complaints concerning ISA interrogations. This issue was raised by various Human Treaty Bodies and was also raised in petitions filed to the High Court of Justice by several NGOs.

Training on Human Right Conventions

The Israeli Police - The Police Education and Information Section operates educational programs aimed at ensuring that human rights values are incorporated into police officers' knowledge as well as fieldwork, such as tolerance within a multicultural society, elimination of prejudice and awareness of human rights

conventions. In recent years, special emphasis has been given to training police commanders, since they influence their subordinates.

The Police School for Investigation and Intelligence incorporates into its training the main provisions of the relevant human rights conventions and law of armed conflict regarding procedures and investigation ethics.

The Unit for Investigation of Wardens (UIW) In May 2018, the Office of the Deputy to the Attorney General (International Law) in cooperation with the NGO Public Committee against Torture in Israel, had conducted a one day training seminar for the Unit for Investigation of Wardens (UIW) in the Israel Police on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as on the Manual on Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Israel Defense Force (IDF) - The School of Military Law hosts multiple training exercises for IDF forces on human rights and the law of armed conflict. These exercises include lectures and academic courses which provide both practical and theoretical applications of international law. They analyze real and fictional operational cases designed specifically for the participants and their military specialty. In addition, commanders and the IDF's International Law Department take part in operational exercises in order to provide them with the professional tools that will allow them to face such challenges in accordance with international law.

Every year, hundreds of lectures are given to IDF soldiers and commanders who serve their mandatory service, as well as to reserve soldiers. These exercises place special emphasis on complicated issues such as arrest and detention practices, the legal responsibilities of soldiers and their commanders, as well as the laws and rules of conduct during an armed conflict.

Special emphasis is placed on legal obligations towards civilian populations, such as the prohibition against using civilian population for military purposes, the rights of prisoners and detainees, the prohibition against using threats and physical force during questioning in the field, the principle of equality, etc.

***The Israeli Prisons Service (IPS)* -** IPS officers and wardens undergo regular training. This includes topics such as prevention of the use of force, warden's ethics and the rights and liberties of the prisoner. These issues are routinely addressed during training and guidance of other prison staff members.

***The ISA* -** The Legal Department of the ISA and dozens of ISA personnel have undergone specific training on international law, including human rights law and the work of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies. These courses instill the importance of fundamental human rights principles, upholding the rule of law and practices stipulated by the courts.

***The Population and Immigration Authority (PIBA)* -** Personnel in the Refugee Status Determination Unit undergo a four-week course on topics related to refugees and asylum seekers. This includes the 1951 Refugee Convention, human rights conventions, Israeli laws and awareness of trafficking in persons.

***The Institute of Legal Training for Attorneys and Legal Advisers in the MoJ* -** The Institute regularly conducts seminars, courses and vocational training, attended by hundreds of practitioners in order to raise awareness of human rights issues.

In recent years, training has focused on the following issues: equal rights for persons with disabilities (November 2016 and May 2017), anti-trafficking in persons (March 2016, March 2015, October 2013), the Arab population in Israel (June 2015, November 2011), Human rights in International Law (December 2014, November 2015, November 2016, December 2017, and scheduled for October 2018), Equality (November 2016, October 2014), the fight against racism and prevention of discrimination (January 2014), women's rights, equality and LGBT rights (November 2017). Additional such seminars are conducted and planned for 2018, for example Transparency v. privacy (May 2018), Meet the Israeli society - Israeli of Ethiopian descent, persons from the former USSR and ultra-Orthodox (June and November 2018), and more. There are additional seminars on topics such as freedom of speech versus incitement, social rights, etc.

***The Institute of Advanced Judicial Studies* -** the Institute holds lectures, seminars, and courses for judges on various forms of discrimination in the legal context. During 2015-2016, these seminars included seminars on trafficking in persons, the rights of

children, racism and discrimination and human rights within the criminal process. In 2014-2015, the lectures, seminars and courses included issues such as trafficking in persons, equality, non-discrimination and immigration and refugee law.

Article 2

Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV)

MASHAV aims to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of populations facing severe development challenges and works with local stakeholders and communities to develop innovative solutions to their own development challenges. MASHAV promotes and engages in development cooperation on a bilateral, trilateral and multilateral level to intensify development policy and strengthen global alliances.

Since its establishment, 60 years ago, MASHAV has been active in 140 countries worldwide, directly training more than 300,000 men and women in a broad variety of fields.

In 2017 alone, MASHAV experts were dispatched throughout the world on 103 short-term consultancies and humanitarian medical missions to 42 countries. Throughout 2017, MASHAV trained more than 3,500 professionals from over 115 countries, based on an approach of "training the trainers" who will, in turn, touch the lives of many thousands more.

In line with OECD recommendations, good practice of DAC members and as a part of a concerted donor effort to combat the challenges associated with the proliferation and fragmentation of aid, MASHAV focuses its aid in areas in which Israel has special expertise. These areas include food security and agriculture; education; medicine and public health; community development; innovation and entrepreneurship for development; gender equality and women's empowerment; regional planning & rural and urban development; research and development; emergency planning and response; and humanitarian aid.

In 2017, MASHAV's activities included a wide spectrum of international partnerships and programs for development. A total of 1,778 professionals from 109 countries participated in 88 activities offered in Israel, while 1,599 took part in 41 on-the-spot

courses (in host countries) offered in a total of 26 countries. MASHAV experts were dispatched throughout the world on 103 short-term consultancies and humanitarian medical missions to 42 countries, and five (5) long-term experts served in MASHAV's demonstration projects around the world. In 2017, MASHAV signed cooperation agreements for development, and organized and participated in many international conventions both in Israel and around the world. The following are highlights of some of MASHAV's activities in 2017:Agreements for Regional and Multilateral Development Cooperation were made with Japan, South American and South African countries in various fields as the Middle East, education, agriculture, health, entrepreneurship and innovation. Additionally, MASHAV conducted development dialogues and international conferences, hosted professional delegations, and carried humanitarian assistance worldwide in areas that have been devastated by natural disasters.

In addition, in 2017, MASHAV maintained its activities with its alumni through a network of more than 70 "Shalom (Peace) Clubs" worldwide that serve as a forum to take part in professional and social activities. Members are invited to attend local lectures from skilled experts, exchange ideas and donate their own expertise to organize activities for the benefit of their communities.

Highlights of some of MASHAV's activities in 2017 are presented in English its annual report which may be found at the following link:

http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/mashav/Publications/Annual_Reports/Documents/AnnualReport2017.pdf

Article 3

Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality - Examples of recent sessions

On May 7, 2018, the Committee held a meeting on the treatment provided to men and women victims of sex offences and on the following day, May 8, on the treatment of Media towards victims of assault and sexual harassment.

On May 15, the Committee held a meeting titled "*Women and small businesses - challenges and course of action*", in which the Small and Medium Enterprises

Authority presented its work and the assistance it provides to women who choose to open a business. The Committee also heard independent women who opened such businesses including on the challenges in doing so.

On May 22, 2018, the Committee held a meeting on supervision and enforcement of the *Marital Age Law*, including statistics for requests for marriage prior to the age of 18, complaints filed with the Police on early marriages indictments and other enforcement activities against early marriages. On the same day the Committee held an emergency meeting on the issue of murder of women both by their spouses and by their family members. The Committee surveyed the cases of 13 women and girls that were murdered in 2018, received an update of the investigation of these cases, steps used to prevent family violence, etc.

On May 9, 2017, the Committee held a meeting titled "*Equal parenthood - How do we get there*?" The Committee invited special guests - The Swedish Ambassador in Israel, and an expert on the topic of maternity leave. During the meeting a Swedish photo exhibition titled "Swedish dads" was presented.

On March 14, 2017, the Committee held a meeting regarding the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (The Istanbul Convention). The session included representatives of all relevant Ministries and several NGOs.

On February 28, 2017, the Committee addressed the topic of labour laws enforcement regarding women from disadvantaged populations.

On February 21, 2017, the Committee held a session marking the LGBTQ community's rights day, and a held a follow-up discourse regarding challenges and issues in one-gendered parenthood of women.

On February 6, 2017, the Committee held a joint meeting with the Knesset Special Committee for Children's Rights, on the issue of teenage-girls and young adults at risk in the Arab society.

On January 5, 2017 the Committee members toured the "Neve Tirtza"- Israel's women prison.

Gender Responsive Budgeting

Government Resolution No. 2084 (October 7, 2014) adopted the conclusions of a Committee for Evaluating Gender Aspects of the State Budget, submitted in July 2014. The Government decided upon a gradual gender evaluation of the State budget by each Ministry and auxiliary unit - 10% in 2015, 40% in 2016, 70% in 2017 and 100% in 2018. The gender analysis is published alongside the State budget proposal and the explanatory notes submitted to the Knesset. This evaluation process is supervised by a Governmental Steering Committee. The implementation of gender budgeting analysis has exceeded expectations. In 2016, gender analysis was performed for 70% of Government Ministries.

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women is working to promote the Government's Resolution No. 2084, and to that end, on May 23, 2017, a conference was held on the subject of gender analysis of the budget for 20 Government Ministries and auxiliary units. The conference' goal was to provide tools, improve and supervise the Government's actions in the field of promoting gender equality. At the conference, tools were given to budgeters to assist in the analysis. In June 2018, a meeting of the Gender Budgeting Committee, chaired by the Director General of the Authority, was held, with the aim of implementing changes in gender budgeting.

International cooperation - On June 18-19, 2018, the second conference on gender budgeting was held in Vienna. The Authority's Director-General and a senior advisor participated in the conference together with other representatives from 23 OECD countries. These meetings helped to establish contacts with other representatives of gender equality institutions in other countries.

Call for Research Proposals for the Advancement of Women

Every year, the MoSTaS publishes a call for research proposals for developing policies for the advancement of women. In 2015, five (5) studies were funded in the amount of 1.5 Million NIS (416,000 USD), and in 2016, four (4) proposals were funded in the amount of 2 Million NIS (550,000 USD).

In mid-2016, the MoSTaS published a call for proposals to establish a center for knowledge on the subject of women and gender, whose goal will be to coordinate knowledge accumulated in research in the field and develop practical recommendations for policy to be implemented and enforced. The MoSTaS allocated 3 Million NIS (834,000 USD) for three (3) years for this project, with an option for extension.

The Promotion of Gender Equality in the Civil Service

The Department of Gender Equality at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) - The Gender Equality Department in the CSC which was established in 1995 continues to promote this issue in the Civil Service. It also publishes an annual report which outlines all activities taken to advance gender equality in the Civil Service.

The Stauber Report and implementation progress - In June 2014, the Government approved Resolution No. 1697, in which it resolved that women shall reach a representation level of 50% in all the top management ranks in the Civil Service within five (5) years. Currently, the representation level stands at 44% with regard to top management ranks.

This Resolution followed the report of The Committee for the Advancement of Women in the Civil Service (*"The Stauber Committee"*), which was appointed in 2014 by the Civil Service Commissioner and the Supervisor on Wage and Labour Agreements in the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The Committee issued a comprehensive report, which included a full data analysis and statistics of women employment in the Civil Service, presented the main obstacles and reasons for the current status of women in the Civil Service, ways to tackle them, and more.

Advanced Employer Certificate - Following the publication of the *Stauber* Committee report, the Government requested that the CSC take action to implement the recommendations, including proposing legislative amendments and awarding an "*Advanced Employer Certificate*" to a Ministry that meets the targets for appropriate representation. In January 2017 all ministries and support units completed the questionnaire for the Advanced Employer Certificate for 2016. A judicial committee was convened to choose the winning Ministries in the different categories.

In addition, the Government ordered the Commissioner to report every six (6) months to the Ministerial Committee for the Advancement of the status of Women, until a complete implementation of the recommendations is achieved. Government Resolution No. 2043, (October 7, 2014), approved an additional funding of 2.75 Million NIS (764,000 USD), to further implement the above recommendations.

The 2017 Strategic Plan for Human Resources in the CSC and the annual plan of the CSC's Gender Equality Department includes various ways to promote women in the Civil Service and to meet the objectives defined in the *Stauber* Report. For example, one (1) of the targets that was set at rate of 50% women in each year of the Civil Service's "talent management program" at the Civil Service's National College of Governance, Leadership and Management. Recently the first year of this program began, and there are more than 50% women.

The Gender Equality Index - In 2017, the CSC issued an assessment report addressing a variety of parameters on the issue of gender equality in every Government Ministry. The report was sent to all ministries and support units, which also received comprehensive information on the salary gaps in their ministry.

The Commissioner Guideline on variable wage components - The *Stauber* Committee found that salary gaps between women and men in the Civil Service derive, amongst other factors, from variable salary components (for example, vehicle allowances, overtime hours and on-call hours). In light of this, in 2014 the Commissioner issued a Guideline which includes criteria for setting salary components and requires Ministries to report to the CSC on varied salary components.

Strategic Plan - Guidelines for strategic planning of the CSC include guidelines for Government Ministries on equal parenting, including the holding of conferences, lectures and workshops on this matter. Furthermore, courses were commenced on balancing home and work and creating a workplace which supports the family. For example, on March 29, 2017, the CSC's Gender Equality Department held a conference titled "*Is Equal Parenting - Family and Career - Possible*?". The conference hosted all Director Generals and HR Managers of Government Ministries.

Work from home pilot - The Department of Gender Equality in the CSC is part of an inter-ministerial team which determined rules for the implementation of the "work

from home" pilot program. This pilot program began in 2016, and enables work from home in the afternoon hours for female and male employees who are parents, serve in an intermediate level position and above, and satisfying the criteria determined in Commissioner's Guideline 1/2016. The pilot program currently includes over 1,000 employees.

The Commissioner Guideline on Short working Day in August **-** In 2016, the Commissioner published a guideline according to which in August, a time in which the majority of children are on summer vacation from the education system, every employee is entitled to work one (1) hour less than usual, or to take one (1) day off.

Parents' Rights in the Civil Service Brochure - The Department of Gender Equality in the CSC issued and distributed a brochure on parental and family rights in the Civil Service, consisting of all rights on this matter, including in cases of complications of pregnancy, surrogacy, adoption, etc.

Gender Commissions - Under the Commissioner's Guideline 1/2016 (which established the work-from-home-pilot), Gender Commissions are being established in every Government Ministry. They are instructed to examine the barriers regarding equal parenthood and create ways to tackle them.

Cooperation with NGOs - The Department of Gender Equality in the CSC routinely collaborates with various NGOs and members of the Academia on the issue of the advancement of the status of women. Recently, the CSC published an open-call for women organizations and developed an extensive circulation list to which all senior positions in the Civil Service open for recruitment are sent for the purpose of active recruitment and encouragement of women to submit their candidacy.

Enhancing the Recruitment of Women in Civil Service Tenders - In 2017, several ventures were initiated in this area, such as: five (5) courses for preparing women for tenders, limiting high ranks positions tenure so to allow more women to occupy positions in the Civil Service, a conference is to be held by the Department of Gender Equality in cooperation with the Senior Department for Examinations in the Civil Service, on the issue of gender and cultural biases in human resource tenders in the Civil Service. In recent months the Department has been creating a training pack for coordinators of the examinations committees on this matter, in order to incorporate

effective and practicable tools. The Department of Gender Equality is an active participant in various teams of the CSC on this issue, for example, the "Tree of Knowledge" team on active recruitment of women, The Determination of Threshold Conditions for Management in order to verify the removal of barriers to the advancement of women in high ranking positions. In addition, the Department of Gender Equality in the CSC was included in June 2016 as one of the authorizing entities for job descriptions for positions filled via the headhunting committees of the Civil Service.

Gender Based Statistics Reflecting Employment in the Civil Service

The following gender-based statistics relating to civil service employment are accurate as of October 2015 (unless stated otherwise):

- 62.3% of Civil Service employees are women. As of this date, the rate of women employees holding first and second academic degrees was higher than that of men (56% and 57% respectively).

- 49% of the top four (4) ranking positions in the Civil Service, and 48% of the top three (3) ranking positions were held by women (an increase of 1% and 2% respectively).

- 67% of government corporations (61 out of 91) are reaching adequate representation of women in their directorates and an additional nine (9) corporations require only one (1) additional woman director in order to fulfill this requirement. In 2014, the Government Corporations Authority established a database of potential candidates who might qualify for senior government corporation positions. This database includes 500 persons, 225 men, 225 women and at least 50 candidates of the Arab population (both men and women).

- 51% of the judges in the Israeli judicial system today are women (updated to October 2017).

- As of August 2018, 22 women serve as heads of diplomatic missions in one of the 102 Israeli missions across the world (compared to 20 women in July 2018). Women also serve as deputy heads of missions on Rome, London, Tokyo, New-

Delhi and in the senior position of Israel deputy head of Mission to the United Nations. In addition, of the 19 Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Deputy Director Generals, six (6) are women. In recent years, an equal number of men and women enrolled in the diplomatic cadets' course.

Women in the Public Sphere

An Inter-ministerial team to prevent the exclusion of women from the public sphere - On January 5, 2012 the Attorney General appointed an inter-ministerial team in order to examine ways to tackle incidents involving exclusion of women from the public sphere. The team was established after increasing reports on various incidents of discrimination against women and their exclusion from the public sphere, sometimes with the exercise of verbal and physical violence. The team filed its recommendations with the Attorney General on March 7, 2013, which were adopted by the Attorney General in May 2013 and a team headed by the Deputy Attorney General (Consulting) was appointed to implement the recommendations.

Below are a number of the main steps taken to implement these recommendations:

Reporting - As an initial step, a designated email box was opened (Hadarat-nashim@justice.gov.il) to which governmental agencies and other public entities could approach and submit a complaints about incidents of exclusion of women.

Separation in cemeteries - On March 5, 2013 the Ministry of Religious Services amended the terms of the burial company licenses in order to prohibit gender separation during funerals of those attending the funeral. Moreover, the MoJ and Ministry of Religious Services are cooperating to eradicate this phenomenon, including by means of surprise visits and joint handling of public complaints on the matter. On this matter please also see Annex No. III (Judicial decisions relating to Article 3).

Exclusion in health clinics - The Ministry of Health (MoH) issued a guideline for the HMOs which prohibit the exclusion of women or gender separation at HMO clinics. The HMOs were required to report on incidents of gender separation in their clinics, such as separate clinics, separate entrances and separate waiting areas. Moreover, the

guideline prohibits the display of signs calling for modest dress. A similar guideline was issued to hospitals on July 2, 2014.

Separate Bus lines - The existence of public transportation lines for the use of ultra-Orthodox communities, which included separate seating arrangements for men and women (so that women would sit in the rear of the bus and men would sit in the front), were challenged before the High Court of Justice (H.C.J. 746/07 *Naomi Ragen v. Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety*). In 2011, Court adopted the recommendations of a Committee that examined this matter whereby **a public transportation arrangement consisting of coercive components is illegal since it is discriminatory.**

Conferences and events - The Attorney General approached several municipalities and asked that they cancel or change the frame of public events where there was gender segregation or women's singing was prohibited.

Government Resolution - On March 30, 2014, the Government adopted Resolution No. 1526 entitled "*Preventing the Exclusion of Women in the Public Sphere*", reaffirming the State's obligation to gender equality and the advancement of the status of women in Israel from all strata of society, in as many areas as possible. This Resolution recognized the fact that exclusion of women from the public sphere is a grave practice characterized by discrimination, which requires active governmental action for its eradication. The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (AASW) circulated the Resolution to all mayors and heads of local authorities, demanding that they ensure that exclusion of women does not occur in ceremonies, public events, funerals, public transportation or any other places in the public sphere.

Article 6

Employment Circles program - Reduction in the numbers of recipients of income supplement benefits seeking employment

This program includes personal and group guidance and workshops that focus on the skills and tools needed for integration into the labour market.

In 2010, 122,880 recipients of income benefit supplement sought employment. In 2014, when the "employment circles" program was initiated, this number stood at 114,601. After just three (3) years, in 2017, there were 72,958 recipients of income benefit supplement seeking employment.

Employment integration grant for outlying areas

This pilot program, launched in 2016, is aimed at job seekers who live in outlying areas who manage to find work far from home. It aims to discern whether the impediment in gaining employment in such areas, where centers of employment are far from home, is monetary. Those eligible receive a grant of 550 NIS (157 USD) a month, for five (5) months. The pilot will run until December 2018, at the latest, after which the data gathered will be examined and a decision made with regard to its continuation. Information about the program is published on the Employment Services website in both Hebrew and Arabic.

Five-year Inter-ministerial Program for Raising Employment in Minority Populations

Government Resolution No. 4193 (of January 2012) set forth a five-year program for raising employment among minority populations, particularly amongst Arab women. This includes a preparatory program for higher education; basic education for Arab women who lack a high school diploma; programs to increase the number of Arab women students in technological education and programs to encourage the demand for employees from amongst the Arab population, including the development and upgrading of industrial zones, programs that encourage entrepreneurship and development, transportation to workplaces and additional tools for creating demand.

Additional Steps for the Promotion of the Arab Population in the Labour Market

Programs for integrating college graduates into the public sector - Government Resolution No. 2579 (November 2007) set forth a target of 10% employment of persons of minority population within the public sector. **In October 2016, 10% of all Civil Service employees were Arabs, including Bedouins, Druze and Circassians** (this in comparison to 9.7% in December 2015). A marketing campaign to encourage applications resulted in tens of thousands of hits on the mini-site established as part of the campaign.

Assistance Program for Businesses - In July 2015, the Ministry of Economy and Industry (MoEI) launched an assistance program based on the competitive allocation of funds for businesses which intend to establish or to expand, so long as at least 90% of their employees (or of the newly-employed workers) are members of a population with low workforce participation. Businesses receive a partial subsidy for monthly salary costs for a 30 month period. A higher subsidy level has been established with regard to the employment of male Bedouins.

Improving Public Transportation - In recent years, the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety (MoTaRS) has invested significantly in public transportation in Arab communities. For example, improvement of public transport is a central part of the five-year plan for economic development in minority communities established in Government Resolution No. 1539 (March 2010), with an allocation of 80 Million NIS (approx. 22.2 Million USD) to this end.

Government Resolution No. 4193 (January 2012) allocated 50 Million NIS (13.9 Million USD) to the design of a plan for public transport to connect local communities to employment areas. Government Resolution No. 2365 (December 2014) allocated 300 Million NIS (83.4 Million USD) to the improvement of transport infrastructures.

Women of Valor

This program provides social support for women from traditional societies, particularly from the Arab population, with less than 12 years of education who are seeking employment. Approx. 2,600 women participate in this program, of which 1,654 are Arab. The project has a budget of 11 Million NIS (3.1 Million USD).

Additional Steps for the Promotion of Women from Minority Populations in the Labour Market

Nursing studies for Arab women in the South - A nursing program for women has been opened at the Ashkelon College, in which approximately 30 Bedouin students take part. The program assists the students in the application process, placement, pre-college studies and full studies and includes transportation to the college.

Loan Foundation for Small Businesses owned by Women belonging to Minority Groups - Established in 2011, this loan foundation is open to women in the Galilee and in the South of Israel. Over 3,000 loans have been extended since the establishment of the foundation. Following its success, the foundation has been extended for three (3) additional years with a budgetary scope of 23 Million NIS (6.4 Million USD).

Professional training vouchers - In Resolution No. 1539 (March 2010), the Government allocated 30 Million NIS (8.34 Million USD) for professional training vouchers for job seekers from minority communities.

Educational Programs - The Ministry of Education (MoE) runs educational programs for Bedouin women in the Negev, including approx. 20 classes each year. During the first years these classes were offered, most of these classes were taught at elementary school level.

During 2011-2012, the AASW held courses for Arab women on economic empowerment and business planning. About 600 women participated in these courses.

