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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Fourth periodic report submitted by Israel under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2016* **

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** The annexes to the present report are available on the Committee's web page.

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Introduction

1. Hereinafter is the Fourth Periodic Report of the Government of the State of Israel, submitted to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in accordance with the requirements of Articles 16–17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter – the “Covenant” or the “CESCR”).
2. Since the submission of our Third Periodic Report many developments relevant to the implementation of the Covenant have taken place. This report provides a comprehensive account of the most significant developments. It also addresses the comments made in the concluding observations by the Committee (E/C.12/ISR/CO/3) dated December 2, 2011.
3. Israeli Non-Governmental Organizations (“NGOs”) were invited to submit comments prior to the compilation of the report, both through direct application, and a general invitation to submit remarks posted on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) website.

General

4. Incorporation of Covenant rights – The fundamental rights protected by the Covenant are effectively protected through legislation, judicial decisions and otherwise. Israel has not enacted any further *basic laws* on economic, social and cultural rights since the submission of our previous report. For recent significant developments in legislation, policy and institutional frameworks, see below.
5. Review and implementation of concluding observations – A joint inter-ministerial team, headed by the Deputy Attorney General (International Law), was established in 2011 in order to further the implementation of the concluding observations of UN *human* rights committees. The work of this inter-ministerial team has brought about several significant changes. For significant examples, see Annex I.
6. Training on the application of the Covenant – With reference to the Committee’s recommendation regarding training programmes for the legal profession and *judiciary*, a wide range of training days on Human Rights Conventions have been held. For details, see Annex I.
7. Independent human rights institution – There are several national institutions that operate in Israel and provide services for the protection of human rights, such as the State Comptroller and Ombudsman, the Equal Employment Opportunities *Commission* (EEOC), the Commission for Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities, the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (AASW) and others.
8. Non-application of the Covenant in the “Occupied Palestinian Territory” – It is Israel’s position that the Covenant is not applicable beyond a State’s national territory. For an elaboration of this position, see our Second Periodic Report, pp. 3–4.

Article 1

9. Self-determination – No change has occurred in this area since the submission of our third periodic report.

Article 2

10. International economic and technical assistance – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) – MASHAV aims to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of populations facing severe development challenges. To this end, it promotes and engages in development cooperation. For details of MASHAV’s extensive activities in 2016, see Annex I.

11. International social security conventions – These agreements maintain the social rights of those who move from one country to the other and prevent the duplication of national insurance contributions.

12. International Cooperation regarding trafficking in persons – see under Article 6; regarding rights of foreign workers, specifically by means of bilateral agreements with their countries of origin – see under Article 6; regarding the preservation of nutritional security pertaining to animal products – see under Article 11B; regarding disease prevention – see under Article 12; in the Scientific and Cultural Fields – see under Article 15.

13. Statistical data on the enjoyment of covenant rights – Data on the progress made in securing the enjoyment of the Covenant rights by all has been included throughout this report.

Article 3

Developments in gender equality – general

Israel recently submitted its sixth periodic report to the CEDAW committee, outlining in detail developments in gender equality legislation. The following are significant highlights

14. Restructuring of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women – Government Resolution No. 2331 (December 14, 2014), “Promoting gender equality and integration of gender thinking”, ordered the restructuring of the AASW and defined its main tasks, including promoting gender equality in the public and private sectors; presenting opinions on gender aspects of legislation, resolutions and budget and creating a knowledge center. Some of the many activities of the AASW are outlined in this report, including in relation to sexual harassment (below); promotion of employment opportunities (Article 6) and promotion of wage equality (Article 7).

15. For details of the AASW’s budget, see Annex II. Note the very significant increase in the 2017 annual budget.

16. Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Government Ministries – the AASW promulgated a Gender Mainstreaming Guide providing guidelines on the implementation of policies for gender equality, such as the examination of plans and budgets from a gender perspective.

17. An Inter-ministerial Team for National Action Plan – an inter-ministerial team was established to formulate an action plan for the advancement of gender equality. This was submitted to the Knesset and the Government in 2013.

18. Gender Mainstreaming in Local Authorities – More than 170 local authorities have enrolled in a plan for gender equality which includes activities regarding work and employment; financial empowerment; advancement of women to key positions; gender-related health issues; prevention of violence against women, and more. The project began in 2017.

19. Establishing a Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality – Under Government Resolution No. 36 (May 26, 2015), the Government established a Ministerial Committee on Social Equality charged with promoting gender equality. For recent examples of the committee’s meetings, see Annex I.

20. 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. For details, see Annex I.

21. Civil Service Targets – In July 2014, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) presented each Government Ministry with individual targets for the promotion of women to senior positions to be reported upon twice a year. The Civil Service Commissioner also distributed operating guidelines for reducing gender wage gaps.

22. Call for research proposals – For details of Ministry of Science, Technology and Space (MoSTaS) calls for research proposals for the advancement of women, see Annex I.

Women in the civil service

23. Israel's sixth periodic report to the CEDAW Committee includes details of developments in the promotion of women in the Civil Service. For details, see Annex I.

Women in the public sphere

24. Israel's sixth periodic report to the CEDAW Committee contains details of the steps taken to contend with incidents involving the exclusion of women from the public sphere. For details, see Annex I. For examples of recent case law, see Annex III.

25. For additional details regarding the promotion of women and women's rights, see Articles 6, 7, 9, 12 and 13.

Article 6

Employment data

26. For data concerning the employment of different populations, including average wages, see Annex II.

The employment service

27. In its previous concluding recommendations, the Committee recommended that Israel take measures to strengthen the Employment Service. We are pleased to report that the Employment Service budget has almost doubled since the submission of our previous report and now operates through a greater variety of means. For details, see Annex II. The following are a number of the main employment programs:

28. "Employment circles" – This program, launched in 2014, aims to facilitate the employment of recipients of income supplement benefits, thus decreasing their *dependency* on benefits. It has led to an impressive reduction in the numbers of recipients of income supplements seeking employment. For details, see Annex I.

29. 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. For details, see Annex I.

30. Training vouchers – These are offered to those eligible, including persons who receive income supplement benefits or unemployment benefits. They may be used for a wide range of courses, from event photography and tour guiding to public *vehicle* driving and accounts management.

Promotion of the Arab population in the labour market

31. Occupational Guidance Centers – In recent years, twenty-one occupational guidance centers serving minority populations have been established, at a total cost of 200 Million NIS (55.6 Million USD). These have served about 17,000 applicants, approx. 10,000 of which have found employment.

32. In 2015, a new center was established in Beit-Hanina, in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. It has provided services to approx. 1,200 residents.

33. Other Placement Services – The Authority for the Economic Development of the Minorities Sector (AEDMS) and the NGO "Kav Mashve" operate career centers for universities candidates from minority populations. 1,017 placements have been made within these programs. Two (2) other NGOs (*Tsofen* and *ITWORKS*) have been selected to assist in placements in hi-tech companies.

34. Additional steps – For the integration of universities graduates from minority populations into the public sector and for financial incentives for businesses that employ

populations with high unemployment and improvements in public transportation, see Annex I.

The promotion of women from minority populations in the labour market

35. In recent years, the integration of Arab women in the labour market has been given significant attention in research and government investment. As a result, the employment rate of Arab women is on the rise. For additional information, see Annex II.

36. Five-year Interministerial Program – Government Resolution No. 4193 (January, 2012) set forth a five-year program for raising employment in minority populations, particularly amongst Arab women, with a budgetary scope of 730 Million NIS (203 Million USD) (approximately 85% of which is committed or being authorized). For details, see Annex I.

37. Day Care Centers in Minority Communities – A new procedure enables communities with a low socioeconomic index to benefit from Government support of up to 100% of the cost of construction of day care centers. Further to Government Resolution No. 4193, more places have been offered to children of Arab women who are employed in part-time positions.

38. “Women of Valor” – This program provides social support for women, particularly from the Arab population, with less than 12 years of education who are seeking employment. For details, see Annex I.

39. Additional steps – For details of a nursing program for Arab women in the South; a loan foundation for small businesses owned by women from minority populations; professional training vouchers, educational programs offered to Arab women and a media campaign to encourage the employment of minorities, see Annex I.

Promotion of the Bedouin population into the labour market

40. A five-year plan for the economic growth and development of the Bedouin population in the Negev was implemented between 2012 and 2016, with a total budget of 1,263 Billion NIS (350.83 Million USD) (Government Resolution No. 3708, September, 2011). This plan included the following employment and training programs:

41. Employment Centers – The first employment center was opened in Hura in 2010. As of September 2017, there are nine (9) centers that provide guidance and placements in all Bedouin localities. For additional data, see Annex I.

42. Reimbursement of Wages – A factory or entrepreneurial business in the industrial, services or tourism fields, which employs at least four (4) new employees from the Bedouin or the ultra-Orthodox Jewish population in the Negev, is entitled to a reimbursement of 15%–20% of these workers’ monthly wages for a period of five (5) years. The employer is also reimbursed for the costs of organized transportation to and from the workplace, to a total of 3,000 NIS (U.S. \$811) per worker, annually.

43. Additional steps – For details of vocational training, the construction of industrial parks in Bedouin localities, training for local authority officials and others; programs to encourage entrepreneurship; and improvements in public transport, see Annex I.

Promotion of persons of Ethiopian descent in the labour market

44. There has been a significant increase in the employment rates of people of Ethiopian descent, such that they are now similar to those of the general population – 65.3% compared to 64.2% of the general population, although the average wage remains lower than average.

45. Employment centers – The Ministry of Education (MoE), together with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), have initiated a four (4) year program to promote employment by providing education and training, with a total budget of 15 Million NIS (4.2 Million USD). As of June 2017, there are nine (9) such employment centers specially geared for the needs of the Ethiopian population.

46. Additional steps – For information on vocational training; placement of university and college graduates; and promoting the employment of women of Ethiopian descent, see Annex I.

Promotion of persons with disabilities into the labour market

47. Israel's initial report concerning the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), submitted in May 2017, contains a detailed account of the steps that have been taken in this regard. For significant highlights concerning affirmative action by large employers, centers that provide support for employers of persons with disabilities (PWD) and more, see Annex I.

Promotion of senior citizens into the labour market

48. The Committee for the Integration of Senior Citizens into Employment and the Community – This inter-ministerial sub-committee was appointed in August 2013, following the establishment of the Strategic Committee for the Aging of the Population.

