FWF GENDER FACT SHEET - TURKEY

FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 64 of 189 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Gender Inequality Index: 69 of 160 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 130 of 149 countries (WEF 2018)
- Lifetime Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence: 38%
- Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence in the last 12 months: 11%
- Child Marriage: 15%
- Literacy Rate: Female: 93.56% / Male: 98.78%
- Population: 80.8 million
- GDP: USD 851,102 million (2017)
- Official statistics on living wage unavailable. 2017 Turkish Statistical Institute data show the majority of the population cannot afford basic living needs.
  - 21% of individuals are living under the poverty line.
  - This number is 26% for families with children.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Garment industry:
- Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world and the garment industry is Turkey's second largest industry, responsible for a large proportion of total export, with the European Union as the biggest purchaser.
- Although the industry is familiar with international workplace standards and international buyer audits, improvements are still needed in many aspects of its labour conditions.
- Small and medium-sized factories with a wide subcontractor chain dominate the industry, with the working conditions deteriorating throughout the supply chain.
- It is estimated that almost 60% of the total workforce in the industry is unregistered, resulting in workers who are unable to assert their rights to social security, job security, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Syrian refugees in labour force:
- There has been an influx of refugees, primarily from Syria, in recent years.
- Syrians end up in the lowest paid and most precarious segments of the workforce.
- Since they often lack the residence or work permits that would allow them to work legally in Turkey, without any official sources of income they have no choice but to accept working in very hard conditions, particularly in the agricultural and construction sector. Many Syrians also work in Turkey's textile sector.

Gender discrimination:
The results of research conducted by DİSK Research Department (DİSK-AR) in early 2018 points to the serious discrimination in the labour market for women workers.
- The three most important problems for women workers are low wages, unemployment, and unregistered employment.
- An estimated 63.9% of women workers are not content with working life, mainly due to low wages and long working hours.
- Around 92% of women workers are not union members.
- The level of discrimination against women is high, with 23.2% of women discriminated against during the hiring phase.
- An estimated 86% of women workers state that there is no childcare support at the workplace.
- Nearly one-fourth of women are working at precarious jobs.
- In general ‘a woman’s job’ holds a lower status, is temporary, precarious, and unskilled, whereas ‘a man’s job’ tends to be more permanent and secure.

Gender-based violence:
Over many years despite the great efforts shown by government, institutions and most importantly by women's movements:
- Women and girls are still exposed to violence, being abused, trafficked, their access to education and political participation is refused and face many other human rights violations.
- According to some, approximately 40% of women in Turkey have suffered domestic violence.
• A 2011 UN report indicated domestic violence rates were almost twice those in the United States, and ten times higher than in some European countries.

LEGAL CONTEXT

National legislation:
• The Constitution includes provisions related to gender equality, prohibition of discrimination based on sex (Article 10 ‘everyone is equal before the law…’), and equality within marriage (Article 41 family is ‘based on equality between spouses’).

• The Civil Code provisions for gender equality and protection of women include:
  - The legal age of marriage set at 18, though there are exceptions for 16- and 17-year-olds marrying with guardian’s consent (Civil Code, Articles 11, 12, 124, 126, 128).
  - The prohibition of child marriage (Civil code, Article 153). However, child, early, and forced marriage is not defined as a criminal act in Turkey and there are no sanctions for those facilitating a marriage of an individual under minimum age.
  - Equal status within marriage (Civil Code, Article 186 and 188). There are no laws requiring married women to obey their husbands.
  - Sharing of parental authority (Civil Code Article 335).
  - Married and unmarried women also have equal rights as men to choose where to live (Civil Code, Article 186).

• Law No. 6248 provides measures for the Prevention of Violence against Women and the Protection of the Family. However, this law does not criminalise domestic violence as such, and includes no provision for prosecution or punishment of perpetrators (CEDAW, 2016b).

• The Criminal Code does criminalise domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, and sexual harassment. However, women’s rights activists and news reports indicate inadequate enforcement of the law.

• According to Article 74 of the Labour Act, pregnant women workers must not be engaged in work for a total period of sixteen weeks, eight weeks before and eight weeks after delivery.

International legislation:
• Turkey was the first country to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence and Domestic Violence against Women in 2012 and has since passed major legislative changes to prevent violence against women.

• Turkey has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and signed a range of ILO conventions. These include conventions on forced labour, child labour, freedom of association and bargaining. However, some are yet to be ratified and/or current legislation and practice are still in violation of these international texts.

• In fact, the country has been criticised for years by the ILO and the EU for not complying with international standards on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The new Act on Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements was adopted and took effect in 2012, but continues to be problematic when it comes to compliance with ILO standards.

SOURCES
UNFPA ‘Gender Equality - Situation in Turkey’: https://turkey.unfpa.org/en/node/9689