In 2015-2016, the Small and Medium Enterprises Authority (SMEA) and the AASW held business enterprise courses for Arab and ultra-Orthodox women. 416 women participated.

Media Campaign - The SMEA ran a media campaign aimed at Jewish employers to encourage the employment of minorities and their integration into the private business sector. The campaign was very successful; over 600 referrals were received from potential employers.

Promotion of the Bedouin Population into the Labour Market

Employment Centers - In 2015, these centers handled 2,855 applicants, 1,683 of whom found employment. Between 2012 and 2014, they handled 4,538 applicants, 2,813 of whom found employment. 86% of the men and 66% of the women who found employment with the assistance of the centers continued to be employed a year later.

Vocational training - The MoEI offers vocational training opportunities, including day seminars that are funded almost completely by the Government, business courses conducted both by the employment centers and by private colleges and businesses and vocational training vouchers.

In 2015, vocational courses were attended by 646 people (38% of them were women). In the same year, approx. 900 people attended workshops aimed at preparing them for entry into the labour force and 130 people attended workshops that included vocational Hebrew lessons and computer skills. In 2015, the total operational cost of these vocational centers was approximately 20 Million NIS (5.6 Million USD).

Bedouin employees have also been integrated into a professional welding course by the Israel Electric Corporation, leading to employment in the corporation.

An agreement has also been signed for the establishment and operation of robotics and technology centers in the Bedouin communities, at a cost of 1.5 Million NIS (417,000 USD).

Vocational Training for Local Authority Officials and others - The "Appleseed's Academy" offers technological, organizational and administrative training sessions for officials in local authorities and educational-technological-computer training sessions for youth and adults, at a cost of approximately two Million NIS (555,000 USD). A preparatory program for cadets in local government has also been established for the Bedouin population, in order to reinforce local government.

Industrial Parks - The "*Idan Ha-Negev*" Industrial Park was established by three (3) local authorities (Bnei-Shimon, Rahat and Lehavim). During 2012-2013 the Government allocated 31 Million NIS (8.6 Million USD) to the additional development of the park. Additional budgets (19.96 Million NIS (5.54 Million USD) in 2014 and 12 Million NIS (3.3 Million USD) in 2015) have been advanced in order to allow more rapid development of the zone and the absorption of factories.

The Industrial zones of "Abu Krinat" and "Bir Hadaj" (each approximately 100 dunams) also serve the Bedouin population. Likewise further industrial zones in Al-Sayyid, Umm Batin, Tel Sheva, Ar'ara and Kuseife are in planning stages. In July

2013, 40 Million NIS (approx. 11.1 Million USD) were allocated to the development of the Shoket Junction Industrial Zone.

Encouraging Entrepreneurship - 14 Million NIS (3.8 Million USD) were allocated for the encouraging of entrepreneurship, between 2012-2016. In June 2014, a unit of the Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses was opened in Rahat, providing general and financial advice, training and guidance. It also provides training days for women, focusing on opening and managing a business. In 2015, the unit provided services to 420 entrepreneurs and small businesses (with up to 100 employees) of the Bedouin population.

A small handicrafts region has also been planned for the Kuseife community in the Negev, at a cost of 300,000 NIS (83,300 USD).

Improvements in Public transport - The Government invested 21.6 Million NIS (6 Million USD) each year of the five-year plan in the improvement of transport infrastructure in the Negev, improving both the frequency of existing public transport and adding bus routes. Eleven (11) projects for the paving of roads in Bedouin communities have also been budgeted at approximately 50 Million NIS (13.9 Million USD), including the expansion of roads within the communities and the paving of roads from the communities to service centers.

On February 12, 2017 the Government approved Resolution No. 2397 titled "Government plan for the empowerment and socio-economic strengthening of the Bedouin localities in the Negev for the years 2017-2021." This is a comprehensive five-year plan addressing different aspect for development for the Bedouin population, with a budget of three Billion NIS (833.4 Million USD) for the benefit of the Bedouin population. Roughly 190 Million NIS (52.8 Million USD) were allocated for the development of employment among the Bedouin population.

A budget was also allocated for the continued operation of the employment centers, which will also include a Hebrew language skills program for 2,500 participants, particularly women, and for the training of engineers.

Promotion of the Persons of Ethiopian Descent in the Labour Market

Vocational training - Courses have been held in computers, high-tech and construction-related professions. As of June 2017, these catered to approx. 96 participants. Vouchers for professional training allow for the training of about 120 people in a variety of occupations.

Promoting excellence in the placement of university and college graduates - This program aims to provide skills to aid university and college graduates in seeking employment. It includes English language, labour market skills and interview preparation workshops. This program caters for approx. 180 participants.

Promoting the Employment of Women of Ethiopian Descent - The Ministries of Education, Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption and Economy and Industry are leading several projects to promote the employment of women of Ethiopian descent. For example, the Herzog Geriatric Hospital has developed a nurses training program for young women of Ethiopian descent. The program promotes the better integration of these nurses into quality positions in the labour market.

Promotion of Persons with Disabilities into the Labour Market

There are approximately 703,700 persons with disabilities of working age (ages 18-64) representing 15% of the general population. Approximately 259,700 persons with disabilities of working age (ages 20-64) have a severe disability.

The latest data of the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities indicates an improvement in the employment rate of person with serious and moderate disabilities. In 2002, only 40% of persons of working age, with serious and moderate disabilities were employed, compared to 68% of persons without a disability.

In 2015, this rate stood at 51% among persons with serious and moderate disabilities, compared to 79% among persons without disabilities.

The percentage of part-time employees among persons of disabilities is 27%, compared to 16% among persons without disabilities.

Affirmative Action by Large Employers in the Private and Public Sector - A number of steps have been taken in order to give effect to the obligation under Section 9 of the *Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law* 5758-1998 which requires employers with over 25 workers to promote appropriate representation of persons with disabilities.

Implementation of Section 9 in the private sector - The *Expansion Order for Promoting Employment of* P*ersons with Disabilities* came into effect on October 5, 2014. This defines the term "appropriate representation" in Section 9 in relation to employers with over 100 employees as 3% of persons with disabilities in the workforce and requires employers to appoint a designated employee to supervise implementation.

Expansion of Section 9 in relation to large public sector employers - A 2016 amendment to the *Equal Rights Law* requires public sector employers (principally, local authorities and statutory corporations) with more than 100 employees who do not have in their employment at least 5% persons with significant disabilities to prepare and post on their website an annual work program designed to promote the employment of persons with significant disabilities, including affirmative action and outreach measures. Affirmative action orders may be issued to employers who are not compliant. In addition, every public sector employer with 25 or more employees must appoint an Equality Officer.

Government Companies - A 2016 amendment to the *Government Companies Law* 5735-1975 sets an obligation of appropriate representation of several population groups among the directors of government companies, including persons with disabilities.

Employer centers - In 2013 three (3) "Employer Centers" were established to provide long and short term support to employers in all aspects of employing workers with disabilities, such as applying for a subsidy for accessibility adjustments, locating workers with disabilities and follow up on the achievement of the goals.

Programs and Projects for the Encouragement of Employment - A number of programs for work placement of persons with disabilities have been developed. These include the following:

"Revadim" Employment Center for Persons with Disabilities - This center provides persons with disabilities a broad range of services including vocational diagnosis and refunding of travel expenses. In addition, recipients of the service are entitled to a grant for diligence at their work equal to their salary (up to 5,000 NIS (approx. 1,425 USD)). The duration of the service provided by the centers is limited to two (2) years. This program is currently running a pilot center in Tel Aviv-Jaffa.

"Rampa" - The Program for the Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities - This program was developed by American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee-Israel (JDC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Social Services (MoLSAaSS) to increase the rate of participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market by providing accessibility to the services of employment centers within the community.

"Siftach" project - In September 2016, a new program was initiated by JDC-Israel in cooperation with MoLSAaSS. This is designed to aid persons with disabilities who have higher education to find employment suitable to their education and skills. The program will initially operate as a pilot in seven (7) institutions.

Inter-sector partnership - Founded in 2010, this promotes the employment of persons with disabilities, with the goal of enlisting all stakeholders: Government, NGOs, the private sector, employers and the largest trade union in Israel, the "Histadrut". The partnership began by identifying barriers in different occupational areas. It has led to the adoption of the Charter for the Employment of persons with disabilities, signed by all the partners.

Promotion of Senior Citizens into the Labour Market

Employment centers - Employment centers offer personal assistance, *referral* to training courses and develop employer relations within local authorities. Approximately seven (7) local centers have been established and more are planned for coming years.

Integrating senior citizens into public service - The CSC is running a pilot program for the employment of senior citizens, over the age of retirement, within the Civil Service.

Entrepreneurship programs - The Ministry of Social Equality (MoSE), together with the Small and Medium Enterprises Authority, have adapted an existing program for entrepreneurship training to the needs of senior citizens.

Corporate responsibility - The MoSE is cooperating with the NGO "Ma'ala" in order to promote corporate responsibility and awareness of the elderly in employment and in the preparation for retirement.

Employment Programs Run by the MoLSAaSS

Regional employment centers - There are currently seven (7) regional employment centers that serve 4,500 people per year at a cost of 24 Million NIS (6.7 Million USD).

"Ma'avarim" - This program serves unemployed residents of regional councils or employed residents who are not optimally integrated into the workforce. It serves approx. 4,800 participants annually.

Employment for Wellbeing Project - This project is aimed at families in the care of the social services who are unemployed or not sufficiently employed. It serves approx. 600 families and operates in 21 regional councils of which one (1) is ultra-Orthodox, one (1) is Arab, and the rest are Jewish or mixed. The project budget is 7.8 Million NIS (2.2 Million USD).

"***Afikim***" - This is an employment project designed for young adults aged 18-25 who are at-risk. It has a budget of 5.4 Million NIS (about 1.5 Million USD). There are 556 participants annually.

Persons with addictions - An additional program aims to integrate rehabilitated persons with addictions into the workforce. The program caters annually for 465 participants at a cost of 750,000 NIS (approx. 214,000 USD).

Legal Safeguards to Protect Workers from Unfair Dismissal

As mentioned in the report, following judicial rulings of Labour Courts in the last two (2) decades, employers who seek to fire an employee are obligated to conduct a hearing in order to allow the employee to present his/her case regarding the intention of dismissal. A notice of a hearing should be given to the employee within reasonable

time prior to the hearing, in order to provide the employee sufficient time to review the claims against him/her, including documents upon which employer's dismissal decision is based. The employer is required to give the employee a fair opportunity to present his/her claims against the dismissal, and the employee has the right to be represented by a lawyer. A representative of the employee's labour union may also attend the hearing if the employer so wishes.

Article 7

Data regarding Adjusted Minimum Wage of Persons with Disabilities

By March 2016, the treatment of 6,830 requests for adjusted minimum wage was completed. 5,100 workers were evaluated by the MoLSAaSS and were found to be eligible for reduced wages, thus enabling them to be included in open market employment.

Enforcement by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC)

The EEOC handles individual complaints regarding discrimination in the labour market. In 2016, the EEOC handled 636 complaints. 63% of them were filed by women. In comparison to 2015, in 2016 there has been an increase in complaints regarding sexual harassment, whilst there was 8.7% decrease in complaints regarding pregnancy discrimination.

Enhancing the Enforcement of Labour Laws Law 5772-2011

This law was legislated following the recommendations of a steering committee that stressed that effective enforcement of the payment of wages and other workers rights will counter increasing poverty amongst employees. The Law achieves this goal in two (2) central ways. The first is the creation of administrative fines which may be imposed upon an employer who is found to be in violation of a long list of labour laws. These fines are imposed by specially authorized labour inspectors. According to the provisions of the law, the fines may be increased in the event of ongoing violations.

This law also imposed direct responsibility for certain workers' rights on the recipient of private security, cleaning and catering services given by a contracting company.

This responsibility covers those rights enumerated in the third appendix to the Law, including those established in the *Hours of Work and Rest Law* 5711-1951 and the *Wage Protection Law*. Pursuant to certain conditions (such as the provision of such services for at least six (6) months, by at least four (4) workers and failing to uphold the workers' rights after a specific request), the law authorizes the imposition of an administrative fine upon the recipient and even criminal responsibility in the event that she/he failed to oversee the treatment of those providing her/him with services or omitted to do everything possible to prevent the contracting company from violating their rights.

Amendment to the *Foreign Workers Law* 5761-1991

Generally speaking, a condition for the receipt of permits to hire foreign workers is that their wages must be paid into a bank account in Israel. An amendment which entered into effect in March 2017 instructs the making of regulations which establish the different methods by which foreign workers may be paid, including the methods of documenting the payment. This amendment was seen to be necessary in light of accounts of foreign workers in the agricultural field who objected to the deposit of their wages in a bank account, in light of practical difficulties in reaching a branch, the concern that employers may deposit wages in a bank account and then withdraw them and in the light of safe banking electronic applications which may be preferable for both employee and employer.

The amendment also clarifies the powers of the Ombudswomen for Foreign Workers Rights at the MoLSAaSS to revoke, limit or refuse the grant of a permit to hire a foreign worker, including the power to demand a bond as a condition for the granting or extension of a permit.

A further amendment relates to the suspicion of the commission of a serious offense, defined as holding a person under conditions of slavery, forced labour, false imprisonment or any other offense against a foreign worker which due to its nature, severity or circumstances imply that the employer is not worthy of a permit. According to the amendment, the Ombudsman may revoke or refuse to renew a permit if an indictment has been filed against an employer, a stakeholder or a senior employer in the place of employment or if they have been convicted of such an offense. Where an investigation has been initiated, the Ombudsman may delay the

adoption of a decision on the grant, renewal or exercise of a permit for a period of up to 18 months, or until a decision has been made regarding the serving of an indictment, according to the earlier date. Where an investigation relating to a stakeholder is ongoing, the Ombudsman must first consider the extent of her/his relationship with the employer and the possibility of prescribing conditions in the permit in order to prevent harm to the foreign worker.

The Promotion a Better Work-Life Balance in the Public Sector

Work from home pilot - See above in Article 3.

The Commissioner Guideline on Short Work Days in August - See Article 3.

The Ministries of Transportation and Road Safety, National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Resources and Health - Changing Work-Parenthood Dynamic - The General Directors of these Ministries notified their employees that on Tuesdays and Thursdays, meetings will not be convened after 15:00 in order to allow parents and grandparents a family afternoon.

The Ministry of Economy and Industry - Adjusting the annual vacation to school vacation - For the last few years, the Ministry has been leading a pilot whereby the Ministry is closed during the last ten (10) days of August, enabling parents to spend their summer vacation with their children.

The Police Gender Equality Unit - In 2013, the Police established a unit responsible for promoting equal opportunities for women serving in the Police, including the construction of mechanisms for long term service of women and promoting a better balance between home and work.

Gender Wage Gaps

Gender Salary Gaps Survey - A survey conducted by the EEOC in 2014-2015 examined prevailing perceptions of employers regarding gender salary gaps. The survey revealed some challenges that are important to be aware of in order to improve equality in the labour market.

For example, findings showed that 85% of the employers in the public and business sectors believe that there is no difference between the salary of men and women and

only 17% of the employers have examined if there are gender differences in the compensation levels in their workplace. On the other hand, with regard to initial wages, findings showed that almost half of the employers (47%) set the initial wage based on fixed criteria in advance, such as education, former position, etc., and only 36% of them do so based on individual negotiation with the employee; personal negotiation is more likely to create wage difference and thus, the tendency towards a fixed criteria is positive. With regard to salary raise, the tendency is the opposite - about half of employers (46%) reported that the timing and amount of a salary raise follows individual negotiation with the employee. Though only 9% of the employers take active initiatives for reducing salary gaps, 56% of the employers noted commitment to gender equality as part of their organization's vision or its values and 81% of employers indicated that they consider themselves as the responsible factor to narrow down salary differences.

Data regarding the gender pay gap - In 2014, the gender pay gap was 33% in gross average income per month, and 16% in gross average income per work hour. According to the 2016 Business Diversity Index (explained below), the gaps are varied, depending on the field. For example, although women's representation is highest in the field of insurance, this is also the field with the largest wage gap between women and men. In the fields of production, distribution, television and radio broadcasting, the wage gap between women and men is the lowest. In the financial services field, the wage gap in small companies is roughly 50%, and in large companies and organizations the rate is between 30% and 35%. In the computer programming field, the wage gap in small companies is approximately 44%, compared to 30% in large companies. The index is constructed of two (2) classifications: representation, and wage equality. The source of the data used for the index is the "Income Tax of Employee Positions File" of 2014.

Business Diversity Index - This is a measuring tool developed by the EEOC, the Central Bureau of Statistics and Tel Aviv University indicating the level of diversity among employees in the private sector. The calculation is based on both representation and equal salary. It focuses on five (5) groups of population: women, Arabs, Israeli citizens of Ethiopian descent, people above the age of 45, and ultra-Orthodox citizens.

Gender Equality in Wages

One of the products of the ***"Of Equal Worth"*** venture is the "Salary Gaps Calculator". This is an innovative tool for gender-related analysis of an organization's pay data. An Employer's Guide, available in three (3) languages, provides support for analyzing pay differences and for formulating an action plan, if needed. The Calculator features on the EEOC's website and can be downloaded by any employer.

Prevention of *Sexual Harassment Law* 5758-1998

A number of amendments have been made to this law, including the following:

***Statute of Limitations Law* 5718-1958** - Was amended in August 2015, allowing for the extension of the statute of limitations where the defendant knowingly misled, threatened or exploited the plaintiff. The expectation is that this amendment will allow more women to file claims in circumstances such, for example, as sexual abuse.

Publishing with focus on sexuality - Publishing a photograph, film or recording of a person that focuses on her/his sexuality, in circumstances in which the publication is likely to humiliate or degrade her/him, without that person's consent, constitutes sexual harassment (2014);

Adverse treatment - If an employee's complaint regarding adverse treatment is submitted, the burden of proof shifts to the employer to prove that the said treatment was not the result of a sexual harassment complaint submitted by the employee, if no more than three (3) years have elapsed from the complaint (2014).

Sheltered employment - Sheltered employment enterprises are now included in the definition of work relations for the purpose of sexual harassment, thus ensuring better protection of employees with disabilities (2014).

Compensation without proof of damages - The amount of compensation that may be awarded with no proof of damage has been increased (up to 120,000 NIS, about 34,000 USD) (2013);

Public employees - Public employees have been added to a list of positions of authority or dependency which do not require the harassed individual to state that she/he is uninterested in the sexual advances in order for an offense to be committed

(2013);

Statute of limitations - The statute of limitations for a sexual harassment lawsuit has been extended from three to seven (3-7) years, enabling more women to file complaints of sexual harassment (2012);

Activities of the AASW with Regard to Sexual Harassment

The AASW continues to take important steps to ensure the implementation of the *Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law*. For example, it sent letters to hundreds of employers reminding them of their obligation to appoint a Sexual Harassment Supervisor; distributed Advocacy Kits in order to assist the supervisors in the performance of their duties; and distributes "Prevention of Sexual Harassment Standards" (in five (5) different languages) which employers are required to display in the workplace.

In 2015 the AASW began to collect annual reports on the prevention of sexual harassment at academic institutions and the scope of the cases in this context.

The AASW also holds lectures and training courses at workplaces, for sexual harassment supervisors, human resource directors and others.

Following the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality, which received a status of a Government Resolution (No. 3229 of December 7, 2017), a committee was established to formulate a national plan for the prevention of sexual harassment, headed by the Director General of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women. The national plan will include aspects of raising public awareness of the phenomenon of sexual harassment and its destructive consequences, education activities to change patterns of behavior and thought among the public, etc. In order to implement the plan, ten (10) Million NIS (2.78 Million USD) were allocated for the years 2018-2020. It is the committee's intention to form a national plan that will focus on the fight and prevention of sexual harassment in workplaces and on preventive measures.

Health and Safety at Work

Recent amendments to the long list of legislation and regulations ensuring safety and

health in the workplace include:

***Enhancing the Enforcement of Labour Laws (Amendment of the Second Schedule to the Law) Order* 5777-2017** - This order, issued in 2017, added statutory provisions concerning safety at work to the Second Schedule of the *Enhancing the Enforcement of Labour Laws Law*, so that administrative fines may be imposed for a breach due to a long list of violations in this field.

***Safety at Work Ordinance (New Version)* 5730-1970** - In 2016, an amendment was made to Section 173 of the Ordinance in order to update the authorization to set requirements, restrictions and conditions for the protection of employees.

***Organization of Labour Inspection Law* 5714-1954** - Section 6 of this law was amended in 2016 in order authorize Labour Inspectors to order the cessation of activity on a construction site where a labour accident which led to the death or injury of a person has occurred and to prohibit further activity on the site for a period of up to five (5) working days.

***Organization of Labour Inspection (Safety Management Program) Regulations* 5773-2013** - These regulations require that places of work, as defined in the regulations, formulate a proactive program for safety management, aimed at the prevention of work accidents and occupational diseases. These regulations include a risk management process which must be performed in a professional, systematic and continuous manner.

Occupational Disease Registry - In 2011, the MoH established a registry of occupational diseases in order to gain further understanding into occupational morbidity in Israel and to serve intervention programs.

Insurance - The *Economic Efficiency (Legislation Amendments for Achieving the Budget Goals for 2019)* 5778-2018, increased the employers insurance payment for their employees by additional 0.1%, from January 2019 for a period of five (5) years.

Article 8

Essential Services

There is no list of essential services in relation to which strikes may be prohibited. The *Settlement of Labour Disputes* Law 5717-1957 sets out a list of "public services". There is no prohibition on a public service strike, although the law defines a number of situations in which such a strike would be considered "unprotected". These situations are as follows: a strike which takes place whilst a collective agreement is in effect, unless it takes place on grounds other than pay or social conditions; a strike which takes place whilst no collective agreement is in effect, but was not declared or authorized by the trade union in accordance with its regulations; a strike which takes place without notification as required by law. In regard to strikes by security forces, please see Israel's initial report.

Article 9

Significant Amendments in Entitlements to Social Security that have been made since the Submission of our Third Periodic Report.

Insurance contributions made by self-employed persons **-** In January 2017, an amendment concerning the insurance contributions made by self-employed persons came into effect, benefiting those with lower incomes, as follows:

	Prior to the Amendment	**As of January 2017**
Up to 60% of the average wage	6.72%	2.87%
Over 60% of the average wage	11.23%	12.83%

Income supplement benefit **-** As explained in Israel's Third Periodic Report, this is a benefit provided to a person whose income from work or any other source (such as Old-Age Pension) is lower than the Minimum Guaranteed Income (MGI) necessary for subsistence as determined by the *Income Support Law* 5740-1980.

In December 2015, income supplement benefits were raised in order to bring recipients closer to the poverty line or over it. These benefits were raised again by between 90 NIS (approx. 25.7 USD) and 320 NIS (approx. 91.4 USD) in 2017 and 2018.

In January 2017, the non-consideration of wages was raised by 142 NIS (approx. 40.5 USD) to 2,035 NIS (approx. 581 USD) for singles and 2,413 NIS (approx. 689 USD) for couples.

Ownership of vehicles - In September 2012, further amendments were made to provisions relating to the ownership of vehicles, such that the ownership or use of one (1) vehicle does not disqualify a person from eligibility for income supplement benefit, provided the vehicle's value does not exceed 40,760 NIS (approx. 11,645 USD). A vehicle which value is 9,000 NIS (approx. 2,571 USD) or more is deemed as having generated income equal to 3% of its value, and a set amount is deducted every month from the benefits.

Rental assistance - In this regard please see Na.In.A. 20952-04-11 *Ehud Yair v. NII* (20.11.15) in Annex III.