49. Government Resolution No. 834 (December 2015) – Outlines steps for the integration of senior citizens into employment. Ongoing programs include “The Experience-Required” Program. This includes a job placement website adapted to senior citizens and a call center that offers assistance in all aspects of job seeking. The program also refers job seekers to workshops, including computer skills. It offers dozens of lectures and workshops on preparing for retirement.

50. Media Campaign – During August 2015, a media campaign seeking to challenge stereotypes presented the benefits of employing senior citizens.

51. Additional steps – For details on employment centers for senior citizens, integration of senior citizens into the public services, entrepreneurship programs and corporate responsibility, see Annex I.

Employment programs run by the ministry of labour, social affairs and social services

52. (The MoLSAaSS) runs several employment programs aimed at specific populations, including women, young families at risk, victims of violence, etc. It also runs programs to help employed people escape the cycle of poverty. For details, see Annex I.

Legal safeguards to protect workers from unfair dismissal

53. This has been discussed in our previous reports. In addition, 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. For additional details on the requirement to conduct a hearing, see Annex I

54. Enforcement – For recent data on the enforcement of the Prior Notice for Dismissal and Resignation Law 5761-2001, see Annex II.

Article 7

Minimum wage

55. The legal framework governing the minimum wage has been outlined in our previous reports.

56. Increase in minimum wage – Following agreements in late 2014 and early 2015 between the Presidium of Business Organizations and the General Federation of the Trade Unions (“Histadrut”), which were later anchored in legislation, the minimum wage in Israel has increased incrementally from 4,300 NIS to 5,300 NIS (1,195 and 1470 USD respectively). For additional details, and information on minimum wage for youth, see Annex II.

57. **Persons with disabilities** – In its previous concluding observations, the distinguished Committee recommended that the minimum wage be fully applicable to PWD, whilst ensuring that this not result in the reduction of employment opportunities. For information on this issue please see Israel's third periodic report (section 102). An additional plan defines special provisions for PWD that are recognized as being in the process of rehabilitation (rehabilitée). These are persons that have been evaluated to have less than 81% of the regular work capacity in the same job and workplace. These persons are employed without a worker-employer relationship, yet they receive part of their rights under labour laws which employees are entitled to, such as a certain amount of remuneration (occupational remuneration) and are provided with certain benefits given to other workers such as days of leave, sick days, travel expenses, and maternity leave.

58. Apart from these exceptions (i.e. rehabilitées and persons with reduced work capacity), PWD are entitled to the same rights as any other employee, and must be compensated with a suitable wage that is at least the minimum wage. Failure to pay minimum wage, or if applicable adjusted minimum wage, constitutes an administrative violation which is subject to a financial sanction of 35,000 NIS (9,162 USD) and in appropriate cases prosecution of the violator. The violator is liable to a penalty of up to one (1) year imprisonment or a criminal fine of 226,000 NIS (59,162 USD).

59. For recent data, see Annex I.

60. Enforcement – For recent data on the enforcement of the minimum wage, see Annex II.

Conditions for workers

61. Conditions for workers, including overtime, paid and unpaid leave have been discussed in our previous reports. The following are a number of updates.

62. Enhancing the Enforcement of Labour Laws Law 5772-2011 – This law established administrative fines for the violation of labour laws and imposed direct responsibility for certain workers' rights on the recipients of security, cleaning and catering services provided by contractors. For details, see Annex I.

63. Prohibition of Receiving Collateral from an Employee 5772-2012 – This law prohibits an employer from receiving security or collateral from an employee as a condition for her/his employment or to guarantee continued employment. It also applies to temporary employees and those employed via a contracting company.

64. Amendment to the Foreign Workers Law 5761-1991 – A 2017 amendment directs the making of regulations to establish the different methods by which foreign workers may be paid. It also authorizes the Ombudswomen for Foreign Workers Rights to revoke a permit if an indictment has been filed for a serious offense which implies that the employer is not worthy of a permit. For details of both amendments, see Annex I.

65. For recent data relating to the enforcement of working conditions, see Annex II; for recent case law relating to the working conditions of care-workers, see Annex III.

Reconciliation of family and personal life

66. Regulations for Promoting the Integration and Advancement of Women in Employment and Adapting the Workplace to Women's Needs 5774-2013 – The Promoting the Integration and Advancement of Women in Employment and Adapting the Workplace To Women's Needs Law 5768-2008, empowers the MoLSAaSS to grant financial awards to employers who encourage the integration and promotion of women in the workplace. The Regulations set out criteria for the granting of awards, such as the creation of official employer policy on integration of women and work-family balance, policy on pregnant working women, training of women and career paths for women.

67. Parental Hour – A 2017 amendment to the Women's Employment Law 5714-1954 extends eligibility to a shorter working day during the first four (4) months after maternity leave to women who do not work full-time, as specified. An additional amendment

provides that the shorter working day can be used alternately by the father and the mother, the designated parent within a surrogacy process or an adoptive parent.

68. In July 2015, the CSC approved a shorter working day for a parent of a child up to one (1) year-old for men whose spouse is on maternity leave.

69. Maternity Leave – For updates with regard to maternity leave, see Article 10 below.

70. For information on steps taken to promote a better work-life balance in the public sector, see Annex I.

Equal pay for work of equal value

71. Israel's recent sixth periodic report to the CEDAW committee included a detailed presentation of this issue. Below are a number of the most significant developments.

72. Male and Female Workers (Equal Pay) Law 5756-1996 – A 2014 amendment requires public bodies that report on employees' salaries to include a gender salaries account. An additional amendment from the same year authorizes Labour Courts to award monetary compensation for a violation of the law even if no monetary damage has been incurred.

73. Gender Salary Gaps Survey – In 2015–2016, the EEOC at the MoLSAaSS conducted a survey which examined prevailing perceptions of employers regarding gender salary gaps. For some examples and data regarding gender gaps in salary, see Annex I.

Programs to promote gender equality in wages – EEOC

74. For data regarding individual complaints of discrimination in the workplace, see Annex I. For significant case law following EEOC civil actions, see Annex III.

75. “Of Equal Worth” – This was a 2012–2015 joint venture of the EEOC and three (3) different NGOs (“Shatil”, the Israel Women Network and “Adva”), funded by the EU, that aimed to reduce gender pay gaps. One of the products developed by the venture is the “Salary Gaps Calculator”, an innovative tool for gender-related analysis of an organization's pay data. For details, see Annex I.

76. MoSTaS training kit – In late 2015, the MoSTaS, in cooperation with Google, launched a training kit on implicit and unconscious gender biases in the workplace. This can be downloaded from the Ministry's website.

Sexual harassment

77. This issue has been discussed in previous reports. The following are a number of significant updates.

78. A National Plan – 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. For details, see Annex I.

79. Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law 5758-1998 – A number of amendments have been made to this law, including to the statute of limitations for a sexual harassment lawsuit, to the ability to claim compensation without proof of damages and to the definition of positions of authority or dependency. For details, see Annex I.

80. Prevention of Sexual Harassment Regulations (Amendment) 5774-2014 – This obliges institutions of higher education to take steps to prevent sexual harassment. Institutions with 2,000 students or more are also obliged to appoint two (2) trained persons responsible for this issue.

81. A Voluntary Code for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment – In 2016, the Association of Rape Crisis Centers, in collaboration with the MoEI and the Standards Institution published a “Voluntary Code for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work”, elaborating on issues that the law does not address.

82. Insurance Indemnity – In May 2014, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) issued a binding procedure according to which insurance companies may not grant indemnity to a defendant for costs incurred by sexual harassment.

83. Activities of the AASW – For details, see Annex I.

84. Enforcement Statistics – For data on the enforcement of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law, see Annex II.

Health and safety at work

85. A long list of legislation and regulations ensure safety and health in the workplace. For significant measures that have recently been added to these frameworks, see Annex I.

86. For data relating to the activity of the MoLSAaSS Labour Inspection Service, see Annex II.

Article 8

Trade unions

87. Since the submission of our third periodic report, dozens of new trade unions have been established, some in new fields such as the communications and insurance industries. This increase follows a number of judicial decisions in which courts ruled that employees should not be prohibited from unionizing, increased competition between labour unions and increased awareness amongst employees of their rights.

88. Freedom to form a trade union – No change has occurred since the submission of our third periodic report.

89. Individual Freedom to join a trade union – This issue has been discussed in Israel's previous reports. In 2009, the Collective Agreements Law 5717-1957 was amended in order to impose criminal liability on an employer who refrained from hiring a person, worsened terms of employment or dismissed an employee because of membership, non-membership or discontinuance of membership in a trade union.

90. Foreign Workers According to the Histadrut constitution, any worker over the age of 18, who is a civilian or resident or migrant worker who is lawfully employed in Israel, and which undertakes to accept the Histadrut Constitution, its principles and the decisions of its institutions, may become a member of the Histadrut. Since some of the asylum seekers (Visa 2(A)(5)) have no prohibition and/or restrictions and are currently allowed to work, it was decided that asylum seekers that hold a valid permit of this kind, will be accepted as members of the Histadrut. The Histadrut's Tel Aviv-Jaffa District established a department for foreign workers that serve as a center for assistance and professional protection for this community. For a recent judicial decision on this matter, see Annex III.

91. Independence of trade unions – This has been discussed in Israel's previous reports. No change has occurred since the submission of the third periodic report.

Collective agreements

92. In 2009, the Collective Agreements Law 5717-1957 was amended in order to require employers to negotiate with new trade unions, although there is no obligation to reach an agreement with regard to a new collective agreement. For details, see Annex I.

93. New Collective Agreements – Significant collective agreements are signed from time to time between employers, employees and trade unions. For data regarding collective agreements that have been recently registered, see Annex II.

The right to strike

94. No change has occurred in this area since the submission of the third periodic report.

95. Public Services – For additional information concerning “public services” in this regard, see Annex I.

96. For data concerning strikes, industrial sanctions, persons involved and working days lost, see Annex II. For a recent ruling regarding the constitutional nature of the right to strike, see Annex III.

Article 9

Social security coverage

97. This issue has been discussed in our previous reports. The following branches of social security are all covered: health care, sickness, old age, unemployment, employment injury, family and child support, maternity, disability and survivors and orphans. For significant amendments that have been made to entitlement to social security since our last report, see Annex I.

98. 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. For additional information, see Annex I.

99. General disability pension – Significant amendments have been introduced in this field, among them Amendment No. 201 to the National Insurance Law of January 2018, determines that as of January 2018, the disability pension will be gradually increased and as of January 2021, the annual increase will be in attached to the rate of increase of the national average salary (on January 1 of each year). For additional information, see Annex I.

Periodic review of benefits

100. Section 1 of the National Insurance Law requires that the “basic amount” defined in the law, which is the basis for the calculation of NII allowances, is updated in January of every year. Since 2006, this is done in accordance with the rise in the consumer index over the previous year. Additionally, the NII frequently assesses the scope of allowances in light of changes in the poverty line and the effect of allowances on overcoming poverty. Recently, the Economic Efficiency Law (Legislation Amendments for Achieving the Budget Goals for 2019), made some significant changes in the area of long-term care benefits, for additional information, see Annex I. For recent changes made as a consequence of increases in minimum wage, including the restructuring of the entitlement to long-term care benefits in order to enable the same number of nursing hours, even given an increase in the minimum wage and the cost of care, see Annex I.

Non-contributory social assistance

101. As a rule, all residents are obliged to pay national insurance fees, including those who are not working. Exceptions to this rule include married women and widows who do not work outside of the home. This latter group is nevertheless entitled to the great majority of the allowances, except those intended for employees, without the accumulation of privileges attached to employment.

102. Moreover, certain allowances are financed by the MoF and are not dependent on the payment of national insurance payments. These include income support, alimony, old age and survivors’ benefits for elderly new immigrants, benefits given to those who affected by ringworm, polio, acts of hostility, and more.

Private social security

103. There are no private social security schemes in Israel.

Equal enjoyment of pension rights

104. Entitlement to Pension – There is no distinction between the enjoyment of pension rights between men and women. Note that in the previous generation of Pension Funds that

were closed in 1995 women have the ability to withdraw their pensions at the age of 62 rather than 67 in the existing Pension Funds.

105. Retirement Age and Old-Age Pension Benefits – According to the Retirement Age Law 5763-2004, the retirement age, and consequently the age of entitlement to old-age pension benefits, is 67 for men and 62 for women. The Law set a mechanism which was supposed to raise the retirement age for women, incrementally, to the age of 64. In 2017, the implementation of this mechanism was made conditional on the submission of the Minister of Finance's recommendation to the Knesset Finance Committee, following the work of a professional, interdisciplinary Public Committee. According to an amendment made in 2017 to the Retirement Age Law, the Knesset Committee is to address these recommendations no later than February 2018.

106. Regardless of these developments, the “entitlement age” for women, that is to say, the age at which a woman is entitled to an old age pension regardless of income or qualifying period, is being raised, incrementally to equal that of men (70 years).

107. No distinction is made between men and women regarding qualifying periods or amounts.

108. For details of the increase in the old-age pension benefit and for the reduction in the qualifying period required for a “seniority supplement” to this pension, see Annex I. For judicial decisions, see Annex III.

Social security entitlements of non-nationals

109. The National Insurance Law and the National Health Insurance Law apply to Israeli residents. Section 2 of the National Insurance Law defines who is not considered a resident in this regard.

110. 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.

111. For information on the right to health services – See below, under Article 12; for International social security conventions – see above under Article 2; for examples of recent relevant Court rulings, see Annex III.

Expiration of residency status

112. The Committee expressed concern about the revocation of permanent residency permits held by residents of the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. In this context we wish to clarify that permanent residency can expire when the person leaves Israel for a period longer than seven (7) years or acquires citizenship or residency in another country. Expiration of residency is relevant only with regard to residence abroad for a period longer than seven (7) years, rather than a temporary stay abroad. Moreover, a person can regain residency, if he or she maintains an affinity to Israel despite life abroad, if he or she lived in Israel for two (2) consecutive years, and if certain conditions were met (this however does not relate to the revocation of residency due to terrorist activity).

113. The following statistics relate to residents of eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem whose residency expired: 2017 – 22 persons (10 women and 11 men), 2016 – 53 persons (27 women and 26 men), 2015 – 89 persons (37 women and 52 men), 2014 – 69 persons; 2013– 93 persons and in 2012 there were 114 expirations of residency. As can be seen, these figures are extremely small.

114. For recent judicial rulings on this matter, see Annex III.

Article 10

The right to enter a marriage with full and free consent

115. This issue has been detailed in Israel's previous reports. The following are significant updates.

116. 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. For details, see Annex I. For data, see Annex II.

117. Police Enforcement of the Marital Age Law – The Police deal with violations of the Marital Age Law. Police officers hold periodic meetings with representatives of the PIBA to ensure that they receive the relevant information. In addition, all police districts are given lectures on the Law's implementation and enforcement.

118. Prosecution according to the Marital Age Law – In May 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.

119. Also, 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. For details regarding these guidelines, see Annex I. For recent case law, see Annex III.

120. Eliminating Polygamy – The Government recently reaffirmed its commitment to tackling this phenomenon (Government Resolution No. 2345, January, 2017). For details, including the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee, an Attorney General guideline on prosecution policy and educational endeavours, see Annex I.

121. Measures to prevent the phenomena of women whose husbands refuse to grant a divorce ("Agunot") – A number of important additional measures have been taken in this regard. For details, see Annex I.

Citizenship and entry into Israel law (temporary provision) 5763-2003

122. In its concluding observations to Israel's last periodic report the Committee expressed concern with the process of family reunification for foreign spouses. In January 2012, for the second time, an extended panel of the Supreme Court scrutinized and upheld, by a majority, the constitutionality of the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Provision) 5763-2003 (H.C.J. 466/07, 544/07, 830/07, 5030/07 *MK Zehava Galon et. al. v. The Minister of Interior et. al.*). The Law was extended several times and it is currently valid until June 30, 2018.

123. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court has stated that there is room to consider some changes in policy, given the length of time that has passed since the enactment of the Law and the difficulties that it has caused. In light of this, the Minister of Interior initiated a number of changes aimed at providing humanitarian relief. For example, the Advisory Committee to the Minister may now determine, in relevant humanitarian circumstances, to recommend a permit valid for two (2) years, as opposed to just one (1) year. In 2016, The Minister of Interior decided to approve the upgrading of the status of persons who hold staying permits in Israel and their family reunification requests that were filed until 2003 were approved, so they and their minor children will receive an A/5 permit to reside in Israel. This upgrade is subject to several tests, among them: proving the existence and sincerity of the marriage, center of life test and lack of criminal and security prevention). So far 1,600 persons received such an upgraded permit, which entitles its owner to national insurance and health insurance.

124. See Article 12 below for details of the health insurance arrangement established in 2012 for the benefit of persons who hold temporary permits for stay in Israel pursuant to the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law.

Parental custody in divorce and child support

125. In recent years, the recommendations of two (2) public committees were submitted to Ministers of Justice – one regarding parental responsibility in divorce and the other regarding child support. These recommendations have yet to evolve into law, although there have been a growing number of judicial decisions that determine joint, equal or shared custody. However, in most cases, the main guardian remains the woman. For a recent precedential case on these issues, see Annex III.

Tender years doctrine

126. In its concluding observations, the Committee expressed concern that, in the case of a divorce, custody of children up to the age of six (6) is given to mothers. To clarify, where there is a conflict between parents, Family Matters Courts and Religious Courts are obliged to consider the best interests of child as a primary consideration. According to the law, both parents share equal parental responsibility towards their children. However, the law enshrines a “tender years” presumption whereby children under the age of six (6) should be in custody of the mother, unless the court considers that there are special circumstances to rule otherwise.

127. In December 2011, a public committee recommended cancelling this presumption and provided a number of guidelines to be considered in determining custody and contact issues, including the physical and emotional wellbeing of the child and domestic violence. These recommendations were adopted by the former Minister of Justice, and were presented in a governmental bill, but are still publicly debated.

Social services for families

128. More than half of the cases known to social services departments are family-related. Most therapeutic intervention is provided by the family’s social worker, although where needed, the family is referred to a specialized social worker. For details, see Annex I.

Equality of access to childcare

129. Lower Contribution to the Cost of Day-care centers – Following the recommendations of a Public Committee on poverty in 2013, as outlined below, the MoLSSaSS significantly lowered the contribution paid by parents of poor families for the day-care of toddlers at-risk. For details, see Annex I.

130. Day-care centers in minority communities – For increased Government support of day-care centers in minority localities, see Article 6 above.

Social services for older persons in the community

131. Social services that enable older persons to remain in their normal living environment for as long as possible include day centers, social programs, enrichment centers and a “Supportive Community” program which includes a hot-line, health care services and a community counsellor. For details, see Annex I.

132. For further social services, including a Government call center, see below under “Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Older Persons”.

Social services for people with disabilities

133. A detailed up-to-date account of the services that enable PWD to live independently within the community was presented in Israel’s initial report concerning the implementation of the CRPD, submitted in May 2017. For significant highlights of the main developments since the submission of our third periodic report, see Annex I.

Health care

134. For details of the accessibility of health facilities, see Article 12.

Maternity protection

135. This issue has recently been presented in detail in Israel's sixth periodic report to the CEDAW committee. It has also been discussed in our previous reports. The following are significant relevant updates.

136. Extension of maternity leave – A 2010 amendment to the Women's Employment Law extended maternity leave to 26 weeks, of which 14 remained with payment and 12 without. An employer is prohibited from firing an employee during this extended period. A further amendment, made in March 2017, extended maternity leave for which parental allowance is paid from 14 to 15 weeks.

137. Parental leave – A father may now take paid parental leave for a period of one or more weeks (instead of a minimum of three (3) weeks). Furthermore, he may take seven (7) days of parental leave simultaneously with his wife, according to the provisions of the Law. Also, according to Amendment No. 60 of 2018 to the Women's Employment Law, a mother that gave birth to more than one child in a multiple delivery is entitled to extend her maternity leave by three (3) additional weeks for every child that was born in that delivery (from the second one). A further period is given to the spouse of such a mother. For details, see Annex I.

138. An amendment to the National Insurance Law 5755-1955 in 2016 provides that an employee whose wife is self-employed is entitled to parental leave in lieu of his wife. Note that a recent amendment allows for the granting of certain social rights to those holding temporary status (A/5, A/2, A/2, A/4) without the previously required waiting period of 183 days.

139. Additional amendments – For details with regard to the protection of pregnant women against dismissal, absence from work of a spouse following birth, maternity leave in the event that the infant is hospitalized and absence from work due to fertility treatment, see Annex I.

140. National Insurance – For information on national insurance benefits given in the event of birth, and during maternity leave, see Article 9.