Assets - A further amendment in the same year altered the calculation of income from assets. Accordingly, the income derived from **financial assets** is now calculated according to the market interest rate, marital status, number of children and the age of the applicant. Income from **real estate** is calculated according the property's designation (agricultural, residential, commercial etc.), and its value is determined by a certified assessor and marital status, age and number of children of applicant.

Holocaust survivors and older persons – In April 2014, the Government approved Resolution No. 1568 titled "National Plan for Assisting Holocaust Survivors" The Plan is designed to reduce the gaps created as a result of former agreements on this issue and to equalize the entitlement conditions to all Holocaust survivors in Israel. Thus, one of the plan's main changes is equalizing of the entitlement conditions for about 18,500 Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Israel after October 1, 1953, and previously were not eligible for benefits under the *Persons with Disabilities due to Nazi Persecution Law* 5717-1957. The assistance program included a package of economic benefits for Holocaust survivors by raising the monthly minimum

allowance for PWD as a result of WWII or Nazi persecutions, granting an annual grant to about 85,000 Holocaust survivors who are not entitled for a monthly allowance, full exemption on medication payments, monthly widower's allowance for the spouse of a deceased Holocaust survivor, including the spouse of PWD due to the war against the Nazis, and increasing the welfare services basket to which survivors are entitled. For this purpose, the program included a series of changes and adjustments in the State budget, and in the budget of the MoLSAaSS, and the NII. The Plan is designed to help Holocaust survivors that currently live in Israel and to further alleviate them economically and socially. This plan was budgeted by roughly one Billion NIS (278 Million USD). Following the approval of this plan several legal amendments were made for its implementation, among them Amendment No. 19 of June 2014 to the *Persons with Disabilities due to Nazi Persecution Law*, which determined, *inter alia*, that the primary allowance according to this law will be at least 2,200 NIS (611 USD) (currently stands on 2,308 NIS (640 USD)) this amendment has been implemented since June 2014 (note that a similar amendment was made to the *Persons with Disabilities due to the War Against the Nazis Law* 5714-1954).

Also, Amendment No. 5 to the *Benefits for Holocaust Survivors Law* 5767-2007, equalized the conditions for receiving an allowance both to persons who survived of camps and ghettoes and immigrated to Israel before October 1, 1953, with the conditions and rights of recognized Holocaust survivors according to the *Persons with Disabilities due to Nazi Persecution Law*. This amendment further provides an annual grant to Holocaust survivors who do not receive any monthly pension (exceeding 1,000 NIS (275 USD) per month) and an annual grant to Holocaust survivors who were forced laborers who had previously received payment from the "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" Fund.

Also in 2014, the Minister of Finance decided to allocate a grant in the sum of 2,000 NIS (556 USD) to survivors in need who receive allowances from foreign countries (according to an income test).

In 2015, the Minister of Finance issued an administrative decision according to which, descendants of Morocco and Algeria who suffered under the Vichy regime or descendants of Iraq who suffered from the "*farhud*" (violent riots carried out against the Jewish population of Iraq in June 1941) are entitled to an annual grant and are

exempted from any payment on medications. Also according to this decision, persons who were slaved laborers according to on order that was issued against Jews during WWII are entitled to benefits and allowances provided pursuant to the *Persons with Disabilities due to the War against the Nazis* Law.

In 2018, the Government established a team headed by the Minister of Finance, with the aim of promoting efficient care for the survivors' needs. It was further decided to implement a project that will allow survivors to fully receive their financial, economic and social rights, including by physically arriving to homes of survivors who cannot be reached by other means.

Single mothers - In January 2017 an amendment which provides temporary material relief was made to the income test for single mothers entitled to child support benefits or income supplement benefits. This amendment aims to encourage single mothers to join the workforce through a limited deduction of their income from benefits.

Senior citizens and survivor benefits - These benefits were gradually increased by 7.3% between 2009 and 2011.

In 2017 an amendment initiated a gradual reduction in the number of years required for eligibility for a "seniority supplement" to senior citizen and survivor benefits. This is a supplement of 2% which prior to the amendment, was added to these benefits after 11 years of insurance. This amendment is to be implemented in four (4) strokes, such that by 2020 the seniority supplement will be given from the first year of insurance.

In 2014, the definition of "child" was expanded such that a child aged 18-20 who is studying at an educational institution will continue to be entitled to survivor's benefits.

Long-term care benefits - The following significant amendments have been introduced in this field:

As of March 2015, additional scoring is given to an individual who resides with a person who is 90 years old or more, even if the latter is not entitled to long-term care benefits.

In 2016, entitlement to long-term care benefits was restructured such that "service

units" were formed. This step was taken in order to enable the same number of nursing hours, even given an increase in the minimum wage and the cost of care.

In January 2017, entitlement to long-term care benefits for those hospitalized was extended from 14 days to 30 days.

Recently, the *Economic Efficiency Law (Legislation Amendments for Achieving the Budget Goals for 2019)*, made some significant changes in this area, *inter alia*, by creating six (6) categories of persons who require nursing and long-term care (previously three (3) categories) according to their need and level of dependency, thus better adapting the care benefits to the various categories and raising the allotment to those in greater need. The changes included in this law, include the provision of additional service units to persons with no relatives who require nursing and long-term care, to blind persons, to persons over the age of 90 etc., in addition, the law provides additional services such as distress buttons, entitlement for day centers and more. The law allows converting some of the nursing services to cash (up to a third of the services cost and subject to a professional annual visit in the person's home).

Child benefits - The following significant amendments have been introduced in this field:

Uniform benefit - In August 2013, child benefit was set at a uniform rate for all children (as opposed to a differential rate according to the number of children in a family). In May 2015, payments were raised in real terms by 14.5% compared to 2014.

A Minor convicted of security offenses - In November 2015, an amendment was made to the *National Insurance Law* regarding a minor convicted of a security offense (as defined in the *Counter-Terrorism Law*) or of the offense of stone-throwing (as defined in the *Penal Law*) when committed with a nationalistic motive or in connection with terrorist activity, and has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment. According to the amendment, the parents of the minor are not eligible to receive national insurance payments which relate to the minor for the period of imprisonment. These payments amount, on average, to about 44 - 54 USD per month. During this time, the needs of the minor, as of all prisoners, are supplied in full by the State.

Children in foster care - In February 2016, arrangements were made for the payment of benefits for children in foster care.

Study grant - The entitlement to a "study grant", given at the start of the school year to qualifying families for every child between the ages of 6 and 14, was expanded to include children up to the age of 18.

Death of a child with disabilities - In March 2016, a benefit was created to be paid in the event of the death of a child with disabilities in order to aid the family in the initial period of adaptation and assisting the child's parents in returning to the labour market following a long period of taking care of the child and after the mourning period.

Birth allowances, birth grants and maternity allowance - The following significant amendments have been introduced in this field:

Hospitalization grants - The hospitalization grants given following premature births were increased a number of times (in 2009 (by 10%), 2012 (by 0.2%) and 2013 (by 10% and 3.87%).

Women with disabilities - In 2015, an allowance was created for women with disabilities who cannot care alone for a newborn. If the woman does not have a spouse, she is entitled to a special allowance amounting to 30% of the average wage for a period of three (3) months. If she has a spouse who accumulated a qualifying period of employment and stopped working due to the birth in order to care for the newborn, this spouse is entitled to a special compensation in the amount of a birth grant.

Definition of stillbirth - In 2016, an amendment was made to the *National Insurance Law* that expanded the definition of stillbirth to include a birth that took place from the 22nd week of pregnancy. This means that a woman who has a stillbirth from the 22nd week of pregnancy, or if the newborn dies after the birth, is entitled to a hospitalization allowance, a birth allowance and maternity allowance.

Maternity allowance - A number of changes were made in 2016 to the method of calculating the income of women entitled to maternity allowance. The income of a self-employed woman is now calculated according to her income in the quarter during

which she gave birth or the quarter prior to the birth, the higher of the two (2). The income of a salaried employee is calculated according to her average salary in the three (3) or six (6) months prior to the birth, the higher of the two (2).

General disability pension - The following significant amendments have been introduced in this field:

Amendment No. 201 to the *National Insurance Law* of January 2018 (See Article 9 in the Report)

Encouraging persons with disabilities to join the workforce In 2016, a number of amendments were made to the *National Insurance Law* following an examination of the implementation of earlier amendments aimed at encouraging persons with disabilities to join the workforce (on this matter please see the *Laron Commission's* report of 2009 as detailed in Israel's Third Periodic Report, para. 103).

Following this examination, the definitions for determining entitlement and date of payment were simplified; the "safety net" provided in the event of an increase in income was expanded; the automatic denial given to those who receive sick pay was revoked; the income disregard was increased; and the exit point from the disability pension was raised.

In addition, the supplement given to those with full work incapacity was *increased*, as follows:

Level of Disability	**Supplement**
Disability of 40% to 49%	151 NIS (42 USD)
Disability of 50% to 79%	350 NIS (97 USD)
Disability exceeding 80%	451 NIS (125 USD)

Accommodating the increase in minimum wage - several changes were made, at an overall cost of about 100 Million NIS (approx. 27.8 Million USD) to accommodate the increase in minimum wage. For example, in 2015, "special services" benefits paid

on account of severe disabilities and benefits paid for children with disabilities were increased in order to enable the continued employment of care givers in the home. A one-time payment was also made to persons with severe disabilities who are recipients of a special services pension, equal to 31.8% of the pension. A special supplement was also given to persons on a respirator.

In addition, the *Economic Efficiency Law (Legislation Amendments for Achieving the Budget Goals for 2019),* made some additional improvements regarding persons with disabilities, *inter alia*, by raising the disability pension by 470 NIS (130 USD), the income disregard was increased to 3,700 NIS (1,030 USD), linking the disability allowance to the average salary (of January 2021) and allocating 2.1 Billion NIS for allowances that will be allocated in 2020-2021 in order to ensure that the disability allowance will be at least 3,700 NIS (1,030 USD).

Compensation for polio victims - An amendment in 2012 granted persons who contracted polio abroad entitlement to a pension if they received treatment for the illness in Israel.

Benefits for a disabled child - The following significant amendments have been introduced in this field:

Children with severe disabilities - In 2015, an amendment granted children with severe disabilities, completely dependent on the assistance of others, benefits equal to the maximum rate of the "special services" pension. This is given to approx. 5,400 children.

A child requiring "constant medical care" - In 2016, an additional benefit was created for a child requiring "constant medical care". This is defined as a child who, according to doctor's instructions, is unable to attend an educational institution for at least three (3) days a week, for at least three (3) consecutive months.

Children with diabetes - In 2016, the entitlement for benefits for children suffering from diabetes was extended to include children between the ages of 12-18, if they require two (2) blood tests a day on a regular basis. The benefit was set at 50% of the total benefit given to a child suffering from diabetes under the age of 12.

***Electricity Sector (Reduced Payment for Various Entitled Persons) Regulations* 5771-2011 -** These regulations set reduced payments for electricity for those on income supplement benefits, those entitled to special services or long-term care benefits, victims of hostilities and others.

In September 2017, the Electricity Authority approved its updated disconnection policy, which limits the cases in which consumers may be disconnected from the electricity grid. This policy extended the timeframe for payment of electricity bill and the ways of doing so, including expansion of ways in which the consumers receive a notice prior to disconnection (detailed notices by voice messages, text messages, translation of the notices to three (3) additional languages (Arabic, Russian and Amharic) assistance by a human representative etc.) Also according to this policy, disconnection will not be conducted in times of emergency or prior to holidays or extreme weather. In regard to vulnerable populations, the policy determines a prohibition of disconnection from the electricity grid in regard to consumers that use life saving devices, persons who are entitled for reduced rates (for example, holocaust survivors, elderly population, persons with disabilities etc. – all according to the relevant legislation). The policy further sets a new mechanism for short and efficient treatment of requests for debt arraignments and varied ways of payment.

***Heating benefits* -** For heating benefits, see below in Article 11.

For a more detailed presentation of amendments that have been made to social security entitlements, see English language summaries of trends and developments in social security published annually by the NII:

2016:
https://www.btl.gov.il/English%20Homepage/Publications/Summary%20of%20Trends%20and%20Developments%20in%20Social%20Security/Pages/Developments2016-eng.aspx

2015:
https://www.btl.gov.il/English%20Homepage/Publications/Summary%20of%20Trends%20and%20Developments%20in%20Social%20Security/Pages/developments2015-eng.aspx

2014:

https://www.btl.gov.il/English%20Homepage/Publications/Summary%20of%20Trends%20and%20Developments%20in%20Social%20Security/Pages/Summary-for-20141020-3534.aspx

2013:

https://www.btl.gov.il/English%20Homepage/Publications/Summary%20of%20Trends%20and%20Developments%20in%20Social%20Security/Pages/Summary2013.aspx

Social Security Entitlements of Non-Nationals

Persons who are employed in Israel but are not citizens or residents (mostly foreign workers) are granted NII coverage in the following designated insurance categories: maternity insurance, work accident insurance and insurance against bankruptcy of the employer. In addition, they are entitled to child benefits and health insurance. For details, see Annex I.

Maternity insurance - A female foreign worker or the wife of a foreign worker employed in Israel is entitled to a hospitalization grant (a grant paid to the hospital where the birth occurred to cover hospitalization costs) and a birth grant (financed by the NII). These allowances are paid even if the mother is unemployed. The insurance terms are similar to those of Israeli residents, with two (2) exceptions - that the birth took place in Israel and that the mother or her spouse have at least six (6) consecutive months of employment in Israel (Section 40(a)(2) of the *National Insurance Law*). A female foreign worker who has been employed for the minimum period in Israel is also entitled to maternity allowance, under similar terms to those required of an Israeli resident.

Insurance against work accidents - Foreign workers, asylum seekers and their families are insured in case of accident at work, under similar terms to those that apply to an Israeli resident. In addition to monetary pension, this insurance includes a wide variety of benefits, such as medical treatment and rehabilitation. Note that a foreign worker who resides in Israel illegally is eligible for benefits only once he has regulated her/his stay or left the country (Section 324B of the *National Insurance Law*).

Insurance against liquidation or bankruptcy of the employer - This ensures payment of salary and payment of social provisions to a provident fund, subject to restrictions prescribed by law, when the employer cannot meet their obligations to the employees. Insurance terms regarding foreign workers are similar to those of Israeli residents.

Child benefits - Section 65(a)(2) of the *National Insurance Law* enables the payment of child benefits to foreign workers, even if they do not fall into the category of "Israeli residents". Note that this provision has limited application since it is contingent upon legal stay in Israel. The majority of foreign workers legally in Israel are present without their children.

Article 10

Amendment to the Marital Age Law 5710-1950

In December 2013, the Knesset amended the *Marital Age Law* (Amendment No. 6) raising the minimum marital age from 17 to 18. A Family Matters Court is authorized to permit the marriage of a minor if they she/he is above the age of 16 and if there are unique reasons linked to the minors' best interest to do so. The Court must hear the minor before deciding on this matter. With regard to the marriage of a minor below the age of 17, the Court must also request a social worker assessment.

Prosecution of Offenses According to the Marital Age Law

Attorney General's Guideline - On May 29, 2018, the Attorney General's Guideline No. 4.1113 concerning the Attorney General's policy regarding applications for a marriage of minor permit was published.

Section 5 of the *Marital Age Law* provides that a Family Matters Court may grant a marriage permit to a minor (male or female) under the age of eighteen years, "if they are above the age of sixteen, and in the opinion of the court there are special circumstances relating to the best interest of the minor, as the case may be, which justify granting such a permit." In such applications, the respondent is the Attorney General, represented by the State Attorney's Office. The purpose of the new Guideline is to instruct the attorneys handling such cases and the relevant government officials. The Guideline's aim is to reduce as much as possible the cases in which a permit for

the marriage of minors is granted. Therefore, the Guideline states that it is necessary to oppose the granting of a permit for the marriage of minors, except in cases where there are special circumstances related to the minor's or minor's interests in question, which justify granting a permit, while deviating from the general policy on this matter. Among the circumstances which, as a rule, will not suffice to consent to the granting of a permit: the customs of a community or population to which one of the spouses belongs; religious reasons; the consent of the minors to marry; consent of the parents of the minor to the marriage, pregnancy or childbirth; financial and other preparations for marriage and the possibility that the engagement will be canceled if a permit is not granted. The Guideline stipulates, *inter alia*, that as a rule, the granting of a permit to marry minors must be opposed, the competent attorney must point out all the aspects related to the minor seeking to marry, and take extreme care where the minors in the case are minors are at risk; information from the criminal record will be presented to the court as necessary; and in addition, State authorities who are exposed in their line of work to information that raises suspicion of violation of the law are required to transmit the information to the criminal enforcement authorities.

State Attorney's Guideline - In May 2016, the State Attorney published a Guideline entitled "*The Prosecution Policy regarding the marriage of a minor's offence*", setting out the Prosecution's policy in respect to this offence.

The enforcement of this offense is complex, in part due to the cultural context in which the marriage of minors often takes place, and due to the fact that these marriages are often held privately and may come to light only many years later. In accordance with the new Guideline, criminal procedures are initiated first and foremost against the person who officiated the marriage or assisted in so doing. This also applies to the parents or guardians of the minors.

With regard to the spouse who married a minor, the Guideline instructs the Prosecution to distinguish between an adult and a minor. No indictment is to be filed against a minor. Against an adult, an indictment should be filed only when the age difference is at least two (2) years. As the age difference between the adult and the minor increases, so should the tendency to indict. The Prosecution is also instructed to consider the following circumstances: whether the minor freely consented to the marriage; the level of harm suffered by the minor as a consequence of the marriage;

whether the couple maintains a sound family life; the existence of related offences; the minor's age at the time of the marriage and the age difference between the minor and the adult; whether or not an application for marriage permit was denied; the period of time that elapsed since the marriage.

Eliminating Polygamy

Inter-ministerial Committee - At the request of the Government, a wide-ranging inter-ministerial committee, which included representatives of NGOs and the Bedouin population, examined ways to increase public awareness of this harm and to increase enforcement in this field. The committee also considered ways in which populations prone to polygamous marriages may be empowered, decreasing the incentive and the context in which these marriages occur.

Attorney General Guideline - In January 2017, the Attorney General published a guideline on the prosecution of the Polygamy offence. This Guideline highlighting that the Supreme Court rejected the "cultural defense" with regard to the offense of polygamy. The Attorney General instructed the State Attorney's Office to request custodial sentences and stressed that a substantive age difference between the man and the women or the existence of coercion, amongst other factors, may be considered to be aggravating circumstances. Attention was also given to the importance of establishing effective internal procedures to enable the sharing of information where a suspicion of polygamy arises. (Guideline 4.1112 entitled "*The Polygamy Offence*").

Educational endeavors - The MoE conducts an annual seminar for teachers from the Bedouin community on preventing child or early marriage, forced marriage and polygamy.

Data - According to findings of the NII, in 2016, there were 1,762 polygamous families in Israel, most of them within the Bedouin population in the South of Israel.

Steps to Tackle the Phenomena of Women whose Husbands Refuse to Grant a Divorce ("Agunot")

Monitoring ongoing cases - In March 2012, the *Rabbinical Courts Law (Implementation of Divorce Judgments*) 5755-1955 was amended to require the

Rabbinical Courts to monitor progress in the enforcement of divorce judgments. The Amendment also established the duty to report to the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee regarding the implementation of such judgments.

Imposition of further sanctions on a recalcitrant husband - A further amendment in 2017 added the possibility of imposing sanctions on prisoners who are spouses that refuse to give a divorce, such as preventing their participation in religious classes, limitations on visitors, limitations on kosher food of a more stringent standard, etc.

State Attorney Guideline - "Prosecution Policy in Cases of Failing to Comply a Judicial Order to Grant a Divorce" - On November 10, 2016, the State Attorney's Office issued a Guideline defining the Prosecution's policy with regard to those who fail to comply with a judicial order to grant or receive a divorce. In such circumstances, the Prosecution is to consider indicting the spouse on charges of violation of a lawful order, in accordance with Section 287(b) of the *Penal Law*. To this end, it is to consult with the Rabbinical Court in order to ensure that such action will not invalidate the divorce from a religious perspective. The Prosecution is to consider, *inter alia*, the extent of time that the spouse has refused to grant the divorce and the harm suffered by the other spouse as a result.

In addition, the Prosecution will consider indicting third parties involved for their involvement in the encouragement, aiding, or solicitation of the refusal.

In circumstances where the spouse continues to refuse to grant a divorce, the Prosecution may consider indicting him again, emphasizing the relevant aggravating circumstances.

Upon conviction, the Guideline instructs the Prosecution to request a substantial period of imprisonment.

Social Services for Families - Data

There are currently 100 domestic violence prevention and therapy centers in Israel; some 70 stations for crisis marriage and family counseling; 270 parent-child centers; 74 multi-purpose housing projects; 95 centers for destitute families; over 1,000 after-school centers for children of various ages; at-home programs geared primarily for

parents of young children, including cultural sensitivity programs; youth centers; over 8,000 child nurturers; integration assistants for some 500 young children in daycare centers and more.

There are 11 emergency centers for at-risk children throughout Israel. Most centers can receive up to 15 children. On average, a child will remain at the center for six (6) months.

Over 20 families have been certified for emergency fostering of children under the age of six (6). A family can receive up to five (5) children at a time (though they will receive no more than three (3) children if possible). In recent years, the working model for children living with these families has been upgraded and mobile evaluation units have been established, run by professionals who specialize in early-childhood psychology and psychiatry.

There are five (5) dormitories for children removed from their homes in immediate emergency situations.

Treatment centers for children victims of sexual abuse are funded by the Government and provided free of charge for every child victim and for family members. A total of 13 centers have opened gradually since 2007. In regions without centers, individual funding is provided for children who require treatment by approved professionals.

Regional Child Protection Centers are served by a multi-disciplinary team that conducts an investigation and preliminary screening of a child that may be the victim of a crime. The centers also work with the Police, the healthcare system and the District Attorney's Office. Each protection center can intervene in cases pertaining to some 400 abused children each year, although the centers in Jerusalem and in the Sheba Medical Center treat approximately 600 children per year.

Lower Contribution to the Cost of Daycare centers

Following the recommendations of a Public Committee on Poverty in 2013, the MoLSAaSS significantly lowered the contribution paid by parents of poor families for the daycare of toddlers at-risk pursuant to *Infants at Risk Law (Right to Daycare Center)* 5760-2000. The minimum parental contribution rate was fixed at 100 NIS (28

USD) compared to the previous average contribution of 500 NIS (129 USD). Two (2) additional reduced contribution-rate rankings were added. In total, over 18,000 children are in daycare centers pursuant to this Law, most of whom come from families that are eligible for reduced fees.

Social Services for Older Persons in the Community

Day centers **-** Community programs for elderly persons with disabilities are run on a daily basis from morning to afternoon and offer a range of services, including transportation, breakfast and lunch, showers, social activities, social worker and nursing services and occupational activities. Today, 163 day centers in Israel serve approx. 17,500 elderly people.

'Mofet' centers - These social programs incorporate cultural and social activities with hot meals and consultation services regarding legal rights. Today, 250 centers throughout Israel serve about 7,500 elderly people.

Enrichment centers - These centers offer enriched social activities in areas that are not large enough to provide a full day center program. They serve light meals, offer social activities and provide transportation. Today, 38 enrichment programs serve approx. 1,200 elderly people.

"Supportive Community" program **-** This program provides a safety net for elderly people living in their homes. It provides a 24-hour emergency hotline, healthcare services, a community counselor available at all hours and for any issue that arises, social and cultural activities, consultation services and more. Today, 250 "supportive communities" serve approximately 50,000 senior citizens.