141. Foreign workers who are pregnant – Subsequent to a High Court of Justice (HCJ) ruling on this matter, Population and Immigration Authority (PIBA) published in 2013 an amended "Procedure regarding Pregnant Foreign Workers" whereby a foreign worker who is legally employed and pregnant is entitled to remain in Israel in accordance with the provisions of the procedure. A female worker who gave birth during her first 63 months of employment may choose either to leave Israel with the child and then to return and continue working in Israel, or to prolong her stay in Israel, with the child, up to 63 months from having first received a B1 visiting visa. For details on this ruling, see Annex III.

Paid employment of children

142. This issue has been presented in our previous reports. The following are significant amendments that have been legislated since the submission of our third periodic report.

143. Youth Employment Law 5713-1953 – As mentioned in our previous reports, this law prohibits the employment of youth under the age of 15. A number of amendments augmented the protection afforded to youth. See Annex I.

144. Additional provisions for the protection of youth in the workplace – See Annex I.

145. Enforcement – In the summer of 2014, the MoEI conducted a nationwide enforcement campaign relating to the enforcement of youth labour laws, with special emphasis on the employment of youth in event halls. In 2015, the MoEI conducted a publicity campaign aimed at employers of youth in order to reinforce compliance with the law. For data on the enforcement of the *Youth Employment Law*, see Annex II.

Economic, social and cultural rights of older persons

146. There are currently almost 940,000 older persons (ages 65 and over) in Israel, approximately 11.1% of the overall population. Over 95% reside in the community.

147. Government Call Center – The Ministry of Social Equality (MoSE) runs a call center which provides information and advice in all matters relating to socio-economic rights of older persons. For examples, see Annex I.

148. The call center also provides assistance in cases of violence against older persons, maintains contact with the welfare authorities and the Police, relaying information, including regarding possible economic exploitation.

149. Public Service for Older Persons – A 2017 amendment to the Senior Citizens Law 5750-1989 mandates that a public service for which there is a queue (for example, services given in the post office, government offices etc.) shall be offered to a person above the age of 80, upon request, without the need to queue.

150. For information on the promotion of employment amongst older persons, social security benefits, social services, food aid, health services and continuing education, see Articles 6, 9, 10, 11B, 12 and 13.

Programs against abuse, abandonment, negligence and ill-treatment of older persons

151. Social Services – Approx. 55 local authorities (out of 255) have units dedicated to handling mistreatment of the older persons. They specialize in locating and identifying victims of abuse, treating them and other family members and handling offenders. In 2014, 5,318 older persons were treated in these units. Social workers in all authorities may refer older persons to immediate protection in respite care or, or if need be, to nursing homes.

152. For details on training in the identification of older persons who are victims of abuse, inheritance planning, personal security in the community, the work of NGOs in this field and for data regarding criminal proceedings, see Annex I.

Economic and social rights of asylum seekers

153. General – Asylum seekers who are granted refugee status receive a temporary residency permit and are eligible to all social rights.

154. Social security – Asylum seekers whose requests for asylum are under deliberation, and are employed, are entitled to rights in three (3) insurance branches, like other non-residents. See Article 9 for further details.

155. Health – For health services offered to asylum seekers, see under Article 12.

156. Education – The Compulsory Education Law 5709-1949 applies to every child residing in the country, including children of asylum seekers. An Inter-Governmental Committee headed by the Director General of PIBA is currently examining the need to broaden the social rights of asylum seekers.

157. Employment – Complaints regarding employment of asylum seekers are brought before the Police or the relevant enforcement authority. Violations of employment law are enforced. Legal aid is provided without charge in cases in which there are indications of trafficking or forced labour, etc.

158. Family reunification of non-residents – Current PIBA policy is not to grant separate work and stay permits to spouses of temporary foreign workers (similar to tourists and illegals) currently in Israel, as this has been found to encourage illegal overstay. Note, that foreign workers receive a temporary stay visa, conditional on the understanding that they are not entitled to settle permanently.

159. A foreign worker may of course marry an Israeli citizen. The citizenship procedure is set out in PIBA procedures published on their website. During this process, the foreign worker is entitled to a temporary stay permit.

160. With regard to refugees who have been recognized as such by the Minister of interior, requests for family reunification with a spouse and minor children are brought before the Director General of the PIBA, alongside a recommendation from an inter-ministerial advisory committee.

Criminalization of domestic violence

161. Domestic violence is criminalized in Israel. For details, see Annex I. For statistics regarding criminal enforcement, see Annex II.

Combating domestic violence

162. Since the submission of our previous report, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Law 5751-1991 was amended to allow the Court to extend the validity of a protection order for up to an additional year, for special reasons.

163. Police reviews – The Police conduct several periodic reviews of the treatment of domestic violence offences each year, in every police district and in several stations. Ongoing discourse with leaders of minority groups is also held, focused on improving accessibility and encouraging women to approach the Police.

164. Placement of social workers in police stations – This project aims to strengthen cooperation between the Police and welfare authorities, provide initial assistance to victims and to prepare appropriate intervention and assistance programs in advance, including risk assessment. For details, see Annex I.

165. Centers for Prevention and Assistance – For data regarding the activities of these centers, see Annex I.

166. Additional steps – An inter-ministerial committee on preventing domestic violence was established and its recommendations considered. For details, see Annex I. For details of rehabilitation hostels for abusive men, prevention programs for youth and the obligation of public health officials to report suspicious incidents, see Annex I.

The support and rehabilitation of victims

167. The MoLSAaSS offers a range of services for families coping with violent situations. These include shelters, transitional apartments, financial grants, assistance in housing, an emergency hotline, child and youth emergency centers and other services for children. For details of these programs and relevant data, see Annex I.

Raising public awareness and training

168. Raising awareness amongst health care professionals – In 2000, the MoH established a designated staff department, the National Social Work Service, which is responsible for the promotion of the identification of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and for the quality of care provided to the victims. Many training days on this subject have been given over the years.

169. Raising public awareness – For the important work of the AASW in raising public awareness, including annual awareness campaigns and a state-sponsored event held in the President's residence, see Annex I.

170. Police training – Training courses are given to a wide-range of police officers. For details, see Annex I.

Trafficking in persons

171. In its concluding observations to Israel's last periodic report the Committee expressed concern that Israel ensure the full and effective implementation of its Anti-Trafficking Law. Recent years have shown that Israel has continued to make remarkable progress in its efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons. The United States' State Department has ranked Israel in Tier 1 for seven (7) consecutive years – an important external evaluation that Israel is fully meeting the minimal standards required for the eradication of TIP.

172. As a result of combined and sustained efforts, there has been a significant decrease in the number of cases of trafficking in persons for the purpose of prostitution, which nowadays rarely appears in its "classic form". However, new patterns of trafficking, where violence and withholding of passports are not present and victims are seemingly not

frightened or subjected to control of another person, pose challenges which are being addressed.

173. For a number of examples of the many measures employed to combat all forms of trafficking in persons, see Annex I.

174. Investigations, prosecutions and convictions – Data demonstrates a decline in the volume of cases of trafficking in persons for the purpose of prostitution, reflecting the success of the combined efforts of all parties in previous years. See Annex II.

175. Precedential Judicial decisions – For recent case law, see Annex III.

Assistance and protection to victims

176. Israel provides services to assist victims of trafficking, none of which are contingent upon cooperation with law enforcement. These include medical services, including psychiatric care; legal aid; shelters; work permits; and a forfeiture fund which allocates budgets for rehabilitation and protection of victims, and to bodies providing victim aid and combatting trafficking. For details, see Annex I.

Article 11

A. The right to the continuous improvement of living conditions

Poverty line

177. The definition and calculation of the national poverty line has been discussed in our previous reports. There have been no changes in this regard.

178. Each year the NII publishes a report on the extent of poverty and social gaps. Recent data reveals improvements in the measures of inequality and poverty. These are attributable to the changes in policy 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 – primarily the increase in the minimum wage and in child and older person benefits. Increased rates of employment are also a contributing factor. For recent data, see Annex II.

National action plan to combat poverty

179. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee recommended that the State party establish a comprehensive policy to address the problem of poverty. We are pleased to report that this matter has been given serious attention. In 2013, the Minister of MoLSAaSS appointed a broad public committee to formulate recommendations for a national action plan to combat poverty and create equality of opportunity. The following are some main points of the national plan as implemented by different Ministries:

180. The National Insurance Institute (NII) – Following the recommendations of the public committee, the NII amended the income test for income supplement benefits; increased income supplement benefits for older persons; created a savings account for every child; and created a heating benefit. For details, see Annex I.

181. The MoLSAaSS – In 2015, the MoLSAaSS founded a poverty response program which operates in 94 localities with a low socio-economic index, at a cost of some 100 Million NIS per year (27.8 Million USD). This program includes two (2) sub-programs, which are based on poverty-conscious social work and inclusive practices. For details and data regarding the programs, see Annex I.

182. The MoF – As reported in our third periodic report, the Increasing Participation in the Work Force and Reducing Social Gaps (Negative Income Tax) Law 5768-2007, initiated an “earned income tax credit” (EITC – that is, negative income tax) as an innovative means for reducing poverty amongst working families and raising participation in the workforce. Since the submission of our third periodic report, a number of amendments have broadened the eligibility for EITC. For details, see Annex I.

183. For information relating to the promotion of employment amongst disadvantaged populations, including professional training vouchers – see Article 6; for information relating to developments in the eligibility for public housing, see Article 11D.

B. The right to adequate food

The national council for food security

184. Following the Committee's previous concluding observations, we are pleased to update regarding the legislation of *The National Council for Food Security Law 5771-2011*, which aims "to promote nutritional security amongst the residents of Israel, in the spirit of human dignity and the principles of equality, justice and fairness..." and established the National Council for Food Security which advises the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Social Services in this regard. For details of the mandate of the National Security Council and its recent activity, see Annex I.

Food aid

185. The MoLSAaSS provides support for programs for older people, community programs and daytime centers which include meals. Hot meals are provided to the homes of older people, specifically Holocaust survivors, in conjunction with the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. For details, see Annex I.

The quality and safety of animal and plant produce

186. For details, see Annex I.

Food waste

187. Following a survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoAARD) concerning food loss at the production stage, the Ministry is currently reviewing policy tools, prior to the adoption of a strategic plan. For details of this and other ongoing projects, see Annex I.

The dissemination of nutritional principles

188. The Nutrition Department in the Ministry of Health (MoH) works in several ways to disseminate knowledge of healthy nutrition, including amongst disadvantaged populations. For details, see Annex I.

189. Food in schools – The new Supervision on Food Quality and Proper Nutrition in Education Institutions Law 5774-2014 authorizes the Minister of Education to set terms and conditions regarding the food and nutritional values of foods sold in education institutions. The Law also requires food suppliers to publish the nutritional composition of foods sold within the institution.

190. Additional guidelines – new guidelines have been adopted or updated in order to ensure or encourage proper nutrition: Nutrition and Food in Summer Camps for Children and Youth (2016); MoH Protocol on Healthy Food in Hospitals (2017); and MoH Circular on Healthy Food in Mental Health Institutions (2012).

Access of disadvantaged populations to food

191. Allocation of Reused Water for Agricultural Purposes – In 2014, transitional regulations were published that give priority to farmers from among the Arab population in the allocation of reused water for agricultural purposes, at a subsidized price (Water (Criteria for the Allocation of Water for Agriculture) (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 5774-2014).

192. Allocation of Quotas for Milk and Egg Production – for information on Quotas for Milk and Egg Production, including on allocation of such Quotas to breeders of the Arab, Druze or Circassian populations, see Annex I.

193. Simplifying the Procedure for Proving Ownership Rights of Private Land for the Purposes of Subsidies and Allocation of Resources – Allocation of water for agriculture, quotas for milk and egg production and agricultural subsidies require the applicant to demonstrate legal ownership of the relevant land. Farmers from the Arab population often face difficulty in doing so since the transfer of rights is often not updated in the Land Registry. In 2015, the MoAaRD published a procedure aimed at facilitating proof of ownership. The procedure is presently implemented with reference to a long list of subsidies (rural development, land preservation, the encouragement of capital investments in agriculture, natural disasters, pasture and more) and in relation to allocations of water, milk and egg production quotas.

194. Efforts to eradicate the Brucellosis Disease in the Negev – A number of Government Ministries embarked upon a multi-year project (2014–2019) for the reduction of Brucellosis Disease in sheep and goat herds in the Negev, in the wake of increased human contraction. For details, see Annex I.

C. The right to water

Adequate and affordable access to safe water

195. 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 and economic regulation which sets cost-based rates in order to ensure the funding of required infrastructure investments. For details, see Annex I.

196. Desalination – Five (5) large-scale seawater desalination facilities and some smaller brackish water desalination facilities currently provide about 50% of domestic water requirements. Regulations govern the quality of desalinated water.

Access to sufficient and safe water

197. In general, the water supplied in Israel, especially for home consumption, is of high quality and safe according to international standards. The quality and reliability of supply is guaranteed, among other things, by the connection of every locality to the national water system. Remaining localities which still rely on disconnected water sources are undergoing development planning.

198. In some cases of illegal construction, there may be legal or practical obstacles to connecting to the supply infrastructure and water is obtained from a more central point in the public system.

199. Access to Water in Bedouin Communities – Following a pilot program that began in 2014, water provision to Bedouin communities is currently done through direct private water connections to the main water pipeline, through its own water meter.

Affordability of water services

200. General – Water and sewage rates are determined in a manner intended to cover the overall recognized expenses of suppliers so as to ensure the efficient allocation of supply. For details, see Annex I.

201. Discounted rates – The Water Rules (Determining the Recognized Amount) 5776-2016 introduced discounted rates for groups of persons in need. For details, see Annex I.

202. Disconnection of water supply – the Water and Sewage Corporation Rules (Disconnection of Water Supply) 5776-2015 dramatically amended the instances in which water supply may be disconnected. For details, see Annex I.

Monitoring the quality of water

203. For details, see Annex I.

Education concerning the use of water

204. There is a high level of awareness in Israel, ingrained in early education, of informed and economical water use. For details of measures taken, including regarding the use of water in times of crisis, see Annex I.

D. The right to adequate housing**Homelessness**

205. Data – According to data held by the Ministry of Construction and Housing (MoCH), during the course of 2016, 1,267 people defined as “street dwellers” by their local social services department received a monthly allowance. This is not necessarily indicative of the total number of homeless people, some of which may not have been identified by social services.

206. Services – These were outlined in our previous report. The MoLSAaSS offers services for street-dwellers within the community, including provision of make-shift shelters for overnight use in emergency situations, as well as rehabilitative and occupational services throughout Israel. This program assists 1,800 street-dwellers annually.

207. Public Housing – For updates relating to public housing, see below.

Affordable housing

208. Acceleration of Construction – The Planning and Building Proceedings for the Acceleration of Residential Construction (Transitory Provisions) Law 5771-2011 was enacted in order to expedite the construction of affordable housing, creating a new planning committee for this purpose. This was replaced in 2014 by the Promotion of Construction in Preferred Residential Sites (Transitory Provisions) Law 5774-2014 which established special planning procedures for preferred residential sites, in order to accelerate the construction of housing in these areas. In particular, these provisions provide fast track for setting detailed plans in order to enable issuing building permits and provide sufficient housing supply.

209. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), whereas 2009 saw the start of construction of 35,165 new apartments (defined as the moulding of the building’s foundations), 2015 saw the start of construction of 50,558 new apartments.

210. Additional amendments set in 2018 were designed to increase the availability of affordable rental housing, see Annex I.

211. Taxation – In 2016, the Economic Efficiency (Legislative Amendments in the Implementation of Economic Policy for the Budget Years of 2017 and 2018) Law 5777-2016 imposed a “multiple apartments” tax on the third or more apartment owned. The Law was approved by the Knesset, yet did not enter into force. Five petitions were filed to the HCJ against Chapter 12 of the Law. For a recent judicial decision on this matter, see Annex III.

212. Regulation of the private rental market – In its previous concluding observations, the Committee expressed concern with regard to regulation of the private rental market. We are pleased to report a number of significant steps recently taken in this regard.

213. On 13th June 2016, the Government directed the Minister of Finance to establish an inter-ministerial committee to examine incentives for landlords to rent their properties for a period of at least five (5) years at a set, index linked, rental price. This resolution also directed the establishment of a MoJ’s Committee to recommend measures that may be taken to improve the efficiency of dispute resolution between landlords and tenants, including the establishment of a designated court to this end (Government Resolution No. 1528).

214. Following the work of the inter-ministerial committee in July 2017, the Knesset approved Amendment no. 1 to the Rental and Loan Law 5777-2017, which includes a special chapter regarding rental for residential purposes. This chapter regulates, among other things, the relations between the tenant and the owner, and increases the protection

and certainty in this market. The chapter sets instruction in regard to the contract (requirement of a written contract), the apartment (it defines apartments as “inhabitable” if they lack, for example, plumbing, electricity or natural light), define the landlord’s responsibilities for repairs, including timeframes; types of payments that the owner can collect for the tenant, the amount of collateral which the owner may demand, instruction in regard to the end of the legal relations between both sides etc.

215. Rental Assistance – In its previous concluding observations, the Committee recommended increasing rental assistance. We are pleased to report that since the submission of our third periodic report, and following two (2) Government Resolutions (of March 2012, allocating 160 Million NIS (43.8 Million USD) to this issue and of January 2016, allocating additional 47 Million NIS (13 Million USD)).

216. In March 2012, Government Resolution No. 4433 regarding “Increase in Government Aid in the Field of Housing and Preservation of the Stock of Public Housing for Eligible Persons” allocated a budget of 160 Million NIS (44.5 Million USD) for the increase of rent subsidies.

Public housing

217. See our previous reports for details of the legislative and policy frameworks relating to public housing in Israel. Below are some amendments that have been made since our third periodic report.

218. Eligibility criteria – A number of substantial updates have been made to broaden the eligibility criteria for obtaining public housing. For details, see Annex I.

219. The Management of Public Housing – During the years 2015–2016, the MoCH invested 393 Million NIS (109.2 Million USD) in the maintenance of public housing.

220. Waiting Lists for Public Housing – For details of waiting lists for public housing and an increase in rent contributions given to those on the waiting list, see Annex I.

221. Increasing availability of Public Housing – In its previous concluding observations, the Committee recommended increasing the number of social housing units. We are pleased to inform the Committee that approx. 1,850 additional apartments have been purchased from funds accumulated from the sale of other public housing apartments, at a cost of about one Billion NIS. Furthermore, two (2) government agencies (the “Jewish Agency” and “Amigur”, who manage some of the public housing) are planning the construction of 2,650 housing units in retirement homes, by 2020. For details, see Annex I.

222. Publication of Tenders for the Sale of Public Housing in Arabic – In 2017, “Amidar”, a national housing company, began to publish tenders for the sale of housing in Arabic as well as in Hebrew. The MoCH has established a special website in Arabic that includes all information presented in the Hebrew website and additional information specifically intended for the Arab population. Such information covers the governmental program for affordable housing (“A Price for Residents”), the procedure for participating and upgrading participation in the program, financial benefits, the technical specifications of the flats on offer, etc. Furthermore, in 2015–2016, the Ministry widely published campaigns aimed at the Arab population through advertising “A Price for Residents” projects in Nazareth and in Sakhnin. The Ministry continues to operate to promote linguistic accessibility for the Arab population.

Accessibility

223. Israel’s initial report concerning the implementation of the CRPD includes a detailed account of the steps taken to improve the accessibility of housing for PWD. For details of the most significant measures, see Annex I. For recent case law, see Annex III.

Preventing housing on polluted sites

224. Legislative and other measures ensure that housing is not built on polluted sites or in immediate proximity of sources of pollution. For details, see Annex I.

Legal provisions governing eviction from housing

225. For data relating to evictions over the past five (5) years, see Annex II. These figures demonstrate that there is a steady decline in the number of eviction orders granted each year. Moreover, only approx. 3% of the eviction orders are executed, due to settlements reached with the debtor prior to eviction and to the fact that several orders may relate to the same property.

Legal provisions governing eviction from public housing

226. The MoCH may initiate eviction proceedings against squatters or tenants with a monetary debt. In both situations, there is a central committee that examines every case on its merits and exhausts an administrative procedure prior to the initiation of legal proceedings.