Social Services for People with Disabilities - Recent Developments

General - The State provides financial support and a wide array of services in order to enable persons with disabilities to live in the community, for example, disability benefits and nursing allowance, primarily for caregivers at homes and towards employing a foreign worker (see under Article 9), mobility benefits, public housing and rent subsidies (see under Article 11D), adaptations to apartments (see under Article 11D). Regarding children, the State provides benefits (see under Article 9),

rehabilitative day-care, family counselling centers and support programs.

Rehabilitative community for persons with dual disabilities - In 2016 the MoH established a treatment program, outlined in an internal procedure, based on a rehabilitative-ecological model tailored to individual needs. This followed the submission of a petition to the HCJ on this issue (H.C.J. 1596/12 *Bizchut v. The MoLSAaSS et. al.* (4.5.16)

Persons with Disabilities - Living Independently in the Community

Out-of-home services are provided for persons with disabilities by State Authorities, as follows:

Intellectual Disabilities - In 2016, the MoLSAaSS provided services to approximately 10,652 persons. Of which 1,384 lived in residential facilities of 18-24 persons, and 2,108 lived in home-facilities apartments of 2-12 persons. 7,000 persons with intellectual disabilities are defined as living in full care facilities including more than 34 persons. Of this last group, 274 persons were placed in home facilities apartments of 2-6 persons each, and 970 persons in residential facilities of 8 up to 34 persons in each, leaving 6,030 persons residing in residential facilities of over 35 persons. The Ministry initiated a three-year project in 2014, to transfer approximately 900 persons with intellectual disabilities from the larger full care facilities placements to smaller housing arrangements. As part of this project, during 2016, 200 persons moved from full care facilities to smaller housing arrangements, upon their consent, as well as the consent of their families and their guardian's approval, after a prolonged preparation of the residents and their families, by the Ministry.

Mental Disabilities - During 2015, approximately 13,727 persons with mental disabilities benefited from the housing rehabilitation services, including residential facilities and supportive community services. Thus, these services are provided to 17% of all the persons with mental disabilities in Israel.

Physical Disabilities - In 2015, the MoLASaSS granted the following out-of-home placement service to persons with physical disabilities: home facilities apartments with up to six (6) tenants (approximately 698 persons), residential facilities (up to 16 tenants, approximately 864 persons), residential facilities (between 17-24 tenants,

approximately 335 persons), residential facilities (up to 65 residents, approximately 358 persons) and full care facilities (approximately 571 persons).

Autism - As of 2015, the Ministry provided housing services for 1,347 autistic persons: 206 persons in home facilities apartments (1-6 persons in each), and 1,141 persons in residential facilities up to 24 persons in each).

Maternity Protection

Absence of spouse after birth - According to Amendment No. 60 of 2018 to the *Women's Employment Law*, in a labour with multiple births (more than one child), in which the mother is entitled to extend her parental and maternity leave by three (3) additional weeks for every child (from the second one), the father may utilize up to two (2) weeks of this additional maternity leave, concurrently with his spouse, in relation to each child from the second one. This Amendment is intended to encourage the integration of men into parental responsibility and help narrow gaps between men and women in the labour market.

Also, an amendment made in 2016 to the *Women's Employment Law* (Section 7(C3)) provides that an employee may be absent from work for up to five (5) days after a spouse has given birth. The first three (3) days of absence count as annual leave. The two (2) remaining days are paid as sick leave, in which 50% of the salary is paid. This is additional to the extension of maternity leave to fifteen (15) weeks mentioned above.

Hospitalized infant - A number of amendments to the *Women's Employment Law* in 2016 relate to female employees whose newborn needs to remain in hospital or to return to hospital for over two (2) weeks. The Employee is entitled to extend the period of leave for up to 20 weeks, where necessary, even if the period of hospitalization was not sequential.

Protection of pregnant women against dismissal - The protection afforded against the dismissal of pregnant women, discussed in Israel's previous periodic reports, was extended in 2011 to apply to an adoptive parent, a designated parent (a male or female employee receiving a child into their custody) and to foster families.

Absence from work due to fertility treatment **-** The protection afforded against the dismissal of an employee undergoing fertility treatment, discussed in Israel's previous periodic reports, has been extended to apply to treatments for up to two (2) births at the same employer. If the employee has undergone fertility treatments for two (2) births with a previous partner, this eligibility also applies, for up to two (2) births, with a current partner.

Protection of Employed Youth

A number of legislative amendments have been made to the *Youth Employment Law* 5713-1953, as follows.

A 2016 amendment to the law requires employers to refrain from employing a youth until such time that their identity card, or that of their parents that includes their details, has been shown to them (Section 27H(a)). This amendment also redefined the term "medical certificate" so as to ensure that it includes only information concerning the youth's fitness to work, in order to protect the youth's privacy (Section 8(c)).

A 2012 amendment to the law added a provision whereby the Attorney General or a senior labour inspector who has special authority to act in this regard, may file a motion for a court order instructing a person to refrain from infringing the law or to act in order to prevent an infringement (Section 29A).

Employment of youth during school vacation - This amendment also added a transitional provision, for a period of three (3) years, whereby it is permitted to employ youth until 24:00 during the school vacation, provided that the employee returns the youth to her/his home after work. This provision does not apply to specific sectors or types of employment which the Minister of the Economy and Industry has determined are likely to affect the health, welfare or physical, educational, spiritual or moral development of the young person. An offense under this provision carries a criminal penalty or monetary sanction (Section 24A). The implementation of this provision and its implications on youth will be examined after three (3) years.

This temporary provision was enacted after consultation with the Youth Council, whose members include representatives of employees, employers, public institutions and the "Working and Studying Youth Movement". The Child Health Council at the

MoH also supported the amendment on the grounds that it poses no health risk. The Safety and Occupational Health Administration in the MoEI carries out ongoing enforcement.

Paid Employment of Children - Additional Provisions

In addition to the provisions mentioned above, and those mentioned in Israel's previous periodic reports, other regulations and procedures aim to protect the physical and mental health of employed youth and to prevent their exploitation.

Section 11 of the *Youth Employment Law*, for example, prohibits the employment of youth without medical confirmation that the youth is fit to work and includes provisions relating to instances where special suitability is required. Detailed provisions are set out in the *Youth Employment (Medical Examinations) Regulations* 5760-2000.

Likewise, *Youth Employment (Prohibited and Restricted Employment Regulations* 5756-1995 set out a list of types of work in which it is prohibited to employ youth. *Youth Employment (Agency in the Employment of Youth in Shows or Advertisements) Regulations* 5759-1999 set rules for the employment of youth in performances or advertisements, primarily to prevent exposure to violence, sexual content, physical risks, alcoholic beverages, etc. These regulations also make a permit to employ youth in these contexts contingent on the provision of safe transportation for the child to and from her/his home, accompanied by a parent or an adult member of the family of one of the children participating in the performance. These regulations also regulate the work of talent agencies in regard to youth.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Of Elderly Persons

Government Call Center - The call center provides information and advice in all matters relating to socio-economic rights. For example, it handles inquiries regarding National Insurance allowances (such as age, supplementary income and nursing allowances), and provides assistance in filing requests and appeals in these regards. It also handles inquiries regarding the exercise of pension rights (without providing pension advice) and tax relief. It provides guidance in dealing with the Ministry of Construction and Housing (MoCH), the MoH and health funds concerning complaints

as to care received and conducts examinations as to the nutritional security of the applicants. If need be, the call center contacts the welfare authorities with regard to this or other welfare shortages.

Violence Against Older Persons

Training in the Identification of Elderly Persons who are Victims of Abuse - For example, the MoH, in collaboration with the JDC, have developed a special training program for hospitals, health funds and institutions which focuses on the treatment of older persons who are victims of abuse.

The MoLSAaSS, in collaboration with the JDC, run a program for training social workers and other professionals working in the community in the identification and initial diagnosis of abuse and neglect of older persons. An additional program aimed at professionals is designed to raise awareness of abuse and neglect in nursing homes.

Inheritance planning - The MoLSAaSS provides financial assistance for a program run by regional councils to assist older persons in the orderly transfer of their estate, aiming to prevent family disputes and undue pressure on parents.

Personal Security in the Community - A joint program run by the Israel Police and the JDC aims to improve older persons' sense of security in the community, increase security in places prone to violence against older persons and raise awareness as to the importance of reporting offenses.

Non-governmental organizations - "*Eran*" is an NGO that operates a crisis hotline for elderly people exposed to abuse and neglect and for their family members. "*Yad Riva*" offers legal assistance and guidance, including regarding legal rights of older people who are suffering from abuse, legal representation if necessary and work to raise awareness of the subject amongst older persons and professionals.

Combatting Domestic Violence

An Inter-ministerial Committee on Preventing Domestic Violence - This committee was established in 2014. Its recommendations were published in February 2016 and those of an implementation committee were presented to the Minister of Public Security in October 2016. These include strengthening current protection and

prevention systems and developing new ones. In June 2017, the recommendations were adopted in principle by the Ministerial Committee against Violence, but have yet to be fully budgeted.

Rehabilitation Hostels for Men - These hostels are part of a treatment program for abusive men who are subject to a restraining order. They are intended for men who demonstrate motivation to change, are not drug or alcohol users and do not generally present criminal patterns of behavior. In 2015, 54 men were referred to these hostels.

Prevention programs for youth - A program ("*Relationships without Violence*") operates in some 17 localities and a program directed at immigrant communities ("*Bridges*") is run in approximately 35 localities.

The Obligation of Public Health Officials to Report Suspicious Incidents - The *Public Health Regulations (Notification of suspicion of violence)* 5736-1975 require public health officials to immediately report a suspicion that a person who requests medical care has been harmed by another. Section 368D(b) of the *Penal Law*, specifies the obligation of several professional to report a suspicion that a minor or a helpless person has been the victim of a criminal offense perpetrated by her/his guardian. This Section obligates all health care workers, teachers, social workers, policemen, mental health workers and any member of staff in an institution where the minor or helpless person is staying.

MoH Procedures - The MoH has circulated a number of procedures which guide health care professionals in the handling of incidents in the following circumstances: suspicion of domestic violence (Director General Circular No. 1/2003 on "*The Obligation to report*"); suspicion of violence against a minor (Director General Circular No. 25/2003 on "*The Location, Identification and Treatment of Minors who have been Victims of Abuse and Neglect*"); the identification of elderly persons who have been victims of abuse (Director General Circular No. 22/2003 on "*Treatment of elderly Persons who have been Victims of Abuse*"); identifying and treating women victims of domestic violence (Director General Circular No. 23/2003), handling victims of sexual assault (Director General Circular No. 24/2003 on the "*Procedure for Treating Victims of Sexual Assault*"); the procedure for transferring information

between medical institutions in order to identify minors and helpless persons who have fallen victim to domestic violence (Director General Circular No. 20/2003) and Medical Administration Circular 35/2002 which sets out a procedure for social workers dealing with female victims of domestic violence in the emergency room.

Domestic Violence

Placement of social workers in police stations **-** In 2016 this program ran in 25 localities, 58% of the men and women who had an "intake" conversation with a social worker were referred to the Centers for Prevention and Assistance.

Recently, a protocol for "efficient data sharing" was created by the Police and the welfare authorities. It regulates cooperation and reporting in the treatment of domestic violence cases.

Centers for Prevention and Assistance **-** There are 103 centers for prevention of domestic violence and assistance to its victims associated with the social services departments. Four (4) of the centers are designated for the ultra-Orthodox community, 24 are centers specifically designated for the Arab population and eight (8) centers operate in cities with mixed populations. In 2017, nine (9) centers operated in Bedouin localities in the Negev. These centers handle some 12,000 inquiries a year, 67% of which involve women, 27% men, and 7% children who are exposed to violence inflicted by their parents. They provide assistance in protecting victims, constructing intervention programs, individual and group therapies, and more.

Support and Rehabilitation of Victims of Domestic Violence

The MoLSAaSS offers a range of services for families coping with violent situations, including women, men, children and older persons.

Shelters **-** There are currently fourteen shelters for women who have suffered violence and for their children. Two (2) of these are designated for Arab women, two (2) have mixed populations and Arabic-speaking staff, two (2) are intended for ultra-Orthodox Jewish women and two (2) accommodate women with special needs and women with disabilities.

According to statistics of 2015, 738 women and 989 children resided in these shelters; 600 of them were new referrals and the rest continued their stay from 2014. 44% of these women are Jewish, 6% are without religious affiliation, 33% Muslims and 8% Christian. Roughly 10% of the women who resided in the shelters were non-residents; 18 women were residents of the Palestinian Authority and 24 had no legal status in Israel.

Transitional Apartments - These are a continued treatment framework for women who have completed their stay at the shelter, are not in danger but in need of rehabilitation. They help the women to acquire a variety of skills including vocational training and education, social skills and assistance in judicial proceedings. The women and children stay at the transitional housing between six (6) months to a year. The shelters are operated by NGOs who were chosen by a governmental tender.

In 2015, there were 18 transitional apartments across Israel (including a house in an Arab village), occupied by 45 women and 97 children.

Of the women living in transitional apartments supported by MoLSAaSS (12 in total), the data relating to 2015 is as follows: 19% of the women were Arab, 23% were secular or traditional Jews, 13% were ultra-Orthodox Jews, 16% were new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and 29% were Israeli citizens of Ethiopian descent.

Financial grant for victims - The *Social Services Law (Adaption Grant for Women who were resident in a Shelter for Battered Women*) 5772-2012, and a further amendment in 2013, granted women who were resident at a shelter for more than 60 days a grant of 8,000 NIS (2,200 USD), and an additional 1,000 NIS (275 USD) for each child that stayed with them in the shelter (up to two (2) children), upon leaving the shelter. This benefit is not considered "income" for the purposes of the *Income Support Law*.

Assistance in Housing - The MoCH provides assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence, in accordance with criteria set out in. Eligible women receive rental assistance for three (3) consecutive years. During 2016, 1,051 women received this type of assistance.

In addition, Section 3B of the *Public Housing Tenants' Rights Law* 5758-1998, sets a special arrangement for women who reside in shelters for victims of domestic violence, according to which, their eligibility to reside in a state-funded public apartment will not be harmed as a result of leaving the apartment and staying at a shelter for battered women.

The MoLSAaSS Emergency Hotline ("118") - Established in 2004, this hotline continues to operate 24/7 in four (4) different languages. For data regarding calls to the hotline, see Annex II.

Child and Youth Emergency Centers - These centers are designed to provide protection, intervention and treatment in times of immediate risk, without removing the child from the home. Specialized centers exist for the ultra-Orthodox, modern orthodox, Arab and general populations.

Other Services for Children - dormitories and foster families for children serve a total of 9,000 children.

Parent-child centers and a "Paths to Parenthood" program target different types of families, including those involved in incidents of harm or violence against children.

The MoLSAaSS also provides emotional therapy free of charge for children and youth that have suffered sexual abuse, including abuse within the family. This is currently offered in 13 centers that treat 2,500 children each year.

Raising Public Awareness and Training

Raising public awareness - The AASW distributes an informational brochure with the contact details of all the relevant hotlines and support centers in cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence, in Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, Amharic, French, English and Spanish. It also runs an annual awareness campaign around the international day on combatting violence against women, intended to raise public awareness.

During 2012-2014, the AASW also ran a campaign encouraging men to receive professional help. The campaign increased the number of calls to help lines by 15 times. It was also available in Arabic on several popular websites.

Anti-domestic Violence Awards - On November 24, 2016, a state-sponsored event was held in the President's residence, honoring activities against gender-based violence. Awards were given to five (5) bodies that play important roles in this regard.

The Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel (ARCCI) - An NGO providing support to victims for 26 years; the NGO Women's Spirit ('Ruach Nashit') - supporting the economic independence of women, especially rehabilitating battered women; the NGO 'Bat Melech' - Empowering religious and ultra-Orthodox women to break the cycle of violence; Mrs. Hadeel Abu-Habla - the director of the shelter for battered women of the Arab population; The NGO 'Tmura Center' - the Israeli Anti-Discrimination Center, judicially handling cases of battered women.

Training of Police Officers on Domestic Violence **-** Training courses are given to investigators who specialize in domestic violence offenses include lectures on respecting the rights of victims, their dignity and privacy and understanding their needs; culturally-sensitive tools of investigation; tours of battered women shelters and assistance centers and a substantive course on the typology of the violent spouses and gender-based violence.

General investigators, including patrol officers, undergo a course that includes guidelines for handling domestic violence offences and principles of primary treatment in case of domestic violence. Police prosecutors undergo training which includes content on domestic violence.

Every police officer who is involved in investigating sexual offences is given two (2) training sessions every year at the National Police Academy. Each course lasts six (6) days and includes a one-day tour of one of the Centers operated by ARCCI; lectures regarding relevant issues and sensitivities of the ultra-Orthodox population, LGBTI and more. Lectures are conducted by a variety of representatives, from the MoLSAaSS, MoH, IPS and more.

In addition, an annual one-day conference takes place for the apparatus of domestic violence investigators and sexual offence investigators in the National Police Academy, together with the AASW and ARCCI.

Trafficking in Persons

The National Anti-Trafficking Unit (NATU) - This is the primary government agency, operating independently under the MoJ, established to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts on a national scale. The NATU also serves as a leader in policy development. It developed two (2) national action plans and is currently updating them.

Training - The NATU and others conduct regular training sessions for government officials who might come in contact with victims of trafficking. Accordingly, the NATU and other relevant officials conduct training sessions, for a variety of government officials, including prosecutors, social workers, judges, and many more professionals. Those trainings are not only meant to keep the officials alert to such cases, but also to provide updated information regarding trafficking, including new methods and possible vulnerabilities. In 2017, trainings were held for 320 PIBA employees at the crucial junctions for victim recognition and prevention - border control officials from every border point, the Refugee Status Determination unit, the legal advisors who appear before the Appeals Tribunal, and the officials handling the process of the interviews. A one-day training on trafficking in persons and trauma victims was held for IPS employees. Training initiatives have also been taken by the anti-trafficking coordinators in the Police and the State Attorney's Office. Furthermore, lectures, seminars and interviews for the wider public were conducted on a regular basis throughout the year in different forums, such as higher education institutes and the media.

Cooperation with NGOs - Israel continues to encourage fruitful cooperation between NGOs and enforcement authorities. For example, a joint work protocol is being formulated with the aim of tackling the prostitution of minors. An additional cooperation led to the formulation of an information leaflet "Take note" on identifying victims of trafficking.

International Co-operation - Israel continues to take an active part in global efforts to combat trafficking. For example, in 2017, the NATU participated in the OSCE Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons Conference on Trafficking in Children and the Best Interests of the Child (April 2017), in addition, the National Coordinator held

a meeting with representatives of IOM (May 2017). Also in 2017, the National Coordinator participated in an OSCE meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Coordinators in Vienna (June-July 2017). The National Coordinator participated in the UNODC Working Group on Trafficking in Persons of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, held in Vienna, and presented Israel's experience with mixed migration flows, in particular the Deaf-Mute cases (6-8.9.2017)

In 2016, the NATU hosted two (2) study visits - One of a delegation from Albania (concerning Israel's mechanisms for victim compensation) and another of a delegation from Moldova (on Israel's efforts in combatting trafficking in organs). In the same year, a representative from the State Attorney's Office participated in international conferences on organ trafficking and the National Coordinator participated in the OSCE Conference on Combating Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Forced Criminality, amongst other international collaborations.

Assistance and Protection to Victims

Medical services - Victims of trafficking who reside in a shelter receive complete medical care free of charge. As of 2017, psychiatric care is also provided regularly. Victims who do not reside in a shelter are entitled to free emergency medical treatment, even if they do not hold medical insurance.

Legal Aid - Legal aid is granted free of charge to victims of trafficking in persons and slavery. They are exempt from the economic eligibility test usually required in order to prove one's entitlement for free legal aid. Legal aid is provided in civil proceedings such as tort and monetary claims against offenders and in procedures related to legal status in accordance with the *Entry into Israel Law* 5712-1952.

Shelters - There are two (2) shelters for women and for men, transitional apartments and a Day Center. These frameworks offer psycho-social services, social activities, vocational training and rehabilitation.

Work permits - Victims residing in the shelters receive special work visas allowing them to work during their stay in the shelter. All victims are entitled to a year of rehabilitation with a general work visa. Victims who choose to testify in criminal

proceedings are entitled to this visa throughout the proceedings. Following the finalization of the procedures, they are entitled to a year of rehabilitation with the same visa. The shelters assist with placing the victims in suitable and safe places of employment.

Forfeiture fund - In 2016 a forfeiture fund for trafficking and slavery began its operations. The fund has allocated budgets to victims for purposes of rehabilitation and protection, and to bodies and NGOs providing victim aid and combatting trafficking.

Article 11a

Poverty in Israel - Recent Data

The following data is taken from the NII 2016 report on poverty and social gaps.

According to this report, the standard of living, in terms of disposable income, increased in real terms by 3.8% since 2015. The poverty line, defined as 50% of the net median income, adjusted to family size, rose accordingly.

In 2016, 18.6% of **families** had net incomes below the poverty line, which was a slight decline in the incidence of poverty compared to 2015, when 19.1% of families lived below the poverty line.

The rate of **individuals** living below the poverty line increased slightly from 21.7% in 2015, to 22% in 2016. The number of **children** below the poverty line increased from 30% in 2015, to 31.2% in 2016. These increases, which are contrary to the general decline in the incidence of poverty, can be attributed to the fact that the NII survey managed to include a higher proportion of the Bedouin population than in previous years, after a period of four (4) years in which it faces obstacles and difficulties to do so. If this difference is discounted, the incidence of families living in poverty has declined to 18.1%, and a decline may also be noted in the incidence of poverty amongst individuals and children.

In 2016, the Gini coefficient on disposable income declined by 1.8%, and the coefficient on market income declined by 1.3%. In fact, since 2000, the Gini coefficient on market income has declined by a cumulative sum of 10%.

The poverty gap index relating to the depth of poverty has declined by 4%. The index relating to the severity of poverty has declined by 3%.

The improvements in the measures of inequality and poverty are attributable to the changes that have brought about an increase in net disposable income for families, older persons and younger persons, particularly in the lower and middle earning groups. These are the increase in the minimum wage by 6.8% in 2016 and the increase in child and elderly person benefits. The continuing growth in employment also contributes to this improvement.

Poverty amongst families of elderly persons has declined from 22.5% in 2015 to 20.8% in 2016. Poverty amongst individual elderly persons stands at 16.9%, the lowest rate measured for five (5) years.

Poverty amongst the Arab families has been significantly reduced from 53.3% in 2015 to 49.4% in 2016. However, poverty measured amongst individuals and children in the Arab population rose slightly. Again, this is attributable to the greater inclusion of the Bedouin population in the NII survey. A comparison of like populations demonstrates that poverty levels in fact declined amongst individuals and children of the Arab population, as did measurements of depth and severity of poverty.

Poverty amongst the ultra-Orthodox population increased slightly, from 44.6% in 2015 to 45.1% in 2016. The ultra-Orthodox population makes up about 15% of the families in Israel living below the poverty line.

In 2016, social security benefits and direct taxation extricated 35.7% of families and 24.1% of individuals from poverty.

As was set out in Israel's previous periodic reports, data on the topic of poverty should be read in conjunction with tables presenting the resources and their use, including GNP, GDP and per capita GNP and GDP. Such tables, updated since the last report, are presented in Annex II.

National Action Plan to Combat Poverty

The National Insurance Institute *(NII)* - Following the recommendations of the public committee, the NII took the following steps:

Single parent families - The income test for income supplement benefits was amended in order to decrease the reduction made as a result of income from work, from 60% to 25%, for income up to 3,270 NIS a month (910 USD).