227. In 2016, a public committee was formed in order to examine eviction from public housing. It suggested that eviction proceedings no longer be pursued in relation to tenants with monetary debt, but rather replaced by improvements in debt collection. The committee also recommended the establishment of an interdepartmental committee charged with examining the circumstances of squatters (note however that the chairperson and committee members were disputed regarding these recommendations). Following these recommendations and the above-mentioned disagreement, the Director General applied to the Attorney General and requested his decision on the matter. In August 2017, a meeting was held with representative of the MoCH and MoJ, in which it was decided that in regard to persons who are entitled and received public housing but are indebted for rent payments – an eviction will only be conducted in extreme and exceptional cases after all other procedure for the rent collection have been utilized and the tenant is unwilling to pay the debt. In regard to squatters to public housing – it was decided that such persons such be evicted with no exceptions pursuant to the law. It was further agreed that in order to deal with dozens cases of squatting, a set of rules addressing the priorities for eviction will be developed, and approved by the Deputy Attorney General (Civil Affairs).

228. For data on persons evicted from public housing from 2011–2014, see Annex II.

Illegal structures in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem

229. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee expressed concern regarding the demolition of illegal structures in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem.

230. Illegal construction harms the local population, as it does not take into consideration planning policies and parameters that are needed to ensure quality of life, the welfare of the population and public needs. Enforcement measures against illegal structures are adopted in accordance with legal guarantees and following due process, subject to judicial review and the right to appeal. Authorities exercise discretion in the execution of demolition orders and give priority to the demolition of illegal structures that pose an obstacle to city development, for example, an illegal structure that blocks a sewer pipe system, a planned school, access to roads, etc.

231. For data regarding the demolition of illegal structures in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem and, conversely, construction permits granted, see Annex II.

Planning and housing in the Bedouin population

232. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee expressed concern regarding planning and eviction in the Bedouin population.

233. In November 2015, the MoAaRD completed a study designed to collect demographic information and planning data concerning the Bedouin population in the Negev. On the basis of this study, recommendations were formulated to expand existing localities and establish new ones, whilst regularizing some Bedouin localities at their current location. For details of the Bedouin localities with approved outline plans, see Annex I.

234. With regard to the planning related to the rest of the clusters in the Bedouin diaspora, planning companies were recruited to conduct feasibility studies and to examine special planning solutions. This process is being conducted with the participation of the population in each region. These companies are currently conducting field surveys and are to make planning recommendations for the consideration of the Authority for the Regularization of the Bedouin Housing in the Negev. This course of planning, with special emphasis on the participation of the Bedouin population, is unprecedented in Israel.

235. The Government encourages movement to regulated localities by providing unique financial benefits. These benefits include, *inter alia*, provision of land plots for free or at very low cost and compensation for the demolition of unauthorized structures.

236. With regard to demolition of illegal structures, note that enforcement activities are conducted only against structures that were constructed after 2010, in areas that do not belong to any local authority. All enforcement activities are conducted according to the law. For data relating to the demolition of illegal structures, see Annexes I and II.

Article 12

National health system

237. As prescribed by the National Health Insurance Law detailed in Israel's previous reports, every Israeli resident is entitled to health insurance, including extensive medical treatment and medicine provision. The following are a number of important recent amendments which extended health coverage to a number of other groups.

238. Health Insurance for Palestinian Residents who Hold Stay Permits – The National Health Insurance Regulations (Enrolment in a Health Fund, Rights and Duties of Recipients of Residence Visas under the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) (5763-2003), 5776-2016 came into effect on August 1, 2016. These Regulations entitle recipients of stay permits under Sections 3, 3A(2) and 3A1(A)(2) of the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) 5763-2016 to register in a health fund and to receive services similar in scope to those given to Israeli residents (with the exception of health services provided abroad), against co-payment as is the practice in the particular fund.

239. The population in question includes Palestinian minors who have received a stay permit in order to reside with a parent legally residing in Israel, Palestinian residents who have received a stay permit to reside with a spouse and those who have received the stay permit on special humanitarian grounds. Since the Law has entered into force, approximately 2,716 permit holders joined an HMO health insurance plan.

240. Health Insurance for Minors without Civil 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 civil status. This agreement was renewed in 2015, with a number of significant improvements. For details, see Annex I. Since the renewal of the agreement, there has been a steady increase in the enrolment of previously uninsured minors. For data, see Annex II.

241. Health Care for Foreign Workers – In June 2014, the HCJ ordered the State to bring health care arrangements for foreign workers in the care giving field, who have been legally resident in Israel for over ten (10) years, closer to the arrangements applicable to Israeli residents (H.C.J.1105/06 Workers Hotline v. The Minister of Social Services) Consequently, 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. For details, see Annex I. For data regarding gaps in health parameters, such as life expectancy, between the Jewish and Arab Population, see Annex I.

Accessibility of health facilities

242. Health funds – Health Funds are obliged to make vital health services available to every patient. Each Health Fund has developed a system for provision of home visits to the elderly and to PWD. In April 2017, the MoH distributed a circular defining “home-bound” patients to whom such services should be offered.

243. Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Accessibility Adjustments to Health Services and Places Providing These Services) Regulations 5776-2016 – Regulations published in September 2016 address the physical accessibility adjustments that need to be made to existing medical facilities.

244. Home care – The MoH is developing networks to enable further care and rehabilitation in the home, with an emphasis on continuity of care, and offers support programs for individuals in their transition from hospitalisation to community.

Health services in outlying areas

245. Health services in the Negev – On 23rd September, 2014, the Government allocated 100 Million NIS (27.8 Million USD) for the development of health services in the Negev area (Resolution No. 2025).

246. Incentives to Health Funds – Between 2011 and 2013, the MoH offered Health Funds incentives totalling 20 Million NIS (5.6 Million USD) per annum for infrastructure improvements in outlying areas. For details, see Annex I.

247. New hospitals – The MoH has decided to open two (2) new general hospitals, one in Be’er-Sheva, the other in Haifa. 15 Million NIS (4.2 Million USD) were allocated for the years 2015–2016, for the purpose of establishment of a new hospital in Be’er-Sheva, and the land for the hospital has been allocated. As for the Haifa hospital, the allocation is in the planning stages. A medical school in the Northern Galilee has also been established.

248. For details of the allocation of hospital beds, staff and other resources, and new incentives for physicians willing to move to outlying areas, see Annex I.

Reducing inequalities in healthcare

249. In recent years, the MoH has enhanced efforts to minimize gaps in health care and address inequalities in health.

250. Unit for Reducing Inequalities – This Unit, established in 2013, is charged with narrowing disparities in economic accessibility to health services, including reducing the impact of cultural differences in the use and quality of health services. For details of the Unit’s activities and achievements, see Annex I.

251. Incentivising Health Funds – In 2012–2014, approx. 55 Million NIS (15.3 Million USD) were distributed to projects aimed at narrowing geographic or social disparities. Funding criteria for 2015–2016 added emphasis on services provided where there are social disparities, including interventions in the fields of pre-diabetics, diabetes and child obesity in the Arab population.

252. Mental Health Services – The transfer of responsibility for mental health services within the community to Health Funds has resulted in the establishment of dozens of new clinics, many of which are in outlying areas.

253. Investments – For an estimate of the funds invested by the MoH to reduce inequalities in healthcare, see Annex II.

Measures to reduce inequalities in relation to persons of Ethiopian descent

254. The MoH has put together a series of policies aimed at the inclusion of persons of Ethiopian descent, focusing on improving cultural accessibility, adequate representation, accessibility to health rights, reducing diabetes and strengthening confidence in the health system, including reducing the duration for addressing complaints of racism to less than 48 hours. For further examples, see Annex I.

Health services available to the Bedouin population

255. Health clinics and medical services – As of April 2016, there are 60 health clinics providing for the Bedouin population in the Negev, including independent physicians who work with these clinics and provide services. Local medical services are also available outside the Bedouin localities, such as in Be'er-Sheva, Yeruham, Arad, Dimona, Omer, Mitzpe-Ramon, etc.

256. Clinics in unauthorized villages located throughout the Negev are computerized, air conditioned, and equipped according to the standards followed by all the Health Funds in the country.

257. Nurses Serving the Bedouin Population – As of April 2016, there are 871 employed nurses who treat patients of all populations in the southern district, 100 of whom specifically serve the Bedouin population. For more information, see Annex I.

258. Medical Centres – In 2014, the Government undertook to establish six (6) medical centers providing services during night hours and on weekends in the Negev area (when regular clinics are closed), among them in Bedouin localities (Ar'ara, Rahat, Kuseife and one that will serve Lakiya, Hura and neighbouring localities). The total budget for this issue is 18.5 Million NIS (5.15 Million USD) (Resolution No. 2025).

Health care for women in the Arab population

259. Leadership in health – In addition to the general measures outlined above for the reduction of inequalities, programs designed especially for women in the Arab population also include a “Leadership in Health” program. This program includes a series of workshops for women from the Arab population who want to be community leaders on health and nutrition, addressing studies that show high obesity rates among Arab women. For details, see Annex I.

260. Child and maternity care – See below.

Health services for non-residents

261. In addition to the legislative amendments presented above, a number of medical services are available to migrants and foreign workers. These include emergency medical treatment, medical services given to infants and pregnant women (including routine immunizations), volunteer clinics that provide medical and mental health services, a community program for HIV/AIDS treatment and oncology treatment. For details, see Annex I.

The cost of health-care services

262. The total budget of the MoH for 2018 currently stands on 35.46 Billion NIS (9.85 Billion USD) (5 Billion NIS (1.39 Billion USD) of which as an expenditure which is depended on income) and additional 409 Million NIS (113.6 Million USD) as authorization for future budgetary obligation.

263. The total budget of the MoH for 2019 currently stands on 42 Billion NIS (11.7 Billion USD) (38 Billion NIS as Net expenditure and 4 Billion NIS as expenditure depended on income) and additional 500 Million NIS (138.8 Million USD) as authorization for future budgetary obligations. In addition, the budget for the medical services health basket, which is financed by the health insurance tax (collected by the National Insurance Institute) and supplementary State budget transferred to the HMOs, is expected to be 53.4 Billion NIS (gross) (14.83 Billion USD).

264. Funding of Health Funds – For updates, see Annex I.

Approval of drugs and medical equipment

265. For details of the legislative arrangements in place to ensure that drugs and medical equipment are scientifically approved and have not expired or become ineffective, see Annex I.

Training of health personnel on health and human rights

266. For details, see Annex I.

Child and maternal health

267. Parenting Skills – The “Possible and Healthy” (“Efshari-bari”) initiative aims to develop the well-being of toddlers by providing tools for improving the child-parent bond and for creating a family environment conducive to optimal parenting through a healthy lifestyle and attentive nourishment. The MoH and Joint Israel are leading this program based on an evidence-based model developed in the UK.

268. Infant hearing screening – In 2010, a successful national infant hearing screening program was launched. For details, see Annex I.

269. Genetic Testing – Measures have been taken to improve accessibility to genetic testing in order to reduce congenital anomalies. Additional genetic tests have been included in the services covered by National Health Insurance.

270. National Screening Plan for Breast Cancer Detection and Treatment of Myomas – For details, see Annex I; Immunisation programs – See below.

Child and maternal health in the Bedouin population

271. Main Projects – In September 2011, the Government authorised 90 Million NIS (24.3 Million USD) for social and communal issues, including health, in the Negev (Government Resolution No. 3708). This was allocated to the increase of Bedouin women mediators working towards the reduction of infant mortality; continued research to map genetic diseases unique to the Bedouin population; enriching flour with folic acid for the benefit of pregnant women; and establishing healthcare centers within the largest schools in the Bedouin population.

272. An updated plan was approved in February 2017, encompassing the improvement of health services, including emergency health services, safety issues and better responses to the health needs of young children (Resolution No. 2397), with a budget of 10 Million NIS (2.85 Million USD).

273. Immunization – The coverage of Bedouin children is over 90%, which is similar to the general population. Vaccinations are conducted in clinics and by mobile immunization teams which reach infants in the Bedouin diaspora. A computerized tracking system enables the identification of infants who are overdue for their vaccinations. 2014 figures show that the rate of influenza immunization among the Bedouin population significantly surpasses that of the general population (41.8% and 31.3% respectively).

274. Mother and child healthcare stations – As of October 2017 there are 47 mother and child health stations located in the southern district, 27 of which (57%) are designated for the Bedouin population. As of April 2016, there were 128 positions of mother and child health nurses in the southern district, 73 positions of which are designated for clinics that serve the Bedouin population specifically. 90% of these positions were filled.

275. In February 2017, the Government resolved to renovate the mother and child health clinics in certain localities, including Bedouin ones, with a total budget of 40 million NIS (10.5 million USD (Resolution No. 2397).

276. An additional budget of 5 Million NIS (1.38 Million USD) was approved by the MoH in order to better cope with health needs at the Bedouin population including – special training for nurses and doctors as well the mediators that work with the mother and the child.

277. School nurses – As of April 2016, there were 44.75 positions for school nurses in the southern district. Of these, 35 positions (78.2%) were designated for schools of the Bedouin population, and these positions have been filled.

278. Autism – Following findings that there is under-diagnosis of children within the autism and communication impairment spectrum amongst the Bedouin population in the Negev, a special program has been initiated to diagnose and treat children. Since the

program began in 2010, 120 children have been diagnosed and have begun treatment, in contrast to the three (3) that were known when the program began.

Infant mortality

279. Data – Israel’s infant mortality rate continues to decrease, from 6.3 deaths for every 1,000 live births between 1996 and 1999, to 3.1 deaths in 2015. There remain gaps in infant mortality rates between different populations, although the decrease in rates is common to all. For more details, including on gaps between infant mortality between different populations, see Annex I. For statistical information on infant mortality rate, see Annex II.

Fertility treatment, contraceptives and sexual health

280. This has been discussed in our previous reports. In 2010, an amendment was made to relevant regulations to enable women to freeze eggs in order to preserve their fertility. Further legislation was passed governing egg donation, subsequent to which regulations regarding compensation for egg donation were published. For recent court rulings on the matter of fertility treatments, see Annex III.

Raising awareness of sexual health

281. In its previous concluding observations, the Committee recommended that Israel increase its efforts in the creation of educational programs and services on sexual and reproductive health. In this regard, 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. Such programs are taught to all pupils Jewish and Arab alike, for information on education programs in schools in the Arab population and Jewish religious communities, see annex I. Over the past years, greater emphasis has been placed on the fine line between normative and harmful behaviour. The activities focus on positive communication, consent, mutuality, sexual relations and birth control.

282. In 2013, an HPV immunization program was initiated for eighth-grade female pupils. In 2015 the program was expanded to include boys as well. This program includes an explanation of the ways the virus is transmitted, including an explanation regarding safe sex.

Diseases linked to water and adequate sanitation

283. Waterborne infections – Since drinking water is treated and inspected frequently (see Article 11C above), waterborne infections are rare. Pathogens are generally spread through contamination of food rather than water.

284. Sanitation – Updated regulations, published in 2010, set higher levels of treatment in existing and future wastewater plants. For details, see Annex I.

285. Access to sanitation – As of 2014, 99.9% of the population had access to sanitation. For additional data, see Annex II.

286. Access to sanitation in the Bedouin localities – Further to Government Resolution No. 546 (July, 2013), a comprehensive waste management program has been launched, including the establishment of regional and local recycling infrastructures, the rehabilitation and evacuation of waste hazards, including collector lines and sewage infrastructures; and education and explanatory activities concerning environmental protection, enforcement and regulation. 40 Million NIS (approx. 11.1 Million USD) has been allocated to this program.

Infectious disease control

287. Immunization Programs – In addition to a consistent program for primary childhood and school-age immunizations, immunizations are offered to high risk groups and during

outbreaks of infectious diseases. The immunization program is updated periodically. For details of recent updates to child and adult vaccinations, see Annex I.

288. Influenza prevention – Each year the MoH updates its guidelines on preventing seasonal influenza and leads the national preparedness drive for pandemic influenza. Guidelines are also issued for treating people exposed to avian flu.

289. Additional measures taken to control contagious diseases – The MoH continues to update the list of notifiable diseases outlined in the Public Health Ordinance 1940. These include those of international significance, diseases under vaccination supervision, zoonotic diseases, foodborne diseases and others. Beyond regular epidemiological investigations, work is also being done on select issues as needed.

290. For details of the work undertaken and programs initiated relating to foodborne diseases (including the successful curbing of a salmonellosis outbreak in 2015); hepatitis B and C; cutaneous leishmaniasis; west Nile fever and rabies prevention, see Annex I.

291. Morbidity prevention among individuals traveling abroad and returning from overseas – For details, see Annex I.

292. International cooperation – The MoH receives reports from around the world related to health threats to the State of Israel and is tasked with reporting to bodies around the world of occurrences in its territory, in line with the obligations of Israel as a member of the World Health Organization.

Substance abuse

293. Tobacco – For examples of measures that have been taken since the submission of our previous report, including smoking prevention in the Arab population and tobacco control in the vicinity of schools, see Annex I.

Alcohol

294. Prevention of Alcohol Abuse – In 2009, the Government authorised a two-stage plan for the reduction of the exaggerated consumption of alcohol (Resolution No, 907). This included legislative steps, public awareness campaigns, youth education and the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee to formulate further steps. For more details, see Annex I.

295. Legislation – Further to this Resolution, several laws were adopted, including new restrictions on the advertising and marketing of alcoholic beverages. For details, see Annex I.

296. Training – For details, see Annex I.

297. Educational programs for youth – Programs for preventing the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and dangerous substances are incorporated into the school program. At high school level, the program includes lectures for parents, pupils and educators. For details of these programs, the work undertaken with pupils who are involved in drug abuse, and a MoE Youth Leadership program in this field, see Annex I.

Treatment and rehabilitation of drug users

298. The MoH operates several different types of rehabilitation centers for adults and youth. For details of recent improvements and of persons treated, see Annex I.

299. Services provided by MoLSAaSS – The Addiction Treatment Service in MoLSAaSS, is responsible for social services offered to persons suffering from alcohol, drug or gambling addictions and their families. The Service sets national policy, initiates and adapts rehabilitation and treatment programs, budgets and supervises treatment frameworks.

300. Services, both ambulatory and residential, are provided by local authorities and voluntary organizations. These services are provided by 936 social workers, counsellors and other professionals.

301. For details regarding treatment services, number of persons treated and budget allocated, see Annex I.

Prevention of HIV/AIDS

302. Preventative Measures – For details of measures taken with regard to each risk group, see Annex I.

303. Prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS amongst persons of Ethiopian descent – A unique program provides HIV carriers from within this community with support and assistance from specially trained coordinators and social workers. For details, see Annex I.

304. Education in schools – In addition to programs relating to sexual education outlined under Article 13, schools are required to discuss HIV/AIDS with pupils. Around the World AIDS Day, the MoE's Psychology and Counselling Service uploads updated material to its website, including recommended workshops. Community organizations, such as the Israel AIDS Task Force, deliver training in schools.

Support to persons with HIV/AIDS

305. Support for carriers and their families is provided first and foremost by the social and psychological teams at eight (8) AIDS centers throughout the country. Dedicated staff is available after hours to provide support and answer questions. They also conduct home visits and accompany patients, where needed, to other services. AIDS centers have space for family discourse and support.

Dealing with stigma and discrimination

306. MoH guidelines issued in 2011 strictly forbid discrimination against HIV positive patients in all health facilities. Guidelines issued in 2017 underscore this in relation to dentistry. Cases of discrimination are brought to the attention of the MoH.

307. MoE Director-General guidelines underscore that pupils with HIV/AIDS are entitled to the same rights as all other pupils. Schools or kindergartens may not limit the educational or social activities of these pupils, unless a doctor directs otherwise.

308. Each year the MoE publish on its website contents intended for teachers, pupils and parents, regarding dealing with stigmas and discrimination. For example, each year towards World AIDS Day, the Ministry publish materials that promoted educational discourse on the matter, which include messages of tolerance towards others including patients and carriers and the importance using contraception's and of safe sex. An additional example is the international day dedicated for the fight against homophobia in the month of May. Each year the Ministry publishes dedicated contents that allows teaches and parents to explain and educate for tolerance, gender equality and gender identity. In 2017, 9th to 12th grade pupils from all populations underwent lectures and workshops by professionals, educational counsels and by members of the LGBTI community.

Affordable access to essential drugs

309. Universal health care includes affordable access to essential drugs, including anti-retroviral medicines and medicines for chronic diseases. Therefore, for residents, the treatment of HIV/AIDS, including all drugs, is included in the services to which they are entitled free of charge.

310. Foreign residents, including those with no legal status and no medical insurance, may receive treatment through a special community program set up in 2014 by the AIDS and Tuberculosis Department in the MoH, with the involvement of AIDS clinics, NGOs, pharmaceutical companies and other commercial organisations. It is funded through a combination of Government budgets, donations of ART drugs by pharmaceutical companies and a volunteer pharmacist service.

The use of restraints in psychiatric hospitals

311. Restraining orders are issued only in accordance to the law and are used only in cases of imminent danger of physical harm to the patient or to others, as a consequence of deterioration in her/his mental health condition, and not as a means of “punishment”.