Income supplement benefits - Were increased for elderly persons. The first update was made following the recommendations of the public committee, and further updates were made in 2017.

Savings account for every child - Based on the recommendations of the public committee, the *National Insurance Regulations (Long-Term Savings for a Child)* 5777-2016 were published, establishing a long-term savings account program for children to which the NII contributes every month. As of January 2017, the NII contributes 50 NIS (14 USD) each month into a long-term savings plan for each child eligible for this allowance until the child reaches the age of 18. The parent may choose to have the child's funds held in a designated savings account that is managed by either an investment provident fund or a bank. The parents may match the NII contribution and deposit an additional sum of 50 NIS for the child. In addition, every child receives 250 NIS (75 USD) upon reaching the age of 3 and 250 NIS upon reaching the ages of 12 and 13 respectively (the ages of Jewish religious maturity). If a child keeps the funds in the savings account until age 21, they will receive an additional 500 NIS (140 USD).

Heating homes - The *Income Support (Cold Areas) Order* 5765-2004 was amended in 2013 in order to expand the areas defined as "cold", making residents of these areas eligible to a heating benefit, which is a one-time annual payment of approx. 550 NIS (155 USD).

In the beginning of 2016, and again in 2017, the NII allocated a one-time heating benefit to all elderly recipients dependent on income support who do not reside in areas defined as "cold", further to Section 9 of the *National Insurance Law*. This benefit is lower than that allocated according to the aforementioned order.

On December 5, 2017, Amendment No. 50 to the *Income Support Law* was passed, according to which, an elderly person will be eligible to receive a heating grant if he/she was entitled to income support benefit for at least one of the winter months

(October-December) and if he/she reached the retirement age on that month or earlier. The grant currently stands on 446 NIS (124 USD).

MoLSAaSS - In 2015, The MoLSAaSS founded two (2) poverty response programs which operate in 94 localities with a low socio-economic index, at a cost of roughly 100 Million NIS per year (27.8 Million USD):

"Breathing Freely" - This program provides an intensive support system for families living in poverty, including psycho-social therapy, for a period of two (2) years. The families are assigned a social worker, family advisor and services tailored to their specific needs valued at 8,000 NIS per year (2,220 USD). The program makes use of a computer information program to follow up on the effects of the interventions.

The program serves 3,000 families throughout Israel, including 9,536 children. In 2015, 38% of the families were Muslim, 38% were Jewish, 14% were ultra-Orthodox Jews, 3% were Druze and 1% was Christian.

"Otzma Centers" - Serve individuals and families suffering from poverty and social exclusion. They aim to empower, increase social involvement and awareness of rights, identify needs and recourses and to strengthen the relationship between social workers and this population. These Centers support approximately 9,000 families.

MoF - The amendments that have broadened the eligibility for earned income tax credit (EITC) include, for example, an increase in the range of average monthly income which grants working parents in a one-parent family eligibility for EITC; a broadening of the eligibility of workers with disabilities whose minimum wage was established in accordance with the *Minimum Wage Law* (see Article 7 above) so as to include workers with no children and workers under the age of 55; and a change in the eligibility of self-employed workers for EITC such that they are now eligible at the same times as others, rather than receiving the grant as a tax benefit over a period of four (4) years.

Article 11b

The National Council for Food Security

The National Security Council is charged with advising the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Services with regard to policy planning in the area of food security, including drafting programs to ensure nutritional security in the short and long term and with regard to the supervision, control and enforcement of actions taken by all those responsible for food security in Government Ministries. It is also charged with examining models for achieving food security and carrying out research projects to this end.

The 13 Council members are representatives of Government Ministries as well as representatives of social bodies dealing with welfare and social affairs.

In line with its mandate, the Council composed a series of policy papers that deal with data and information about nutritional security in Israel, a national plan for food security, food prices in Israel, school feeding programs, nutritional security of the elderly, and supporting those afflicted with Celiac.

In addition, the Council helped formulate, and now helps supervise and improve, the National Food Security Pilot, the first of its kind in Israel, that assists 10,000 eligible households mainly with the equivalent of food stamps. An effort is underway to assure that the assisted households have a healthy diet. The Council proposes to expand the program to about 110,000 households.

Food Aid

In 2016, food packages valued at approximately 54 Million NIS (15 Million USD) were supplied to some 2 Million people in need.

Budgets for meals at schools, at a total of 110 Million NIS (30.5 Million USD), are allocated by the MoE.

MoLSAaSS also lends support to NGOs that run food provision programs, for example, to an umbrella organization that supplies extra and salvaged food to 100 end-organizations. The MoLSAaSS has also approved the tender for an NGO to

operate in 36 localities in order to deliver a monthly food package, valued at 375 NIS (104 USD), to 10,830 needy families known to their local social services.

The Quality And Safety of Animal Produce

The Veterinary Services are responsible for the health of animals, including the prevention of the spread of animal diseases and the protection of the animals' health as well as public health. Within this framework, it acts to preserve nutritional security in matters pertaining to animal products.

The *Protection of Public Health (Food)* 5776-2015, was enacted in 2015, and replaces the former *Health (Food) Ordinance*. This Law introduced new and updated instructions, *inter alia*, regarding veterinarian services (for example, authorizing a Veterinarian physician to supervise on a meat factory or a market in which meat products are sold).

The second project that began in 2015 (in conjunction with Germany and Holland) focused on the Veterinary Institute and dealt with an improvement in laboratory diagnostic abilities, in accordance with European Union and World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) standards. An emphasis was placed on the diagnosis of registered diseases and food safety and developing epidemiological ability and conducting risks assessment and relevant surveys about existing and future challenges.

At the Veterinary Institute the Animal Food Residues Laboratory, the Food Hygiene Laboratory and the Fish Quality Laboratory are responsible for the quality of animal food with regards to chemical, biological and organoleptic pollutants. The Residues Laboratory is responsible for a wide scale survey of chemical residues in animal products.

The Veterinary Institute, in addition to its being a diagnostic institute also conducts studies in order to reduce the spread of animal and diseases.

The Quality and Safety Of Plant Produce

The following are a number of updates in this regard:

***The Public Health (Food)(Pesticides Residues) Regulations* 5751-1991 -** In June 2016, an amendment to these regulations was published, prescribing maximum permitted levels of pesticide residue in plant produce. The regulations relate to pesticides that have been approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoAaRD) and by the Inter-ministerial Toxicology Committee on Pesticides. In December 2017, an additional amendment was made regarding the first and third addendum to the Regulations, expanding the pesticide allowed for use and prescribing maximum permitted levels of pesticide residue in plant produce.

***Regulation of Plant Production and Marketing Law,* 5771-2011 -** This law, passed in 2011, sets standards for the production and marketing of plants. The MoAaRD is currently preparing regulations pursuant to this law which will establish basic standards for the treatment and sale of fresh agricultural plant produce designed for human consumption in order to further ensure high quality and safety, including conditions for growing the produce, conditions for packing and storage, minimum quality requirements for marketing and safety requirements relating to maximum levels of pesticide residue, microbiological and micro toxin pollutants and heavy metals.

***Pest Control Programs* -** The MoAaRD subsidies various pest control programs, with the aim of reducing the use of chemical substances for pest control.

Food Waste

Following a survey conducted by the MoAaRD concerning food loss at the production stage, the Ministry is currently reviewing policy tools, prior to the adoption of a strategic plan. In order to test the effectiveness of proposed solutions, a pilot program is planned with regard to two (2) main crops that are staple foods of the Israeli diet. Farmers who will participate in the pilot will be paid the picking costs for the surplus they want to donate.

The Ministry is also financing a three-year multi-disciplinary research which aim is to test the applicability of technological solutions that are in the final development stage. The solutions include smart packaging for fresh agricultural produce (e.g., packages that help regulate humidity levels) and various post-harvest treatments (e.g., covering potatoes with menthol oil to prevent sprouting).

Finally, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MoEP), a series of preliminary studies is underway which aim is to come up with creative solutions, together with key players in the food production and distribution industry, for (a) raising the public's awareness to the problem of food waste and (b) offer strategies for reducing waste at both the retailer and the consumer's levels.

The Dissemination Of Nutritional Principles

The Committee for Nutritional Regulation - Established as part of the "Possible and Healthy" program, this Committee, headed by the Director General of the MoH, is charged with formulating regulations and procedures to facilitate a healthier food environment, including for disadvantaged populations; updating nutritional guidelines; formulating nutritional guidelines for national holidays and festivals.

As a part of the development of manpower in this field, extensive work has been carried out in managing practical training on nutrition, in-service training of a large number of professionals, and a specialized course for dietitians in different specializations.

Following a thorough process, including public presentations and meetings, the Committee for Nutritional Regulation has formed recommendations for the economic accessibility of healthy food; food labeling; limits on marketing and advertising of harmful foods; re-formulation of various foodstuffs to reduce sodium, sugar, and saturated fats; regulation of nutrition within the education systems; promotion of healthy nutrition in large factories; encouraging medium and small manufacturers to manufacture healthy foods, granting of support and incentives for research grants to encourage the manufacture of healthy foods; and promotion of nutritional education and national advocacy within the education system and in the media.

National Universal Nutritional Safety Program - This is a pan-European program intended to advance healthy nutrition for populations suffering from nutritional deprivation. Israel is one (1) of 14 countries participating in this important initiative. The program has included several round-table discussions with stakeholders on issues such as the prevention of malnutrition in hospitals and in the communtiy and communication and education for therapists and patients. It has so far led to significant changes such, for example, as the addition of malnutrition screening tools in health systems; the creation of quality indexes for the treatment of nutritional jeopardy; improvement of the nutritional quality of food served in hospitals.

The Nutrition Department's Website - This website is updated anually, and contains information in three (3) languages - Hebrew, Arabic, and English, with recommendations for healthy eating for the holidays for the various religions.

Access of Disadvantaged Populations To Food

Allocation of Quotas for Milk and Egg Production - Within the *Egg and Poultry Board (Rules Regarding Quotas for the Production of Eggs for Marketing in 2017) Regulations* 5777–2016, quotas for the production of 10 Million eggs (out of a total of 40 Million that are to be allocated to new breeders) are to be allocated to new breeders among the Arab, Druze or Circassian populations. As for the Quotas for 2018, the relevant Regulation determines that ten (10) of the 55 new quotas for the production eggs (five (5) Million eggs out of a total of 27.5 Million eggs) will be allocated for new breeders among the Arab, Druze or Circassian populations. In regard to the allocation of milk quotas, according to the *Planning of the Milk Sector (Development Policy for 2017) Regulations* 5777-2017, two (2) of the 11 new quotas for the production cow milk (1,000,000 litters out of a total of 5,500,000 litters) will be allocated for new breeders among the Arab, Druze or Circassian populations. In addition, one (1) of the five (5) new quotas for the production of sheep milk and one of the five (5) new quotas for the production of goat milk were allocated for new breeders among the Arab, Druze or Circassian populations. All of these allocations are subject to certain relevant threshold conditions such as ownership or rights in an agricultural farm etc.

Efforts to eradicate the Brucellosis Disease in the Negev - A multi-year project is currently underway for the reduction of the Brucellosis Disease in sheep and goat herds in the Negev (2014-2019). This disease may be passed to humans through the consumption of unpasteurized dairy products. The project includes the mapping of all the herds in the Negev, the full subsidy of vaccination and raising awareness of the breeders and population at risk. In light of data that was gathered, it was decided to offer financial compensation to breeders for the removal of infected animals from the herds. This compensation was offered *ex gratia* as most did not meet the criteria for compensation set out in the *Animal Diseases Ordinance (New Version)* 5747-1985.

A pilot study was commenced in October 2015 in the city of Rahat and in adjacent Bedouin villages, with a budget of 5 Million NIS (1.4 Million USD). Approximately 500 herds were treated under this pilot program. The pilot was conducted with the cooperation of the flock owners and the local authority. It was very successful. Indeed, 2015 findings reveal a decrease of approximately 30% in human Brucellosis incidence.

For 2016, the Israeli Government approved a budget of 50 Million NIS (14 Million USD) in order to eradicate the disease and the program was gradually being expanded to the entire Negev. The budget was dedicated to payments to breeders, expansion of the personnel acting in the field, upgrading diagnostic network and an extensive advertising campaign to raise awareness of the disease and the methods of preventing infection among the Bedouin population. This project ended in December 2017.

In addition, following repeated of Brucellosis among the Arab and Druze population in the north of Israel, a program has also been initiated in these areas aimed at the prevention of the disease. In these areas, the MoH also worked with women who prepare home-made cheese from which the disease spreads.

Adequate and Affordable Access To Safe Water

Ensuring the supply of safe water in adequate quantities is part of the overarching goal of Israel's water economy. It is achieved in a number of ways, including by sustainable, long-term planning and development of water infrastructure; economic regulation which sets cost-based rates in order to ensure the funding of required infrastructure investments; the establishment of licensing and service standards;

adequate service and sufficient, uniform funding; the establishment of a water economy structure based on regulated public agencies, acting under the strict and uniform regulation of the Water Authority; and lastly, by investing regulatory powers in the hands of a professional, independent government agency. This agency is the Governmental Authority for Water and Sewage (the Water Authority).

The two (2) main laws governing the water economy are:

The Water Law **5719-1959** - Which lays down the overarching principle whereby water is a public, state-owned resource and that any use thereof requires licensing. According to the Law, regulatory powers of the water and sewage economy are held by the Water Authority Council - a governmental body composed of representatives from senior Government Ministries and two (2) public representatives. The Council has the authority to enact regulations pertaining to the water economy, both with respect to licensing and to the setting of rates and official costs.

The Water and Sewage Corporations Law **5761-2001** - This law regulates the provision of water and sewage services for the urban sector. Pursuant to this law, these services are provided by corporations fully owned by the local authority in whose jurisdiction they operate, although they are limited, special purposes companies under close supervision by the Water Authority. Their sole purpose is the provision of water and sewage services and they provide water in accordance with the rates set by the Water Authority Council, on the basis of the cost and uniformity principles, and subject to service standards established by the Council.

The Water Authority is invested with similar powers with respect to the rural sector, where water supply and sewage services are managed by the villages or regional councils.

The responsibility of the Water Authority applies to both water and sewage, the goal being to produce statewide regulation that is as uniform as possible.

Affordability of Water Services

Water rates for residential consumption are based on two (2) consumption tiers: the first tier is a subsidized rate for an authorized amount of water per capita; the second,

higher (although still subsidized) rate is for consumption exceeding the authorized amount per capita. This rate structure is designed to grant every consumer access to baseline levels of water and sewage services, as well as to promote the economical usage of water.

Water desalination - Israel is dealing with a fifth consecutive year of drought. Recently the Government approved a strategic plan to deal with times of drought for the years 2018-2030, which updated the amounts of water to be desalinated in order to meet consumer demand. To that end, the Government resolved on the establishment of two (2) new water desalination plants (Resolution No. 3886 of June 10, 2018).

Discounted rates **-** The *Water Rules (Determining the Recognized Amount)* 5776-2016, stipulate that persons are eligible for 3.5 cubic meters per month at the basic rate. Discounted rates were introduced for groups of persons in need, such as certain categories of persons entitled to disability allowances, elderly persons who are recipients of supplementary income benefits or other benefits, Holocaust survivors and a number of other groups are eligible for an additional 3.5 cubic meters per month at the basic rate, thus doubling the quantity of water to which they are eligible at the basic rate.

In addition, the *Water and Sewage (Criterions and List of Eligible for Reduction in Payment for the Fiscal Year 2014) Regulations* 5775-2014, establish criteria for discounted tariffs.

Disconnection of water supply - On April 1, 2015, the *Water and Sewage Corporation Rules (Disconnection of Water Supply)* 5776-2015, came into force, dramatically amending the instances in which water supply may be disconnected. The rules now require Water Companies to acquire the prior authorization of the Director of Israel's Water and Sewage Authority for each and every disconnection. They enable the submission of such a request only where the unpaid debt is higher than 1,000 NIS (280 USD). Before a decision is made, consumers who have financial difficulties may appeal to the water company or to the Water Authority. The Rules also prohibit the disconnection of water due to debt from certain institutions, including institutions in which persons with disabilities reside.

Monitoring the Quality of Water

Water sources in Israel are overseen by both the MoH (drinking water wells) and the Water Authority (other water sources). Delivery systems are monitored by the MoH. The quality of water at source level and contamination prevention is monitored by the Water Authority.

In 2013, the Knesset enacted new regulations regarding the quality of drinking water and the controls to be exercised, based on the recommendations of a professional committee. These regulations set a high standard for the sanitary quality of drinking water, sources of drinking water, water production and distribution systems, and more.

Limitations set by the MoH concerning the supply of drinking water are set as conditions on the licenses issued by the Water Authority.

All drinking water is quality controlled. Samples are taken along the entire water supply system: water sources, water treatment plants and public water supply. The results of chemical, microbiological and physicochemical tests are published on the MoH internet site.

The Water Authority monitors fuel contamination with the aid of approximately 770 groundwater monitoring wells in the vicinity of approximately 218 fuel storage and transportation sites, via groundwater sampling, and industrial groundwater contaminations with the aid of approximately 440 specially designated monitoring wells. These sites are monitored due either to their potential for causing groundwater contamination, for having been sites for contamination in the past, or for their proximity to drinking water wells. This monitoring system, consisting of over 1,100 groundwater monitoring wells, gives the authorities a status overview of water quality at the source level and provides advance warning of any contamination before it reaches drinking wells. The system also serves as a tool for determining the need for groundwater rehabilitation and the sites to be rehabilitated. This monitoring system is supported by the Water Authority's laboratory, which is among the most advanced in the world for detecting many water agents - most of which are not included in the drinking water standard and therefore not monitored by other authorities.

Additionally, there are clear regulations with respect to water produced at desalination facilities. The Water Authority, together with the MoH, continuously monitors compliance with these regulations.

The MoEP also has regulatory authority aimed at monitoring and protecting the quality of water. Primarily, it monitors and regulates sewage disposal, including the building of sewage lines and through stations and the establishment of treatment stations. The Ministry has the authority to take administrative and criminal action in the case of regulatory violations.

Education regarding the Use of Water

Water rates are designed to reflect the true cost, thereby promoting informed and economical water use. Other measures are also taken such, for example, as training watering supervisors in local authorities to manage and optimize water use in irrigation, while maintaining growth and a green environment. In recent years, emphasis has been placed on raising awareness of the optimizing water usage in garden irrigation.

In times of crisis, such as the severe nationwide water crisis less than a decade ago, the Water authority took several key measures, including cutbacks in water allocations for agriculture, taxes on increased water usage, encouraging the use of water-saving devices (aerators), and a wide-scale and effective publicity campaign which called on the public to show national responsibility and avoid using water beyond necessary levels. Currently, a similar campaign is on-going.

Affordable housing - Accelerating Construction

A number of other legal arrangements have recently been made in order to accelerate the construction of housing. For example, according to an amendment legislated in 2016, the *Planning and Construction Law* 5725-1965, Section 147(8) authorizes local planning committees to permit additional construction, not exceeding 10% of the existing apartments, in high rise residential buildings, under certain conditions. A temporary provision added in 2017 to Section 147(10) authorizes local planning committees to allow the sub-division of existing detached houses, under certain conditions. According to Amendment No. 120 of 2018, to the *Planning and Building*

Law, local and district committees are authorized to grant developers additional land (up to 25% of the area approved for construction), provided that the housing units added to a specific project will be allocated for long-term rental for 20 years. In addition, the law provides that at least 25% of these housing units will be rented for a five (5) years period at a reduced and supervised price, to those found eligible, and according to the order in which they will be chosen in a raffle. The rest of the housing units will be allocated for long-term rental at market prices. Each housing unit which is rented to those who are eligible at a reduced price will be rented for a period of up to five (5) years, in order to ensure distribution of the benefit among a number of households. At the end of 20 years, the entrepreneur will be entitled to sell the apartments on the open market.

Public Housing

Eligibility criteria - The following substantial updates have been made to broaden the eligibility criteria for obtaining public housing:

Couples - Every couple that has at least three (3) children, who maximize their earning potential and yet receive an income supplement allowance, are eligible for public housing. The points system previously in place is no longer in force.

Single parent families - The requirement that a single parent family receive income support from the NII in order to be eligible for public housing has been amended to include families who subsist on maintenance from the NII.

Persons with disabilities - The principle enshrined in the *National Insurance (Amendment No. 109) Law* 5768-2008 has been applied to the allocation of public housing to persons with disabilities. This amendment prescribed that any additional work income that such a person receives that does not exceed 60% of the average wage shall not be included in the calculation of his/her income for the purposes of disability allowance. Accordingly, today, income from work that complies with the conditions of this legislative amendment is not deemed to be income for the purpose of eligibility for public housing.

The eligibility of persons with disabilities has been expanded to include a single parent family subsisting on an unemployment allowance of 75% or more that has two (2) children, one of which receives a disability allowance for a disability of 100%.

Waiting Lists for Public Housing - As of December 2016, there were 2,892 eligible persons or families waiting to receive apartments in public housing. 428 of these persons are already in public housing and are waiting for a larger or more suitable apartment. In February 2016 rent contributions given to those eligible for public housing awaiting the allocation of an apartment were increased by 600 NIS (166 USD), so that the amount now ranges from 3,100 NIS to 3,900 NIS (860-1,080 USD).

Increasing availability of public housing - The budget for the purchase of additional public housing units by the Government Agencies stands at about 3.2 Billion NIS (890 Million USD). Of this budget, the State will pay 530 Million NIS (147 Million USD) towards construction costs (one half of the cost) and 2.7 Million NIS (750,000 USD) for the operation of the apartments for 40 years.

Preventing Housing on Polluted Sites

Legislative and other measures ensure that housing is not built on polluted sites or in immediate proximity of sources of pollution.

Environmental Impact Surveys - Large and complex construction plans require the submission of an environmental impact report. The *Planning and Building Regulations (Environmental Impact Surveys)* 5763-2003 regulate the types of plans for which a survey is required, allowing planning institutions the discretion to require a report for additional plans that may have environmental implications.

Land Surveys - Planning authorities may require an initial land survey, particularly where a change in zoning from industrial to residential land is requested. This provides an assessment of the potential for soil pollution and recommendations, which must then be implemented, as to preventing damage to the environment and to public health.

***Dangerous Substances Law* 5753-1993** - this law authorizes the MoEP to issue licenses which limit the use of dangerous substances that are harmful to the environment.

Accessibility of Housing for Persons with Disabilities

Public Housing - The MoCH runs a special assistance program to make public housing apartments accessible to persons with special needs. Both internal modifications (such as widening entrances, adapting shower, toilets and kitchen) and external modifications (such as building an access path, ramp or wheelchair lift) are made to public housing at the recommendation of an occupational therapist. These modifications are made from the State budget, without any contribution from the tenant.

General Housing - The MoCH operates an assistance project aimed at increasing the accessibility of housing. This assistance is given as a grant or loan, according to parameters of income and family size. Persons with disabilities are eligible for loans and rent assistance.

Planning and Building (Permit Application, Permit Terms and Fees) Regulations 5730-1970 - Amendments made to these regulations in 2010 govern accessibility to new public buildings and apply to apartment complexes containing six (6) flats or more. These Regulations expanded the range of accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, and made the issuance of a building permit conditional on compliance with accessibility requirements.

The *Persons with Disabilities (Allowance and Rehabilitation) Law* 5719-1959 allows eligible IDF veterans with disabilities to receive assistance in adapting their housing to their individual disability.

Illegal Structures in The Eastern Neighborhoods of Jerusalem

Demolitions - According to recent statistics, in 2017, 101 illegal structures were demolished by the municipality of Jerusalem; Out of these, 58 structures in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, and 43 of the illegal structures were in the western neighbourhoods of Jerusalem.

Out of the 101 illegal structures, only 22 were residential structures.

Construction permits - In 2016, 217 construction permits were granted in the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem. In 2017, 115 construction permits were given in the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem (until June 30th, 2017).

Planning and zoning in Bedouin localities

To date, there are 18 Bedouin localities with approved outline plans, including the city of Rahat, Lakiya, Hura, Kuseife, Tel-Sheva, Segev Shalom and Ar'ara. All of these plans include infrastructure such as schools, health clinics, running water, electricity, roads, pavements, etc. Additional 11 localities that are under the jurisdiction of the Neve Midbar and A-Kasum Regional Councils also have approved outline plans. In addition, the planning procedures for six (6) additional localities are ongoing.

Additional development plans are underway in several other Bedouin towns. Rahat, for example, will be approximately tripled in size (from 8,797 dunams today to 22,767 dunams). The project is estimated to cost approximately 500 Million NIS (135.13 Million USD). Other localities are also in the process of expansion with the development of infrastructures and construction of industrial and employment areas.

Illegal Structures in the Bedouin Population

In the first half of 2017, 436 demolition orders were issued, and a total of 764 demolitions were carried out (including orders from previous years). Of the total number of demolitions, 537 (70.3%) were implemented by the illegal structure's owner, and only 29.7% were conducted by state authorities.

In 2016, 683 demolition orders were issued, and a total of 1,158 demolitions were carried out (several of them regarding orders that were issued in previous years). Of these, 746 (65%) were implemented by the illegal structure's owner, and only 35% of the demolitions were conducted by state authorities.

Note that both in regard to 2016 and 2017, the majority of the illegal structures that were demolished by the state authorities were makeshift structures such as animal sheds, huts, shipping containers, fences, concrete floors, iron scaffolding, dirt piles

etc. Only about 7-10% of the demolished structures were inhabited, since the owners of these illegal structures that were built on State land without permits as required by Law did not adhere to stop work orders that were issued during the building period.

Article 12

National Health Insurance

Health Insurance for Minors without Legal Status - The MoH signed an agreement with the Meuhedet Health Fund for the provision of the full range of health services (with the exception of health services provided abroad) to minors resident in Israel without legal status. This agreement was renewed in 2015, with a number of significant improvements. For example, the copayment to be collected now stands at 120 NIS (34 USD) per child (up to two (2) children), as opposed to 185 NIS (51.5 USD) in the past. No additional payment is collected from the third child onward. Furthermore, the exclusion of prior medical conditions has been limited to a period of up to two (2) years from the date of registration.

Following these amendments, there have been very significant increases in the number of minors without legal status registered for health insurance, andas of the June 13, 2018, 8,118 previously uninsured minors were registered for the Meuhedet health insurance.

Health Care for Foreign Workers - In 2016, an amendment was made to the *Foreign Workers Order (Employee Health Benefits Package)* 5761-2001, which regulates the health services to which legal foreign workers in the care-giving field are entitled. This stipulates that a foreign worker in the nursing-care field is entitled to compensation in the amount of 80,000 NIS (20,800 USD), if ten (10) years have passed since they received a permanent working permit in Israel, if they were found unable to fulfill their work duties due to a medical condition and had made the necessary arrangements to fly back to their country of origin. The compensation is given towards medical expenses in the country of origin, given that their medical insurance will no longer apply. This amendment entered into force in November 2017.

Gaps in Life Expectancy, Diabetes and Cancer between the Jewish and Arab Population

Life expectancy - The life expectancy both in the Jewish and Arab populations had increased. In 2015, the life expectancy of Jewish men and women stood at 81.1 and 84.5 respectively, while the life expectancy of Arab men and women stood at 76.9 and 81.2 respectively (compared to 78.6 and 74.9 respectively in 2005). The gaps continue to decrease.

Diabetes - The rates of diabetes among Jewish and Arab men are similar, however, a slightly higher rate was found among women, when comparing Arab women to Jewish women (9.8 and 7.4 respectively).

Cancer - The rate of cancer cases among the Jewish population is higher than that of the Arab population in Israel, except with regard to lung cancer.

Health Services in Outlying Areas

Incentives to Health Funds - In 2013, funds were allocated towards 460 intervention programs and 199 investments in infrastructure. This is an increase of about 400% in the number of intervention programs and about 121% in the number of investments in outlying areas compared to the previous year.

Allocation of hospital beds, staff and additional resources - In 2011-2013, additional hospital beds in internal medicine, intensive care, pediatric intensive care, obstetrics and other hospital wards were allocated to outlying areas. Additional staff positions were also created in these hospitals. New emergency rooms and important additional medical equipment, including new MRIs, linear accelerators and PET scan devices were also allocated to peripheral areas.

Incentives for Physicians - A new Physician Wage Agreement was signed in August 2011 between the MoF and the Israel Medical Union which included wage raises and bonuses for specialized doctors who move to outlying areas.

Reducing Inequalities in Healthcare

Unit for Reducing Inequalities - The unit has created programs to increase the numbers of medical professionals and services in outlying areas, initiated training sessions on cultural sensitivity and established a knowledge center for health service managers.

The following are a number of the Unit's significant activities:

National Translation Call-Center - Manned by bilingual representatives who have undergone training in medical translation, this call center offers translation services caregivers and patients, where needed, in Russian, Arabic, Amharic and French. It operates 24 hours a day (with the expection of Saturday). On average, 1,500 calls are handled by this call center per month.

Public consultation - During the course of 2016, the MoH held a broad public consultation aimed at formulating a plan for reducing inequality in health. This included calls to the public and round tables, two (2) of which focused on women - the first was held with women who are residents of the unauthorized villages in the Negev and the second with Arab women from Acre.

MoH Director General Directive - In February 2011, a Directive was circulated setting the aims and standards expected of health service providers in relation to cultural and linguistic accessibility.

Training on Cultural Awareness - Including the devlopment of a training kit, computer courseware for indivdual learning and the training of over 100 health counselors and 45 lecturers on this topic.

Measures to Reduce Inequalities in relation to the Persons of Ethiopian Descent

One examples of suce measures is the MoH, which jointly with the "*Clalit*" Health Fund, runs a program to include mediators of Ethiopian origin in 21 primary clincs in which there are a high percentage of persons of Ethiopian descent in order to improve communication and care and to operate education programs in selected health fields.

The MoH also promotes the qualification of nurses of Ethiopian descent that will assist in advancing these programs. There is also a nationwide affirmative action plan in medical schools in relation to medical and nursing studies.

Nurses Serving the Bedouin Population

The nurses that serve the Bedouin population receive supplementary training on issues that are specifically pertinent to this population.

The Ben-Gurion University offers a nursing degree program geared to students from the Bedouin population. As of September 2015, 31 Bedouin students graduated from this program and an additional 27 were in their final year of study. In 2017, The University opened a course in its nursing-degree program for seventy (70) male and female Bedouin students . Concurrently, a course toward registered-nurse certification was opened for sixty (60) Bedouin students.

Furthermore, as of April 2016, there were two (2) ongoing Nursing Diploma Programs being taught at the Nursing School affiliated with Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon.

In regard job placement among graduates, more than 90 percent of the alumni are employed in facilities serving the Bedouin population.

The MoH has made many efforts to recruit and fill all nursing positions within the Bedouin diaspora, including by offering financial and other incentives. Because of the turnover of nurses serving the Bedouin population, the Ministry makes continuous efforts to recruit more nurses for this population.

Women leadership in health programs within the Arab communities

This project aims to promote healthier lifestyle amongst Arab women, following studies that show high obesity rates. Two (2) programs are currently running in Um Al-Fahm and Meiser. These include a series of workshops for women who want to be leaders in their community on health and nutrition. The trainings include sessions totaling 100 hours. The women participating in the program undergo a process of empowerment which includes imparting skills to lead community health programs.

The goal is for the women to hold house meetings for other women concerning healthy lifestyle.

So far, the program has recruited a core of 20 volunteer leaders for the health field. These leaders have led 11 house meetings with 3-4 sessions each, including 15-20 women.

Over 60% of the women who participated in these meetings made at least one (1) change in the health habits for themselves or/also their family.

In Meiser, all 15 women from the group reported on at least one (1) change in their nutrition habits. Here, the group also decided to initiate negotiating with the local council to create a jogging path in the locality and take an active part in the local health events.

Health Services for Non-Residents

A number of medical services are available to migrants and foreign workers, as follows.

Emergency medical treatment - In accordance with the *Patient's Rights Law* 5756-1996, emergency medical treatment is given without condition of prior payment.

Family health stations - These provide preventive medical services to infants, toddlers and pregnant women, including routine immunizations. The service is provided free of charge.

Intervention program for Eritrean families (“*Hatishma Koli*”) - This is an intervention program for Eritrean families without legal status relating to family health. It includes cultural mediation programs which are operated in relevant family health stations in order to coordinate preventative medical services for this community.

General medical services - The "*Terem*" Clinic, located in the new Tel Aviv-Jaffa central bus station provides medical services to the migrant population without legal status. It is funded by the MoH and operated by an NGO. The clinic provides primary

medical services including doctor's examinations, laboratory and imaging services. It includes a volunteer clinic where specialist doctors offer their services.

Mental health services - The "*Gesher*" clinic, based in Jaffa, provides mental health services, including psycho-social assistance and pharmacotherapy. The clinic operates nine (9) hours a week.

Treatment for venereal diseases - The "Levinsky Clinic" of the MoH in Tel Aviv-Jaffa operates under the auspices of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa city council. It was established in 2002 for the diagnosis and treatment of veneral diseases. Services are provided free of charge and anonymously regardless of age or legal status.

Treatment for the homeless and persons engaged in prostitution - A mobile clinic provides services to the homeless and to women engaged in prostitution. In 2015, 4,054 people visited the clinic. Of these, 51% were Israelis, 28% were Eritrean, and the rest were tourists, citizens of other countries with no official status or immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

The Sheba Medical Center - This hospital, situated near Tel Aviv-Jaffa, operates a clinic for the uninsured, focusing primarily on oncology.

Community Program for HIV/AIDS treatment - The MoH operates a community follow-up and treatment program for HIV positive migrants without medical insurance. This is a joint project which involves AIDS clinics, NGOs, pharmaceutical companies and other commercial organizations. It is funded through a combination of Government budgets, donations from pharmacutical companies and a volunteer pharmacist service. This progam is to be further expanded, with the MoH assuming full responsibility for its financing. In 2015, the cost of HIV medications for migrants with no legal status via this program was 117,734.00 NIS (32,700 USD).

The Cost of Healthcare Services

Funding of Health Funds - Previoulsly, the capitation formula which determined the allocation of funding to the different Health Funds was based on age alone. In 2010, coefficients of gender and peripheral location were added to better reflect the needs of

the Health Funds. As a result, the healthcare funds are awarded higher funding for members living in the geographic periphery, a large proportion of which are Arabs.

Approval of drugs and medical equipment

The Pharmacists Ordinance 5741-1981 and subsequent regulations stipulate strict requirements in relation to the registering of drugs and their continued supervision. It also mandates that the expiry date, amongst other information, be clearly stated on the package of a drug. A recent amendment to the Law establishes criminal and administrative sanctions in the event of the publishing of misleading information concerning, *inter alia*, the expiry date.

The Medical Equipment Law 5772-2012, and the *Medical Equipment (Registration and Renewal of Medical Equipment) Regulations* 5773-2013 govern the registration of medical equipment, although these have yet to enter into force. To date, until the completion of additional regulations which will bring the *Medical Equipment Law* into force, this field is regulated by MoH procedures, administrative guidelines and general legislation, such as the *Penal Law*.

Training of Health Personnel on Health and Human Rights

Training courses operated by the MoH include the following:

Cultural accessibility - Persons responsible for cultural accessibility at hospitals and health funds received training regarding healthcare disparity and cultural differences, and especially linguistic differences. The MoH has also developed workshops and materials for practitioners on these matters, including a CD with simulations demonstrating interactions between a caregiver and a patient from a different cultural background.

Persons with disabilities - The MoLSAaSS and MoH work together to develop training and enrichment programs intended to develop the knowledge and professional skills of medical teams in this area.

Domestic violence - Please see the report for details of trainings given to healthcare professionals on domestic violence.

Child and maternal health

Infant hearing screening - In 2010, a succesful national infant hearing screening program was launched. Prior to the program, the median age for diagnosis of hearing difficulties amongst Arab children was ten (10) months. In 2013, this had been reduced to five (5) months. The median age for the start of rehabilitation was reduced from 16 months to nine (9) months. Among Jewish children, the median age had been 14 months and this was reduced to five (5) months. The median age for the start of rehabilitation was reduced from 23 months to nine (9) months.

National Screening Plan for Breast Cancer Detection - MoH Circular No. 22/2016 entitled "*National screening plan for breast cancer detection - update*" obliges all Health Funds and Breast imaging clinics to report annually to the MoH on the implementation of a biannual Mammogram screening for women aged 50-74, and an annual Mammogram for women aged 40 and above with a family history or with a higher risk for breast cancer for other reasons.

Treatment of Myomas - MoH Circular No. 07/2014 entitled "*Treatment of myomas with MRI-guided focused ultrasound*" enables Health Funds to consider invasive and non-invasive alternative treatments for a patient with myoma, including MRI-guided focused ultrasound therapy. The guideline states that significant weight should be given to the woman's preference to refrain from hysterectomy.

Infant Mortality

Data - Israel's infant mortality rate continued to decrease from 6.3 deaths for every 1,000 live births between 1996 and 1999, to 3.1 deaths in 2016. Among the Jewish population, the infant mortality rate decreased even further to 2.2 in 2016. Among the general Arab population, infant mortality rate is also decreasing steadily, although it remains higher than other populations and stands at a rate of 6.2 in 2016 (compared to an average of 7.1 between 2005 and 2009).

Among Muslims, the infant mortality rate is also decreasing and it stands at 6.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016 (compared to 7.4 in 2010). Among Christians, the infant mortality rate is also decreasing and stands at 2.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014 (compared to 2.8 in 2010).

Among the Druze population, the infant mortality rate is also decreasing and stands at 3.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015 (compared to 4.3 in 2013).

Among the Bedouins population, the infant mortality rate was 11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014, representing a decline compared to 2005 (15 deaths per 1,000 live births).

Efforts to decrease infant mortality in minority populations - The gap between the populations stems from a number of factors, among them the high rate of consanguineous marriage which leads to a high rate of birth defects, religious prohibition against abortion even in medically recommended cases, as well as socio-economic differences and high rates of births among older women.

In 2017, additional screening tests, including those aimed at the detection of genetic diseases with a prevalence of 1:60 in the Arab and Druze populations, were added to the State-funded Health Care Basket. They are therefore now free-of-charge. Nuchal translucency tests have also been added, making these tests accessible to populations with limited means, including the Bedouin population.

The 2017 Health Care Basket was also updated to include a wide variety of medicines and technologies: preventative medicine (carrier testing, skeleton, and genetic diseases), through the fields of obstetrics and gynecology.

Sanitation

Updated regulations, published in 2010, set higher levels of treatment in existing and future wastewater plants. They include maximum levels for dissolved and suspended elements and compounds and for different parameters in effluents which then enable unrestricted irrigation and discharge to rivers. Additional provisions relate to the preparation of monitoring and control plans on the quality and quantity of sewage discharged. Sampling and test results are published on the websites of the MoEP, MoH and the Water Authority.

Reuse of effluence

The reuse of effluent in agriculture is a high priority. This reflects a combination of factors, including severe water shortage, contamination of water resources and highly intensive irrigated agriculture.

In 2014, the amount of total municipal sewage was about 510 MCM. About 96% of the wastewater is treated and about 85% of all treated wastewater (effluent) is reclaimed.

In 2015, about 60% of all effluent was produced from tertiary treatment plants and about 40% of effluent was produced from secondary treatment plants.

98.9% of the sewage was centrally collected via public sewage network and about 1.1% was discharged to cesspools in rural areas.

Approx. 2.2% of the sewage was untreated and was discharged to rivers.

Between 1990 and 2014 the discharge of untreated wastewater decreased from 11.8% to 2.2%.

Immunization Programs - recent updates

The immunization program is updated periodically.

For example, HPV immunizations were added for eighth grade girls (in 2013) and boys (in 2015), and the influenza vaccination was added for second graders in 2015. Polio vaccinations using live attenuated vaccines (bOPV) were commenced at Mother and Child Centers in 2014 due to the polio virus penetrating the sewage system.

Updates have also been made to recommendations concerning adult vaccinations. For example, in 2012 a vaccination against whooping cough was offered to pregnant women in order to prevent morbidity and mortality amongst babies. In 2015 this vaccine was included in the health funds' services basket.

All routine vaccinations are tracked by a computerized system to ensure nationwide coverage. The stockpile of available vaccinations and any undersirable effects closely following administration are also tracked.

The Control of Contagious Diseases

Foodborne diseases - Morbidity from foodborne diseases in Israel is on a variable trend, with similar levels as in western countries. Israel is an endemic country for some foodborne diseases, such as Brucella.

Israel maintains continual monitoring of foodborne diseases, based on reported data, data from clinics and sentinel laboratories and analysis of this data. This enables near-real-time risk assessments to be made and the enactment of a preventive policy.

In this way, for example, a salmonellosis outbreak at the end of 2015 was halted thanks to the joint efforts of different departments of the MoH - the Epidemiology Department, the Food Service, the Israeli Center for Disease Control and the veterinary service. So, too, a joint committee of the Epidemiology Department, the National Food Service and the Environmental Health Services monitored listeria morbidity and tracked down potential sources, finding similarities between the discovery of listeria in food and the discovery of the bacteria in clinical cases.

Hepatitis - The MoH estimates that the carrier level in Israel for viral Hepatitis type B is about 1.5% and for viral Hepatitis type C, about 1.3%. The high risk groups in both diseases are similar.

Measures are underway to build a national program for treating viral Hepatitis. The head of the Public Health Services appointed three (3) working groups to focus on the definition of criteria for screening tests (based on a cost-benefit analysis, the development of tools for public advocacy and a budgetary estimation of the cost of screening and treatment). Following the submission of their recommendations, the MoH is focusing on the formulation of an appropriate program.

Simultaneously, other measures are being taken in relation to this issue, including the following:

- Inclusion of pregnant Arab women in the high risk groups for screening as carriers of viral Hepatitis type B. This refers to an at-risk population where timely intervention will reduce the incidence of infants contracting the virus;
- Routine screening of viral Hepatitis amongst high-risk populations;

- Ensuring that the new generation drugs for viral Hepatitis C patients suffering from liver fibrosis stage 3 and 4 are accessible in the health basket;
- Maintaining a high level of vaccination coverage among the population (about 95%) against viral Hepatitis A and B within the childhood vaccination program;
- Infection prevention among intravenous drug users by distributing between 5 and 45 disposable needles and syringes, per applicant per week;
- Raising public awareness as a part of the Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day, in collaboration with the Viral Hepatitis Patient Association, as well as through ongoing updates on the MoH website.

Cutaneous Leishmaniasis - In 2012, following an increase in the incidence of cutaneous leishmaniasis and its spread to new areas of the country, the Government directed the establishment of an interministerial committee to examine ways of decreasing the incidence of the disease. Following the establishment of the Committee, a three-year program was initiated which included: information dissemination, particularly in selected areas; experimental steps to curb the transfer of leishmaniasis to humans; and research focusing on the means by which leishmaniasis is transferred to humans. The Committee also organised a professional seminar to raise awareness among physicians of the treatment of cutaneous leishmaniasis and prepared a position paper to define diagnosis and treatment. The MoH website also contains a explanations for the public as to the disease, its identification and treatment.

In 2016, the Government allocated an additional budget in order to aid local authorities in the reduction of leishmaniasis.

Computer systems have been developed for the tracking of the epidemiological investigation of cutaneous leishmaniasis and for the reporting of incidents of the disease.

West Nile Fever - Improvements have been made to the monitoring of West Nile fever. Since 2015, each case must be reported to the Central Virus Laboratory. In August 2016, the MoH annual report was extended to include reference to this disease.

Rabies prevention - Guidelines for preventing rabies before and after exposure have been updated.

Morbidity Prevention among Individuals Traveling Abroad and Returning from Overseas

Hereinafter are examples of steps taken to prevent morbidity related to travel:

The Epidemiology Department in the MoH prepares guidelines for professionals working in foreign traveller clinics. The guidelines include general and specific recommendations for travelers depending on their planned destination. Specific guidelines are prepared for pilgrims travelling to Mecca and for travellers to Olympic games and other international tournaments.

Guidelines have also been prepared for the use of vaccines and malaria prophylaxis.

Instructions are prepared for travellers to countries which have endemic, emerging infections (for example, the zika virus and the coronavirus) and for those returning from such countries. The instructions include possible ways to protect oneself, measures necessary for preventing the spread of the disease, methods for diagnosing the disease and the meaning of the test results.

Substance Abuse - Tobacco

Smoking prevention in the Arab population - Between 2012-2015, hundreds of thousands of NIS were invested in in-depth studies of smoking in the Arab population. The results formed the basis of a culturally adjusted program for reducing smoking amongst the Arab population. This included the distribution in 2015 of Arabic language activity kits in relevant schools on the issue of smoking prevention amongst adolescents.

Tobacco control - In May 2011, the Government adopted a National Plan to reduce smoking and related disease and mortality, following the report of a public committee on the prevention of smoking-related damage. Amendments were made to the *Prevention of Smoking in Public Places and Exposure to Smoking Law* 5743-1983 to increase the protection afforded to the public from exposure to smoking. An amendment to the *Restrictions on the Advertising and Marketing of Tobacco Products*

5743-1983, in 2011, banned cigarette vending machines, effective as of 2014, and empowered the Minister of Health to enact intermediary regulations, with immediate effect, that banned the placing of cigarette vending machines within one (1) kilometer of educational institutions. Since February 2016, all educational institutions for minors are smoke free, both indoors and out, including to a range of ten (10) meters outside the entrance to the school yards.

Intervention programs in schools - Programs to prevent smoking initiation among teenagers are routinely conducted for sixth and seventh grade pupils, using peer to peer methods, media literacy and social pressure resistance skills.

Counselling - All smokers are entitled to smoking cessation counselling, via the Health Funds, free of charge.

Substance Abuse - Alcohol

National program - Government Resolution No. 907 (November 2009) established a two-stage plan:

First, the passing of legislation to decrease the consumption of alcohol and the launching of a public awareness campaign by the Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority. A number of further campaings were also developed subsequent to this Resolution, including formal and informal educational campaings amongst youth; the development of volunteer groups to work with youth; the extension of an ongoing project run by the Ministry of Public Security (MoPS) known as "City without Violence", which may be run in areas where alcohol consumption by youth is particularly widespread; and the identification of youth who could benefit from rehabilitation centers adapted to minors.

The Resolution also established a Director-General's Committee which was directed to formulate a national plan in this regard. The Committee presented its recommendations to the Government within a month. These included the development of steps to delegitimise any consumption of alcohol by children and adolescents; steps to encourage a responsible approach to alcohol consumption by young adults; increasing the public knowledge base concerning the damaging effects of alcohol consumption by children and adolescents; the creation a research database

and of qualified teams to provide explanations, preventative measures and professional, culturally sensitive treatment; reducing the violence, criminal and anti-social behavior that is a consequence of alcohol consumption; and reducing the death and morbidity rate connected to alcohol consumption.

The Government allocated 27 Million NIS (7.5 Million USD) to this project for use from 2010-2011. It was subsequently extended for a further two (2) years (2012-2013), with a budget allocation of 20.2 Million NIS (approx. 5.6 Million USD) per year.

The implementation of the project was supervised by the Director General of the Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority.

Legislation - The *Anti-Inebriation Law* 5770-2010 empowers the Police to seize and destroy alcoholic beverages where they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person holding the beverages intends to consume them in a public place and may cause a disturbance to public order. The Law also empowers the Police to seize and destroy alcoholic beverages if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a minor is drinking or intends to drink them in a public place, without the supervision of an adult.

In 2010, an amendment was made to the *Traffic Ordinance [New Version]* which lowered the blood alcohol level that defines "intoxication" in relation to certain categories of drivers, such as drivers under the age of 24, who statistically cause more accidents on the road.

In 2012, the *Restriction on Advertising and Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages Law* 5772-2012 was approved, introducing limitations on the advertisment of alcoholic beverages. For example, pursuant to the law, no advertisments for alcoholic beverages are to be placed on billboards, in printed press that is intended mainly for children or youth under the age of 18, or broadcast during programs aimed at children. The Law also defines the content of advertisments for alcoholic beverages and requires advertisments to be accompanied by a health warning, as set in relevant regulations.

Training of Medical Professionals on Substance Abuse

The MoH and the Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority hold training days for Government Ministries on drug and alcohol abuse among adolescents. The MoH is also responsible for raising awareness amongst the medical professionals (primarily general medicine and psychiatry) in the field of psychoactive substances and other issues related to substance abuse.

The Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority, together with the MoH and Tel Aviv University, trained approximately 80 family physicians, psychiatrists and anesthetists on treatment of addictions. Furthermore, training on co-occurring disorders has been given to approximately 1,000 medical and para-medical teams since 2010, in eight (8) medical health centers. Training on the treatment of addiction to pain medication has also been given to about 25 physicians in relevant fields.

Fetal Alcoholic Syndrome **-** Each year, on the International Fetal Alcoholic Syndrome Disorders Awareness Day, the MoH, the Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority and the Schneider Medical Center hold professional seminars. Nurses at mother and child health clinics have been trained on this issue, a national clinic has been recognized as a specialist on this issue and a position paper was published on the MoH website. These activities are all carried out under the supervision of a professional, inter-ministerial steering committee.

Convenience Store Drugs - In 2014, the MoH held a seminar on the use of convenience store drugs amongst adolescents and young adults, attended by 200 medical professionals.

"Life Skills" classes - Programs for Preventing the Use of Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Dangerous Substances

Pre- school **-** The program is designed to develop awareness for the importance of protecting our bodies and avoiding the use of dangerous substances. This program focuses on skills such as personal responsibility, decision making, resisting temptation and asking for help. The program was designed in collaboration with the Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority.

Grade two - The program focuses on beneficial and harmful substances; positive and negative use of medications.

Grade three - The program focuses on learning about substances that are harmful to our bodies; forced smoking; hazardous volatile substances at home etc.

Grade five - The program focuses on social life, such as parties. It includes an educational unit on growing up without drinking - preparing for parties, skills and dilemmas, setting boundaries, coping with peer pressure, facts and myths about alcohol consumption, what to do when things get out of hand, etc.

At this stage, a program is also run for parents that deal with adolescence, teenage recreation and parental roles in taking a stance on alcohol consumption.

Grade six - The program includes discussions on how to avoid smoking, an informative questionnaire about smoking, peer pressure, and the truth about commercials.

For parents, a program is offered focusing on adolescent years, dangerous behavior and parental roles in encouraging anti-smoking stances in youth.

Grade seven - The program focuses on understanding the implications of smoking, myths and distorted messages, acquiring information and withstanding peer pressure.

Grade eight - The program focuses on alcohol and recreational use, understanding the implications of alcohol consumption, providing information, how the individual influences the overall social atmosphere by drinking, facts vs. opinions, coping with dilemmas etc.

Grade nine - the program focuses on parties, different types of recreational activities, impacts, temptation and choices, clarifying personal stances on drug use, personal boundaries, information on the impacts of cannabis and designer drugs, internet and drug use, six (6) stages of addiction, responsibility or tattle-telling, who to contact for help etc.

Grade ten: the program focuses on drugs and includes discussion on cannabis and designer drugs.

Grade eleven **-** The program focuses on drinking and driving, including discussions about the impact of alcohol on driving, recreational drinking. It also tackles adolescent use of cannabis.

Grade twelve **-** The program focuses on preparing youth for army service - drugs and alcohol in this context.

School Leaders for Prevention of the Use of Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Responsible teacher or counselor - High school principals are responsible for appointing a teacher or guidance counselor to initiate and operate programs in the school designed to prevent use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Working with pupils who are involved in drug abuse - A MoE Director General's circular contains instructions for schools on dealing with pupils who abuse drugs. According to this circular, the school principal must report any information related to drug abuse to the Police. In addition, a school committee comprised of members of the school staff and community representatives are to develop a treatment plan for the pupil, based on police instructions.

The MoE also operates a structured group for pupils who occasionally use drugs, alcohol or tobacco and want to stop doing so. The group is moderated by a school guidance counselor, social worker or psychologist.

Schools are supported by the Department for Treatment of Substance Abuse in the MoE which is responsible for planning and organizing services for the treatment of harmful use and addictions to psychoactive substances including alcohol, drugs, and prescription drugs. In 2013, it held a seminar on "withdrawal and reduction of smoking among addicts", attended by about 200 participants from various drug rehabilitation centers.

Youth leadership program - This was designed to empower and develop leadership qualities among selected pupils and to train them on issues related to youth culture, such as avoidance of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and dangerous substances. The MoE also offers training and support to youth movements in the development of programs.

Raising Awareness of Sexual Health

Schools all over the country study and discuss sexual education and gender issues in several educational, such as: Life Skills", "Preparation for Family Life" and "Worth Talking". These programs include topics such as: physical development, dating and relationships, love, sexual and gender identity, gender equality, sexual relations, couple and sexual communication, birth control, pregnancy, adolescent prostitution, gender diversity, various family types, career planning, warning lights in a relationship and how to receive assistance and more. Schools can also choose to focus on gender studies in many ways and programs offered by the Gender Equality Unit in the MoE. In Schools in the Arab population, programs include: friendship and personal identity, physical and emotional development, friendship among genders and prevention of sexual harassment, (grades 5 to 6), friendship and love, personal body image, improper internet contents, dating and relationships, Sexual transmitted diseases (grades 7 to 9), gender equality, friendship and relationships without violence, family, couple and sexual communication, preparation for marriage and more. These contents are also provided to religious communities with the required adaptations. In addition, one (1) week in January is devoted to discussions on sexual abuse.

MoH Residential Rehabilitation Centers for Addiction

The MoH operates several different types of rehabilitation centers for adults and youth. In 2016, quality controls were conducted, in addition to the regulatory supervision required by legislation, with special emphasis on quality of treatment, nutrition and patient rights. In 2017, changes were made to one (1) of the centers in order to provide specially adapted services to adult women, focusing on sexual abuse, motherhood and empowerment.

In cases which so require, youth are admitted to residential centers specially adapted to their needs.

In 2016, 2,476 adults were admitted to these centers, of which 1,485 succesfully completed treatment.

In 2016, 202 male youth were admitted, of which 94 succesfully completed treatment; and 125 female youth were admitted, of which 67 succesfully completed treatment.

MoLSAaSS Services for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Addiction

In 2016, the following frameworks operated:

For the treatment of drug addiction **-** 74 adult treatment units for persons who suffer from drug abuse (treated 10,336 persons in 2016); 65 youth treatment centers (treated 3,759 youth for various addictions in 2016); two (2) day centers for youth suffering from addictions (24 youth received treatment in these centers during 2016); 23 day or evening centers provide treatment and employment for adults and youth during a rehabilitation period after detoxification (792 persons received services from these centers in 2016); 672 budgeted places for persons suffering from substance abuse in 13 residential programs, including treatment communities, hostels and transitional apartments.

For the treatment of alcohol and gambling addiction **-** 53 ambulatory centers run by local authorities and voluntary associations (4,697 persons received treatment in 2016); 35 beds in a residential facility for persons suffering from alcohol and drug abuse (45 persons received treatment in 2016); 17 prevention support groups aimed at youth and parents from Ethiopian descent or from the former USSR on the subject of drugs and alcohol (204 youth participated in these groups in 2016).

Special programs **-** Programs for the treatment of adult and youth immigrants on the spectrum of addiction, run in 15 regions (180 participants in 2016); treatment and rehabilitation programs concerning driving under the influence of alcohol (eight (8) groups were operated in 2016, with a total of 96 participants); other programs include group therapies (7,656 participants in 2016); therapies tailored specifically to women (675 participants in 2016); and 12 field units for locating youth in need of treatment (in 2016, these units located 2,548 youth).

Additional information - In 2016, 3,513 persons on the spectrum of drug, alcohol and gambling abuse successfully completed treatment programs. 23% of these persons are from the Arab population. This constitutes an increase, which may be attributed to

concerted efforts by the Addiction Treatment Service to reach these populations by opening new treatment ptograms in relevant areas.

Of persons suffering from drug addiction, most of them are youth, 43% suffer from addiction to Cannabis; 19% to Opium; 12% to designer drugs and 9% to Cocaine.

However, alcohol addiction is the most prevalent - 53% of those treated by the Service, of all ages, suffer from this addiction.

Of these persons, 11,410 were male and 2,683 were female. 16% were Arabs, which constitutes a slight increase in relation to 2015.

Budget - In 2016, the Addiction Treatment Service's budget was about 74 Million NIS (20.5 Million USD) which were allocated as follows: treatment communities - 46 Million NIS (12.7 Million USD); treatment of adults suffering of addictions - 23 Million NIS (6.4 Million USD); treatment of youth suffering of addictions - 5 Million NIS (1.4 Million USD).

Prevention of HIV / AIDS

According to the MoH periodic epidemiological report of 2015, the main risk groups in Israel for HIV/AIDS are men who have sex with men, israeli citizens of Ethiopian origin, foreign workers, persons engaged in prostitution and intravenous drug users. Preventative measures are adjusted to the various risk groups.

Preventative Measures - With regard to men who have sex with men, measures take in account the need to make condoms and tests easily accessible and the need to promote mental and emotional well-being through specialised psychological services. The MoH also cooperates on an ongoing basis with LGBTI organisations, gay youth and the Israel AIDS Task Force in preventative projects.

For intravenous drug users there is a 'Yitzhar' project for drug-related harm reduction. This project, with cooperation from the MoH and the Israel Anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority includes five (5) centers in which addicts arrive to receive clean injection devices, support, a light meal, clothing, and other necessities from a professional staff and volunteers.

For women engaged in prostitution, projects focus on safeguarding health, rehabilitation and assistance in breaking the cycle of prostitution.

For persons who crossed the Israeli border with Egypt, community based preventative programs are organized jointly by the MoH and the Israel AIDS Task Force and focus on the Tel Aviv-Jaffa area. Nationwide response and support is provided over the phone.

Campaigns encouraging the use of condoms and safe sex are centered both around World AIDS Day and on special Internet websites and Facebook pages. These are aimed at the general population. Eight (8) AIDS clinics throughout the country provide information and treatment.

Prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS amongst persons of Ethiopian descent

A unique program, employing 42 persons from within the Ethiopian community, provides HIV carriers of Ethiopian descent with support and assistance from specially trained coordinators and social workers.

In 2014, some eighty advocacy workshops, consisting of 5-8 meetings, were held on AIDS prevention within the general population of persons of Ethiopian descent. A six (6) episode TV-series in Amharic was broadcast, making reference to health and physical and social well-being.

Assistance was given in establishing an association of HIV-positive activists from the community who underwent an advocay course. They began independent activities to support fellow carriers within the community and their families, minimize continued infection and to reduce the stigmatization of carriers within the community.

Support groups were held for HIV carriers around the country and assistance has been provided in basketball and football leagues in the Ethiopian community.

An AIDS awareness-raising and stigma reduction drive was organised, including a series of meetings and conferences with leading professionals from Ethiopia. This event consisted of four (4) city conferences with hundreds of members of the Ethiopian community participating, meetings for professionals in the AIDS field

(physicians, social workers, etc.) and a first of its kind main conference for carriers of Ethiopian descent.

Health care coordinators mediate cultural differences between treatment professionals and patients. They are chosen from within the Ethiopian community and accompany the patients to AIDS centers, verify correct and consistent use of anti-retroviral medication and give emotional and psychological support. Health care coordinators are available by phone at all hours. There are currently 17.5 coordinators positions, who attend to 1,686 carriers from within the community. Each year, eleven (11) training sessions are held for the coordinators in order to enrich their knowledge and professionalism and in 2016 a support group was created for them.

In addition, the AIDS centers which cater for persons of Ethiopian descent have social workers who are charged with the mental and social wellbeing of carriers from this community. There are currently nine (9) such social workers.

Two (2) large AIDS centers also employ a community nurse who, together with the coordinators and others in the community, work to increase the responsiveness of the patients to treatment and to ease their interactions with the health and welfare authorities.

All of the carriers and patients in the community receive full reimbursement of travel expenses to the AIDS centers.

Article 13

Education on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Relevant calendar days - Days which promote rights and equality are marked with special activities - for example, the Human Rights Day (December10th)**,** the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21st) and the International Day for Tolerance (November16th)). Activities are organized in collaboration with NGOs, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the Center for Educational Technology. The requirement that schools mark these days is anchored in a circular that was issued by the MoE's Director General in 2014.

These days include the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biophobia. In honor of this day, MoE's Psychology and Counseling Service ("*Shefi*") dedicates a unit on its website to this topic. The website includes explanations on specific subjects, publications by educational organizations from the LGBTI community (Hoshen, Israel Gay Youth, Jerusalem Open House and others) and recommended workshops for educators to use in their classes.

Tolerance - A program to promote tolerance and prevent racial discrimination includes activities during the opening of the school year, activities for the various calendar days mentioned above, including a joint project run with the MoJ on the International Day for Tolerance and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Guest speakers are invited to more than 700 schools.

In addition, a website has been developed, aimed at all ages, offering activities and lesson plans relating to these special days, lesson plans on the subject of tolerance, democratic values and prohibition of discrimination. Schools also initiate ongoing activities throughout the year in response to relevant incidents.

This program has been presented to educational supervisors in the MoE and district offices. The MoE intends to develop and expand the program over the next years.

Civic and Democratic Values - 10^{th} grade pupils are taught a class known as "General Knowledge". In addition to existing units which relate to "Civic Milestones" and to "Coping with Racial Discrimination", this class includes a unit on incorporating current events into the classroom through discourse that is based on civic and democratic values and a unit entitled "The Democratic Experience", run in conjunction with the Center for Educational Technology. All of these units promote discussion on human rights.

Life Skills - This class is taught to pupils of all grades. It includes such topics as gender-based discrimination; LGBTI rights; prevention of domestic violence and sexual health.

Regarding domestic violence, as of 2011, the MoE's Psychology and Counseling Service's website includes teaching materials on domestic violence and violent relationships, including recommended workshops for teachers. In the same year, an

updated booklet on violence-free relationships was distributed to educators. In 2015, an Arabic language version of this booklet, adjusted to cultural sensitivities, was distributed to educators in the Arab and Bedouin populations.

The MoE promotes incorporation of ethics into the educational curriculum and offers hundreds of hours of professional development for teachers and others on democratic values, dignity, pluralism, tolerance and preventing discrimination. Training courses on civic studies, racism and co-existence are offered to MoE supervisors, principals, teachers and pre-school teachers. Approximately 2,300 hours have been allocated for these studies each year.

Information on educational programs relating to HIV/AIDS can be found under Article 12.

Information on education programs relating to misuse of drugs and alcohol can be found under Article 12.

Implementation of the Long School Day

The full implementation of the *Long School Day and Enrichment Studies Law* 5757-1997 has been postponed for an additional three (3) years, until 2019. The Explanatory Notes to the *Bill for Economic Streamlining (Legislative Amendments for the Achievement of Budgetary Targets for the Budget Years 2017 and 2018)* 5777-2016, in which the postponement was proposed, stated that the "*New Horizon*" reform at kindergartens, elementary and junior high schools has already added hours to the school day. In addition, the implementation of the recommendations set forth in Government Resolution No. 4088 of January 2012, and the implementation of the report of the Committee for Economic and Social Change (known as the *Trachtenberg Committee*) included the operation of afternoon frameworks that extend the school day until 16:00 at kindergartens and in Grade 1 and Grade 2 in socio-economic clusters 1 to 3. Furthermore, the full implementation of the Law is expected to cost over 2 Billion NIS (556 Million USD).

Parental Payments

General - Schools are prohibited from making the provision of one (1) service contingent upon the payment for another. The collection of payments must be done in a manner that safeguards privacy.

The MoE circular with regard to parental payments for the academic year 2016-2017 stipulates that pupils must not be prevented from participating in activities due to financial difficulties. Schools are directed to find solutions to these situations in conjunction with the local authority. They are also required to ensure that all pupils who require financial assistance are aware of the MoE's pupils' grant budget. Schools must include reference to this budget in their payment circular and post it on the school notice board.

If schools offer an additional curriculum, authorized by a MoE's district supervisor, participation and payment are contingent on written parental consent. This should ideally be offered at the end of the school day, enabling pupils not participating to go home. If it is taught in the middle of the day, all pupils must be allowed to participate, even if their parents have not paid.

Schools are required to send parents a payment circular which contains details of the services that are provided at the school and the requested payments. At the end of each academic year, the school must provide a report on the management of the funds that were collected through parental payments.

School Meals

In addition to the *Daily Meal for the Pupil Law* 5765-2005, referred to in Israel's previous periodic report, in 2014 the Government enacted the *Supervision of the Quality of Food and Proper Nutrition in Education Institutions Law* 5774-2014 which obligates the State to supervise the nutritional values of all foods served and sold in educational institutions. The regulations required to implement the Law are in the process of being formulated.

The Early Childhood Council

In August 2017, the Knesset passed the *Early Childhood Council Law* 5777-2017, a new law which directs the establishment of an Early Childhood Council. This law aims to further the care of infants and their physical and intellectual development, ensure their physical and mental health and the fulfillment of their educational, social, physical and emotional needs and to provide an appropriate environment which will enable them to enjoy equal rights in adulthood.

Educational initiatives in the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem

The Jerusalem Municipality distributed 1,720 desktop and laptop computers to schools, kindergartens, and teachers in the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem and an additional 350 computers for pupils' homes. In addition, seven state-of-the-art "smart-boards" were introduced by the municipality to six (6) schools in these neighborhoods.

In 2016, the Municipality also began implementing an initiative to lengthen the school days in secondary schools in eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem with extended programming that continues until 17:30 daily. Pupils enjoy an organized educational framework with a variety of interesting classes and enrichment courses. This project is extremely successful. In the year and a half since it began, the number of pupils participating in this initiative has doubled.

Since 2012-13, the Municipality has invested 1 Million NIS (270,000 USD) per year in a new science program for pupils from the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem. This initiative aims to increase the percentage of pupils who choose to major in the sciences for their school matriculation. It seeks to open doors to the Academia and future careers, enabling Arab pupils to better integrate into the workforce.

The Jerusalem Municipality is advancing the establishment of another technological school in the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem, which will be the third one there. 16 Million NIS (4.5 Million USD) were allocated to this project, which aims to reach pupils who have dropped-out of school.

The Jerusalem Municipality provides a variety of scholarships for pre-university and university studies. From 2014-2016 the number of institutions preparing residents of the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem for higher education increased from 50 to 160.

Additionally, during 2014-2016, 6.8 Million NIS (1.9 Million USD) were allocated for Hebrew and computers skills courses, as well as for the prevention of school-drop-out.

Between 2015 and 2016, two Million NIS (550,000 USD) were added to informal education, and 750,000 NIS (208,400 USD) were allocated for a program aiming for the prevention of violence ("*City with no Violence*").

New Educational Programs

In recent years, the Education Administration in the MoE launched four (4) education programs aimed at promoting pupils with high scholastic achievements who excel in their studies.

"*Pre-Atid*im program" - This program is intended for the top 10-30 percent of pupils from periphery areas who wish to acquire an advanced science-oriented high school diploma. The program aims to boost pupils' self-esteem, help them improve their academic achievements, and guide them towards academic studies in Engineering and the Sciences.

"*Psagot*" - In this program talented pupils from disadvantaged neighborhoods and low socio-economic backgrounds participate and are exposed to a variety of enrichment programs tailored to their needs. The program's goals are to allow pupils with high scholastic abilities to realize their potential for excellence, achieve high academic achievements, develop educational tools required in higher education, build social world views expressed in contributing to society and the community, and to later integrate into the society as involved, contributing, and caring citizens.

"Mentoring program" - This program locates 15 to 18 gifted pupils nationwide and provides them with tutors from the Academia in order to nurture their unique talents. The program aims to nurture future leaders in the research of specific fields. Each

pupil is individually guided in an academic research institute that employs his/her tutor. In the frame of this program, the pupils can nurture their curiosity, study in-depth areas of interest, and develop their potential.

"*Alpha*" program - Initiated in 2015, this program is intended for gifted higher education pupils. It allows the pupils to work and study with an expert in the academic world and conduct in-depth research on a topic of their interest. The pupils are required to write a final paper that will be examined and later recognized as part of their matriculation certificate. This program also takes into consideration the relationships between pupils, as well as emotional and social aspects during the program. Recently, several meeting were held in order to raise the participation of pupils of the Arab, Druze and Bedouin populations in this program and to find ways to locate gifted children among these populations.

Technical and Vocational Education

The vocational-technological track offers specialized programs in a broad range of fields, as elaborated in our report. Pupils must pass exams on each of the subjects in their selected field of expertise. They also submit a final paper. In addition to the technical skills acquired, these programs develop skills such as entrepreneurship, creativity, systemic thinking, cooperative learning and creative thinking.

The MoE works with other Government Ministries and with the Israel Manufacturers Association in order to define the necessary certifications needed for each and every field so that pupils may be able to join the workforce after completing their studies.

For example, during the 2016-2017 academic year the MoE introduced training courses in IT and information systems that prepared pupils in the vocational-technological track for professional certification exams. Both the courses and the exams are funded by the MoE. 2,236 pupils participated in this program and this number is expected to grow in the coming years.

Data Concerning Accessibility to Higher Education

The Arab population in Israel constitutes approximately 20% of Israel's population, and an estimated 26% of the age group that is relevant to higher education.

In recent years, the rate of Arab students among the total students studying for their first degree has been steadily increasing. According to figures from the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in 2014-2015, the percentage of Arab students studying for a university bachelor's degree stood at 14.6%, compared to 9.9% in 2006-2007.

An increase is also evident in Masters and Doctoral degrees. In 2014-2015, Arab students constituted 8.8% of all students learning master's degrees (compared to 6.7% in 2009-2010 and 5.9% in the 2006-2007) and 5.7% of the students studying for doctorate degrees (compared to 3.9% in 2009-2010 and 3.5% in 2006-2007).

The rate of participation of Arab students at academic colleges has also increased considerably, from 5.5% in 2009-2010 to 9.8% in 2014-2015 (bachelor's degrees) and from 3.8% in 2009-2010 to 8.1% in 2014-2015 (master's degrees). These increases are attributed, among other things, to the opening of higher education institutions in peripheral areas which increased the accessibility of higher education to the Arab population.

There has been a substantial surge in the rate of Arab women in higher education. In 2012-2013, this rate stood at 68% of Arab students (compared to 62% in 2009-2010 and 40% in the early 1990s). This important development is also linked to the opening of higher education institutions in peripheral areas which allowed Arab women to study in locations closer to their residential areas.

Government Resolution No. 922 defined a goal of increasing the rate of Arab students studying for their Bachelor's degree to 17% by 2025.

Higher Education - Accessibility to the Arab Population

As part of the Planning and Budgeting Committee's (PBC) multi-year plan to make higher education more accessible to minority populations, the following steps have been taken:

Preparatory Information, Guidance and Counseling - Including the establishment of guidance centers aimed at the Arab population (to date, 18 guidance centers have been established, 17 more are underway); the establishment of guidance centers within over 100 high schools; and the training of teaching staff.

Preparatory training and courses - Since 2013, every preparatory college funded by the PBC in which minority students study receives additional funds for Hebrew lessons, dormitories, transportation and more; the PBC participates in a marketing campaign aimed at the Arab population in order to encourage enrollment in preparatory colleges; since 2014, the PBC grants excellence scholarships to 20% of graduates who belong to minority populations.

Academic preparation - Including a course for Arab Students who have been accepted to higher education institutions, covering language skills (both Hebrew and English), academic orientation, time management, computer literacy and more.

Absorption programs - Programs aimed at easing the absorption of Arab students in their first academic year, including social guidance, tutoring, academic workshops, emotional support and more, are budgeted at approx. 90 Million NIS (25 Million USD).

Additional programs - These include a special scholarship fund for students from the Arab population (650 students per annum, at a budget of 6.5 Million NIS (1.8 Million USD)); "*Maof*" scholarships for science students from the Arab population whom institutions wish to recruit as academic staff (seven (7) students per annum, at a budget of 3 Million NIS (835,000 USD)); tutoring scholarships given to first degree students who tutor high school children in return for half of the higher education tuition fees (of the students who participate, 27% are Arab; of the high schools who participate, 21% are Arab schools); and an assistance fund for students in need (with a budget of approx. 80 Million NIS (22.2 Million USD)).

Women in Higher Education

In July 2015, PBC and CHE approved several resolutions on the basis of these recommendations, including: gradually doubling the number of scholarships for excellent post-doctoral female students; funding allocation for women in staff positions; updating the statutes of adjudicatory committees of excellence in order to assimilate gender reference; and instructing education institutions to ensure that at least half of those examined for scholarship programs in science and engineering are women. In total, the budget allocated for the implementation of the recommendations

is about 6 Million NIS (1.7 Million USD) in 2017 and 6 Million NIS in 2018 (including matching funding by the institutions).

Gender Equality Advisors **-** The PBC allocated a budget for advisors for gender equality program in higher education institutions for 2017-2019 at a maximum annual cost of 1.1 Million NIS (305,000 USD) and to further allocate funding for a period of three (3) years at up to 600,000 NIS (167,000 USD).

Scholarships for women **-** On June 19, 2013 the PBC launched a post-doctoral Scholarship Program for female students in order to assist them in post-doctoral research in leading universities abroad. During 2014 and 2015, ten (10) such scholarships were awarded each year (20,000 USD a year for a maximum period of two (2) years). On July 1, 2015 the PBC decided to gradually double the number of scholarships in this program.

In 2015-2016, at least 50% of the applicants for the majority of scholarships were women, except in the *Alon* scholarships program where the percentage of women who were considered stood between 25%-35%.

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Space (MoSTaS) also finances scholarships for female researchers and students. For example, in 2016, the "Shulamit Aloni Excellence Scholarships for the Advancement of Women" were awarded to 12 researchers, in the amount of 2.5 Million NIS (695,000 USD). Furthermore, in 2016, 12 academic-business sector scholarships for the advancement of women in science were awarded to MA, PhD and post-doctoral candidates, in the amount of 1.14 Million NIS (317,000 USD).

In 2016, 17 additional scholarships, in the amount of 1.28 Million NIS (approx. 355,000 USD), were awarded to PhD and post-doctoral students living in outlying areas.

Note that 40% of all scholarships granted by the MoSTaS, were granted to women.

Access of Students with Disabilities to Higher Education

Accessibility adjustments - The *Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Accessibility Adjustments to Existing Public Places which are Institutions of Higher*

Education and for the Higher Education Services they Provide) Regulations 5776-2016, include provisions on physical accessibility adjustments and services required at higher education institutions. These Regulations also promote accessibility and equal rights in the acceptance process for these institutions. These Regulations are being implemented gradually.

Rights of students with learning disabilities - The *Rights of Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Higher Education Institutions Law* 5774-2014 anchors the rights of candidates, pupils and students with learning disabilities in higher education institutions, regulates the practice of identification and diagnosis of such difficulties and sets support mechanisms

Investment in Schools for Arab, Druze, Bedouin and Circassian Populations

A number of Government Resolutions have sought to define five-year plans which direct substantial investment into education and the building and refurbishment of schools for the Arab, Bedouin, Druze and Circassian populations:

Government Resolution No. 1052 - Entitled "*Multi-year program for the strengthening of Druze villages in the Golan Heights for the years 2014-2017*" (December, 2013), includes plans for the strengthening of educational frameworks through the construction of additional classrooms and kindergartens, the development of educational programs, including preparation for higher education, extra-curricular activities and more, with a total budget of 54 Million NIS (15 Million USD).

Government Resolution No. 922 - Entitled "*Government activities for the economic development of minority populations for the years 2016-2020*" (December, 2015), includes additional investment in education, including teaching quality, educational programs, informal educational and extra-curricular activities.

Government Resolution No. 959 - Entitled "*Program for the Development and Strengthening of Druze and Circassian Villages for the years 2016-2019*" (January 2016), allocated substantial budgets for formal and informal education, including programs to facilitate accessibility to higher educations, and for the construction of educational infrastructure in Druze and Circassian villages.

Government Resolution No. 2397 - In this Resolution, entitled "*Program for the socio-economic development of the Bedouin population for the years 2017-2021"* (February 2017), the Government instructed the MoE to report annually on its progress in achieving the following goals: reducing dropout rates; increasing eligibility for matriculation certificates; reducing gaps in the results of standardized tests; and improving the standard of teaching. It was also instructed to form a plan to deal with violence in schools, to encourage higher education amongst Bedouin pupils and to develop informal education in these areas. These plans were budgeted at 112 Million NIS (31.1 Million USD).

For the construction and refurbishment of classrooms, the Government allocated 236 Million NIS a year (65.5 Million USD) (184 Million NIS (51.1 Million USD) from an existing budget).

The Government defined the need to train teachers from amongst the Bedouin population, in a manner that is culturally sensitive to the needs of the pupils. This program will strive to ensure that, in five (5) years time, at least 80% of the teachers in schools attended by Bedouin pupils have so been trained. Following this purpose, two (2) training centers will be built for educators from the Bedouin population in the Negev (in Rahat and Tel-Sheva).

Additional plans - The MoE launched a five-year plan for the promotion of equality in primary and intermediate education, which is intended to substantially increase the budget of Arab schools. This program includes additional teaching hours for the Arab population with a budget of one Billion NIS (278 Million USD) over five (5) years, and additional substantial resources for enrichment activities (100 Million NIS in 2016 and 188 Million in 2018 - 27.8 and 52.2 Million USD respectively).

In 2014-15, the MoE added a teaching unit to Arab, Druze and Bedouin schools, at a total budget of 38 Million NIS (10.6 Million USD).

Adult and Continuing Education

In order to reduce educational gaps in the adult population, the MoE prioritizes groups that require special support and reinforcement such as immigrants, the uneducated, job seekers, soldiers and prisoners. Educational tracks at different levels are offered,

ranging between basic education, 10th-grade equivalence and 12th-grade equivalence with a high school diploma. Students are assigned to the level that best suits them based on screening tests. In 2017, 41 courses were opened in areas that were selected based on socio-economic criteria.

Regarding older persons, the MoSE runs a project which provides classrooms for older persons within schools. This provides the opportunity both for continuing education and for strengthening intergenerational bonds.

Pupils in Schools By Level of Education

In 2014-2015, there were 971,058 elementary school pupils (including 14,527 pupils in special education schools), 25.5% of which were of the Arab population (including Druze, Bedouins and Circassians), 281,138 junior high school pupils of which 30.6% were of the Arab population and 409,856 high school pupils of which 24.3% belong to the Arab population. In addition, 24.8% of the classrooms in elementary schools, 29.8% of the classrooms in junior high schools, and 23% of the classrooms in high schools are attended by Arab pupils.

Government Resolution No. 959

This resolution allocated 180 Million NIS (50 Million USD) over four (4) years, of which 70 Million NIS (19.5 Million USD) is to be taken from the MoE's existing budget, to formal and informal education, including programs to make higher education accessible and adult education programs, in Druze and Circassian villages.

In addition, it allocated 140 Million NIS (38.9 Million USD), of which 80 Million NIS (22.2 Million USD) is to be taken from the MoE's existing budget, were allocated over the same timeframe for the building of educational infrastructure in these villages, such as new classrooms and kindergartens, refurbishment of existing classrooms and buildings and the removal of health and safety hazards.

Language of Instruction

The language used in schools is either Hebrew (Jewish population) or Arabic (Arab and Druze populations). Parents are entitled to enroll their children in a kindergarten or school of their choice within their local municipality, whether the spoken language

is Hebrew, Arabic or both. The only limitation is that preference in enrolment is given to children who reside within close proximity of the educational institution.

Mixed Schools

In 2016, there were 420 Jewish schools which are also attended by Arab, Bedouin and Druze pupils (in several of these schools the number of Arab pupils exceeds that of the Jewish pupils). Additionally, there are 35 Bedouin schools attended by Jewish pupils, 109 Arab schools attended by Jewish pupils, and four (4) Druze schools attended by Jewish pupils.

In addition, as of 2017, there are seven (7) bilingual schools in Israel. A prominent example may be found in the village "*Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam*," situated equidistant from Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, founded in the early 1970's. Similar bilingual and intercultural educational frameworks operate in Jerusalem, Misgav and Kfar Kara.

Investment in the Education of Students of Ethiopian Descent

Government Resolution No. 1300 (February, 2014) - Instructed Government Ministries to recommend new policies for improved integration of the persons of Ethiopian descent. Following a broad public consultation, during which more than 4,000 responses were considered, a number of basic tenants were defined. These tenants served Government Ministries in the formulation of detailed policy plans.

Government Resolution No. 666 (October 2015) - Focused on the augmentation of the informal education of children in this population. A budget of 6 Million NIS (1.7 Million USD) was allocated for extra-curricular and enrichment activities for children between 2017 and 2019.

The Education of Girls

Admission criteria - The *Compulsory Education Law* makes no distinction between boys and girls. Schools are generally not permitted to have admission criteria and their intake is determined by catchment area alone. This is true of both mixed and single-sex schools.

Schools which offer a special program, authorized by the MoE, may regulate intake in a manner which conforms to the particularity of the school (such as arts and drama, for example). Admission criteria must be directly related to the specialty and are examined and authorized by a designated MoE committee. These admission criteria are examined to ensure that they preserve equality of opportunity and do not create social segregation of any kind. If the demand for the school is larger than the placements available, the school is required to give preference to children from disadvantaged social groups.

Literacy

Israel has a very high rate of literacy. In 2016, of the population aged 15 and over, the percentage of Jewish females that never attended school was 1.6% compared to 0.9% of Jewish males. In addition, the number of persons with only four (4) years or less of formal education has continued to decline, and there has been an improvement in the situation for all segments of the population. The number of persons with 1-4 years of formal education also decreased from 3.1% among the Arab population in 2008 to 2.4% in 2014 and to 2.1% in 2016, and among the Jewish population, from 0.8% in 2008 to 0.6% in 2014 and to 0.5 in 2016. For information and data regarding the degree of formal education possessed by the adult population of Israel during 2006-2014, by population group, gender and age, see Annex II.

Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - Gender Inequality

With regard to sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics, girls remain underrepresented. The Gender Equality Unit in the MoE strives to overcome these differences by means of national programs designed to further girls in the study of mathematics and sciences, gender sensitive training of teachers, gender sensitive formulation of teaching programs and teaching gender equality as part of the core curriculum. National programs to further girls in the study of mathematics have raised the percentage of girls matriculating at the highest attainable level in mathematics to 49% of all students.

The MoSTaS also runs a number of projects to increase gender equality in Science education. The "Future Female Scientists" program, for example, aims to support girls from the periphery that excel in high school science and technology (ninth to twelfth

grades), in order to increase the percentage of women in the exact sciences. The program is conducted in cooperation with the MoE, the AASW and the Academia. Currently, the MoSTaS is funding the studies of 520 female pupils in the program, from 14 local authorities.

The "Pioneering Girls" program, run together with the MoE, aims to encourage female high school pupils in the eighth and ninth grades to choose scientific and technological subjects of study. Activities include lectures by volunteer researchers and visits to the researchers' laboratories. So far, about 40 volunteers have been involved in this program, leading to the exposure of hundreds of female pupils to their work.

Prevention of Early Marriage

The MoE runs group programs for girls from the Arab, Bedouin and Druze communities on prevention of early marriage. These aim to strengthen self-empowerment and develop awareness of equal opportunities and freedom of choice, and providing academic and professional guidance.

In total, 1,276 Arab pupils participated in gender programs, out of which 1,112 were girls.

A program called "preparation for family life" is also taught in schools, including in high schools in the Bedouin population. In higher classes the program highlights values of respect between genders, reducing the phenomenon of polygamy and preventing domestic violence.

An annual seminar is conducted for teachers from the Bedouin community by the MoE on issues of preventing child or early marriage, forced marriage and polygamy.

Drop-Out Rates

Dropout Rate in Jewish and Arab Populations **-** In 2014-2015, the total dropout rate in the Jewish population (grades 7 to 12) stood at 2.1% (compared to 2.8% in 2013) and in the Arab population at 3.5% (compared to 4.7% in 2013). In addition, that year in the Jewish education system, the dropout rate of female minors in the 9^{th}, 10^{th} and 11th grades was 1.1%, 1.2% and 1.5% respectively (compared to 1.9%, 1.7% and

2.3% in 2012-2013), and in the 12th grade the rate of female pupils who dropped out was just 0.5%.

In the Arab education system, although the dropout rates of Arab female minors exceeded those of Jewish female minors, they were still relatively low - 2.3% in the 10^{th} grade, 2.2% in the 11^{th} grade and 0.7% in the 12^{th} grade (compared to 3.1%, 2.7% and 1.1% respectively in 2012-2013). Arab male minors dropped out at a greater rate than did their female counterparts.

Attendance Officers - As of April 2016, there were 623.7 standard positions of attendance officers. In practice there are 679 attendance officers, an increase of 36% compared to 2010. Of these, 435 operate in Jewish localities, 75 operate in the ultra-Orthodox population, 138 in Arab localities, and 25 in Bedouin localities. In addition, there are six (6) attendance officers who are designated to the work with pupils of Ethiopian descent, although many of those who handle the general population also handle this population.

Guidelines and Procedures - In March 2017, the Director General of the MoE published a circular defining the guidelines, procedures and actions to be taken by authorities in order to adhere to the requirements for regular attendance, as set in the *Compulsory Education Law* and in order to implement MoE policies designed to guarantee regular attendance. These emphasize the responsibility of the educational institution to do everything within its power to enable pupils to complete meaningful learning programs that will facilitate their future integration into society.

Eligibility for Matriculation Certificate

61.1% of pupils aged 17 were eligible to receive a matriculation certificate in 2013. This figure increased to 65.5% in 2014. In the Jewish population, in 2013, the rate of pupils aged 17 who were eligible to receive a matriculation certificate was 62.6% - this figure also increased to 67.8% in 2014. In the Arab population, the rate of pupils aged 17 who were eligible to receive a matriculation certificate in 2013 was 55.5% and in 2014 this figure increased to 59.5%.

In 2013, the matriculation success rate of girls was significantly higher than that of boys: 67.4% of girls in the Jewish population and 64.6% of girls in the Arab

population received a matriculation certificate, compared to 58.4% and 45.7% of boys, respectively.

Please note that in 2014 the locality with the highest matriculation rate was the Druze locality of Beit-Dajan with a matriculation rate of 94.4% (an increase of 2.45% compared to 2013). For more details, see Annex II.

Encouraging Achievement Amongst Students at Risk of Dropping Out

The MoE runs 2,500 classes nationwide for pupils at risk of dropping out (via the *"Mabar", "Etgar", "Amatz"* programs). These programs have been implemented in schools with Jewish, Arab, Bedouin and Druze pupils, specifically areas with populations of lower socio-economic status. This year, a new program was developed to empower and support ultra-Orthodox pupils at risk of dropping out.

"Second chance" programs are offered at 110 technological schools and seventeen schools run in conjunction with social services. The MoE also offers educational programs at fourteen emergency centers for children at-risk who were removed from their homes and at two (2) youth prisons, detention facilities, rehabilitation centers and at thirty youth protection institutions that house youth who require shelter and children without legal status in Israel.

Educational, therapeutic and learning services are offered to some 11,000 youth who have dropped out and are not registered at any educational institution. These take place in over 200 youth centers across the country. Young women constitute 30% of the participants in these programs and Arab youth constitute 33% of the participants. Over two-thirds of the youth are from local councils in low socio-economic clusters.

The MoE also offers a range of programs designed to enhance community support for pupils at risk of dropping out of school. These include 402 after-school centers across the country.

Ninety (90) local councils in low socio-economic clusters also run programs within their educational and neighborhood restoration budgets.

The MoE runs a program aimed at comprehensive, multi-disciplinary intervention for children in early childhood educational frameworks. The program, which is run in 119

pre-schools, works to prevent and minimize the harm that may be caused to the developmental potential of toddlers and young children who are at risk due to poor parenting resources and lack of rich interaction from the first months of life. This program operates among all populations, with cultural sensitivity.

Article 15

Accessibility of Sports and Cultural Facilities - Legislative Amendments

The 2010 Amendment to the *Planning and Building (Permit Application, Permit Terms and Fees) Regulations* 5730-1970, discussed above (under Article 11D), apply to any newly constructed buildings, including buildings intended for culture, leisure and sport. These regulations relate to factors such as seats, parking spaces, accessible restrooms, stage accessibility, dressing rooms, accessible showers and restrooms for actors. In addition, the amendment expanded the range of accessibility requirements regarding amplifier systems for the hearing impaired.

In 2013, the *Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities (Accessibility Adjustments for Public Places that are not Buildings) Regulations* 5774-2013, set requirements for playgrounds and other places of recreation, including zoos, beaches, sport facilities, public parks, memorials, and wedding halls.

In 2013, the *Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities (Service Accessibility Adjustments) Regulations* 5773-2013 (the "*Service Accessibility Regulations*") were published. These relate to a wide range of services, including culture, leisure and sports sites. In particular, detailed requirements are prescribed for museums and libraries. Requirements were also set for the display of subtitles at cinemas. Plays and shows are required to be made accessible to a certain extent, for example by means of subtitles and amplifier systems for the hearing impaired. The Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities supervises the implementation of these Regulations.

The MoAaRD has funded an agreement with the Israel Organization for the Disabled for the operation of ten (10) sports groups for persons with disability in the Bedouin population at a cost of 500,000 NIS (approx. 142,857 USD).

Funding to Advance Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Culture and Sport (2014)

Renovation and extension of cultural institutes - In 2014, the Ministry of Culture and Sport (MoCS) approved support funds in the sum of 8.3 Million NIS (2.3 Million USD) for the renovation and extension of cultural institutes, including accessibility adjustments.

5.76 Million NIS (1.6 Million USD) in support funds were approved for visual accessibility adjustments to libraries.

623,700 NIS (173,250 USD) in support funding was approved for several non-profit organizations that operate projects for artists with disabilities.

Sports activities - In 2014, the MoCS provided support funds to a number of associations that encourage and promote athletes with disabilities to a sum of over four Million NIS (1.1 Million USD). In addition, in 2014, dozens of local authorities enjoyed financial support of 5,000 to 25,000 NIS (1,400 to 6,950 USD) for sport activities for persons with disabilities.

In 2014, the Sports Gambling Council, established in accordance with the *Arrangement of Gambling in Sport Law* 5727-1967, allocated 200,000 NIS (55,500 USD) to the IDF Disabled Veterans Organization and the Paralympics Association for equipment. It also allocated funds to sport associations, including associations for persons with disabilities in such sports as biking, bowling, judo, tennis, basketball, swimming, athletics, marksmanship, rugby, etc., to a total sum of 1.9 Million NIS (527,800 USD).

In addition, the Disabled Persons Association received 3 Million NIS (approx. 833,400 USD), the Paralympics Association received around 300,000 NIS (83,400 USD), the Lawn Bowls Association (Petanque) for the Blind received around 300,000 NIS (83,400 USD), and the Sport Association for the Deaf received around 460,000 NIS (127,800 USD).

In addition, the MoCS operates sport programs for children and youth with the aim of identifying athletes with disabilities in schools, so as to integrate them in the sports system, using a budget of one Million NIS (277,800 USD) over five (5) years.

The Status of the Arabic Language

On May 24, 2016, the Knesset marked its first-ever Arabic Language Day in which Arab and several Jewish lawmakers spoke in the plenum in Arabic with simultaneous translation into Hebrew and committee meetings were dedicated to the use of Arabic in the public sphere. Seven (7) Governmental committees focused their efforts that day specifically on advancing Arabic language and culture in Israeli society. Among the topics discussed in these committees was public transportation in the Arab localities, the teaching of Arabic in schools, providing court services in Arabic, the provision of online government services in Arabic, and the provision of health services in Arabic. The special day was the initiative of Joint List MK Youssef Jabareen.

Affordable Access to the Benefits of Scientific Progress

The MoSTaS is dedicated to promoting science and technology in the general public and one of its main goals is to encourage pupils to study these fields. Each year it holds a series of extra-curricula activities aimed at making science more accessible to youth, with special emphasis placed on the inclusion of minority groups. The following are a number of examples:

Promotion of digital literacy - The MoSTaS operates 30 centers throughout the country, especially in outlying areas, as part of a digital literacy project known as "*Lehava*". These centres hold complimentary introductory courses in computers. Seven (7) of these centers are operate in Arab municipalities and four (4) in ultra-Orthodox localities.

Informal education in exact sciences - As of 2016, the MoSTaS offers lateral support to local authorities for encouraging informal education, including research and experiments, in exact sciences and technology. Local authorities ranked in low socio-economic brackets receive priority. In 2016, a projected budget of 30 Million NIS (8.4 Million USD) was approved.

Summer activities - The MoSTaS organizes summer activities in the fields of science and technology in local authorities (25 in 2015, 10 in 2016).

Improving accessibility to the ultra-Orthodox population - The MoSTaS employs a special consultant to tailor activities to this population. It is also carrying out a joint venture with the Jerusalem Development Authority for the provision of classes and training courses in the ultra-Orthodox population.

Israel Science Day - The MoSTaS holds educational activities, including those aimed at minority groups.

Israel Space Agency - The Space Agency carries out educational activities with the goal of encouraging pupils to study space-related fields. For example, in 2015 the Space Agency conducted virtual classes with the participation of 700 classrooms, 400 of them from the Arab population and a "Hoopoe Project" in which a nano satellite was built with groups of pupils from five (5) schools, one (1) of which is of the Arab population. During Israeli Space Week, held in February 2016, 80 schools, 25 of which were from the Arab population, participated in dedicated science activities in a museum the *Eretz Israel* Museum in Tel Aviv-Jaffa.

Educational tenders - Many MoSTaS tenders for educational programs allocate added weight to activity in outlying areas or communities with low socio-economic ranking.

Regional research centers - The MoSTaS provides additional support to regional research and development centers with the aim of establishing scientific research in areas in which the rate of such activities is low. This additional support, in the sum of 13 Million NIS (3.6 Million USD), is currently provided to seven (7) regional research and development centers, two (2) of which operate in Arab localities.