312. In May 2016, the MoH Director General appointed a steering committee to examine possible plans to reduce the use of mechanical restraints in Israel. The Committee was headed by the Ombudsman of the Medical Professions at the MoH and included professionals from mental health departments, the Commissioner for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities and more. As of March 2017, the use of such restraints has already decreased by more than 50%. In June 2017, the Committee published its recommendations that include, *inter alia*, a recommendation to introduce methods that will replace restraining measures thus enabling immediate professional, safe and non-aggressive treatment for challenging patients’ behaviours, and a three-year plan to reduce the use of such restraints in the medical system. In the practical aspect, the Committee determined that retraining patients is allowed only in very exceptional and narrow situations of real and immediate threat to the life or limb of the patient, other patients or a staff member, and only if every other alternative have failed. The Committee further recommended that restraints will be used for the shortest time period required until the immediate threat is over. It was further recommended that a restrained patient is to be examined by a physician every hour, in order to examine if he/she can be released. The Committee also recommended that a hospital will not have restraining authority for more than 24 hours, and in exceptional cases in which a Hospital Director considers it necessary, he/she must request a special permit from a designated psychiatric committee. If this committee provides such a permit for up to 24 additional hours, the relevant patient will have the right to appeal to a court of law and receive free of charge legal aid. The Committee further recommended that minors (under the age of 13) will not be restrained or put in isolation alone and for more than one (1) hour. The committee suggested that its recommendations will be anchored by legislation.

313. In April 2018, a Circular of the MoH Director General was published. The Circular states that the mechanical restraints of a patient and her/his isolation are extreme measures, which can be taken only in unusual circumstances, and only for the purpose of preventing immediate substantive physical danger to the patient or her/his surroundings. It was further instructed that it is prohibited to impose mechanical restraints or isolation on a patient in the following situations: as a measure of punishment; as an educational measure; during a psychomotoric unrest that does not endanger the patient and her/his environment; when the patient refuses to comply with instructions; as a means of discipline and more. According to the Circular, an instruction for the imposition of mechanical restraints or isolation of a patient will only be given based on the medical considerations, and solely for the purpose of preventing danger to the patient or her/his surrounding, and when such risk is of a high level of certainty. In general, isolation should be preferred over restraint, but if there is an alternative measure that can reduce the harm caused to the patient, her/his health and her/his dignity – the staff must prefer such alternative. The restraining of the patient should be for the shortest period possible, and will terminate when the circumstances for the provisions of the restraint cease to exist.

Article 13

Education on economic, social and cultural rights

314. The Department of Civil Education and Co-existence in the MoE promotes human rights education and activities to bring together different groups in Israeli society. For example, days which reinforce issues of rights and equality are marked with expansive activities (such, for example, as Human Rights Day and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination); schools run programs to promote tolerance and prevent racial discrimination; teach classes on civic and democratic values and “life skills” classes which include topics such as gender-based discrimination and LGBTI rights and prevention of domestic violence.

315. The MoE also offers hundreds of hours of professional development for teachers and others on democratic values, dignity, pluralism, tolerance and preventing discrimination. For more details, see Annex I.

Free, compulsory primary education

316. This issue has been discussed in Israel's previous reports. As outlined, education is compulsory and free for all until the age of 17 (12th grade). In 2015, the Compulsory Education Law 5709-1949 was applied such that state kindergartens now provide free education to children from age three (3).

317. 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. For details, see Annex I. As of December 2016, this law is implemented in schools in 106 communities and in kindergartens in 92 communities, according to socio-economic parameters.

318. Parental payments – Parental payments may be requested for compulsory or elective services. The only compulsory service is the insurance of personal accidents. All other services are elective. Schools are instructed that pupils must not be prevented from participating in activities due to financial difficulties. For details, see Annex I. For details of the maximum amounts permitted for collection during the 2016–7 academic year, see Annex II.

319. Special education – Special education services are provided for children with special needs between the ages of 3 to 21 who are entitled to such services by law. For numbers of pupils and classrooms for pupils with disabilities, according to population, see Annex II.

320. School meals – For additional developments concerning meals served at schools, see Annex I.

321. The Early Childhood Council – In August 2017, the Knesset passed a new law which directs the establishment of an Early Childhood Council. For details, see Annex I.

Secondary education

322. Prohibition of discrimination – The Pupil's Rights Law disallows any form of discrimination in the registration of pupils to schools. In 2011 and in 2014 this law was amended to include country of origin, sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of grounds upon which discrimination is prohibited.

323. New Educational Programs – The MoE has launched four (4) programs aimed at pupils with high scholastic achievements, two (2) of which are aimed at pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. For details, see Annex I. For statistical data concerning participation, see Annex II.

324. Programs for the promotion of education amongst minority groups – See below.

325. Data – For data concerning pupils in schools by level of education, distribution of pupils by classrooms and populations, literacy rates and the extent of formal education possessed by the adult population during the years 2006–2014, by population group, gender and age, see Annex II.

Technical and vocational education

326. High school pupils choose a theoretical or vocational-technological track. The vocational-technological track offers specialized programs in a broad range of fields, including machinery, electronics, healthcare and biotechnology. For more details, see Annex I.

327. Over the last five (5) years, the number of pupils in these various programs has grown from 100,000 to 150,000.

328. Technological Education in the Bedouin population – The MoE runs three (3) technological high-schools for Bedouin pupils in the Negev (in Hura, Rahat and Segev-Shalom). In 2015, 1,090 pupils, both male and female, attended these schools.

329. Between 2013–2015, a practical engineering course was attended by 171 Bedouin students in the Negev, both men and women. This included a full scholarship, monthly stipend, transportation fees, personal tutoring and placement assistance following graduation for Bedouin students who met the requirements.

Higher education – accessibility to the Arab population

330. 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 bachelor's degree stood at 14.6%, compared to 9.9% in 2006–2007. For more data on the accessibility of the Arab population to higher education, see Annex II.

331. Multi-year plan – In January 2010, the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) of the CHE launched a multi-year plan for the years 2011–2016 to make higher education more accessible to minority populations, including the ultra-Orthodox population, with a budget of approx. 500 Million NIS (138.9 Million USD).

332. As part of this plan, guidance centers aimed at the Arab population have been established, preparatory colleges at which minority students study receive State funding and a wide range of courses including academic preparation, social guidance and scholarships are offered to students from the Arab population. For more details, See Annex I.

333. Plans for a state-funded academic college – The CHE has also started the process of establishing a state-funded academic college in an Arab locality in northern Israel. This institute will render higher education more accessible to the Arab population, especially to women.

334. Universities Psychometric Entry Test – The Psychometric Entrance Test (PET) is a standardized national exam in Israel, generally taken as a higher education admissions exam. It may be taken in Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, French, Spanish, or Hebrew/English. The PET is evaluated for cultural fairness, with sensitivity to gender, religion and population. The Arabic version of the test is drafted by native Arabic speakers who ensure that there are no unequal reference points in the different versions. The MoSTaS allocates scholarships to Arab students for the preparatory course.

335. Arabic language education – In 2014 the CHE appointed a committee to evaluate study programs in Arabic. This committee, composed in part of international experts, examined Arabic language education at four (4) Israeli universities. In its report, the committee expressed satisfaction with the level of Arabic teaching and commended the Hebrew University in this matter.

Integration of persons of Ethiopian descent in higher education

336. In June 2016, following the recommendations of a working group that examined the obstacles faced by persons of Ethiopian descent, the CHE decided to implement a number of measures aimed at increasing the participation of Ethiopian students in higher education. 100 Million NIS (28.6 Million USD) have been allocated to fund additional classes, personal tutors, employment preparation courses, stipends and scholarships.

337. In 2017, the CHE established a Steering Committee that includes representatives of the Academia, public representatives and students, the majority of which are of Ethiopian descent. The Steering Committee examined this issue including barriers, and required changes, and in 2017 presented its preliminary recommendations to the PCB. The Steering Committee recommended inter alia, on the following:

- The expansion of the “achievements” program that operates in 32 cities and municipalities, in which young persons of Ethiopian descent who are most suitable for higher education are located and receive assistance in accessing higher education institutions. In addition, in order to assist persons of Ethiopian descent to better prepare for the psychometric exam (higher education entry exam), vouchers are allocated for preparation courses and a budget was allocated for pre-academic colleges for the provision of academic or financial assistance for students of Ethiopian descent;

- The Steering Committee noticed that while the rate of the Ethiopian population in Israel is about 1.7% the rate of students of Ethiopian descent is only 1.1%. Therefore, the PCB set a target of reaching at least a rate of 1.7% of students of Ethiopian descent at the end of the current five-year plan;
- The Council also set a goal of decreasing the dropout rate of first degree students of Ethiopian descent, which is 20% higher than that of the general population, by allocating personal academic tutoring classes and financial assistance if needed, financing residence in students dormitories is required, psychological assistance (personal or group sessions), including by diagnosing learning disabilities. The total annual budget per student for this issue is between 4,000 and 5,500 NIS (1,100–1,530 USD);
- Excellence program for students of Ethiopian descent – In the frame of this program students of Ethiopian descent will receive enrichment and empowerment classes and academic and financial assistance if needed;
- The CHE sees great importance in transferring students of Ethiopian descent from programs that were intended specifically for them, to general programs;
- In addition, the Steering Committee also formed a plan to absorb academic staff members of Ethiopian descent in higher education institutions. According to this plan, as of 2018–9 academic year the PBC will allocate two (2) three-year scholarships for this purpose, and in the following years this number shall increase to four (4) such scholarships. The total budget for this plan is 9.5 Million NIS (2.64 Million USD);
- The MoSTaS is operating since 2017, a program intended to encourage students of Ethiopian descent to study second, third and post doctorate degrees, with scholarship of 50,000, 80,000 and 100,000 NIS respectively (13,900, 22,200 and 27,800 USD respectively). The Ministry of Aliya and Immigrant absorption also provides scholarships for third degree students in the sum of 72,000 NIS (20,000 USD);
- In addition to the steps described above, there are additional measures which are taken by the relevant higher education institution, i.e. personal assistance, cognitive counselling, instrumental enrichment course, test preparation workshops etc.

Integration of ultra-orthodox students in higher education

338. The PBC invests significant efforts and resources in order to allow the ultra-Orthodox population to integrate into the higher education system and subsequently into the labour market.

339. In 2012, the PCB and the CHE established a five-year program aimed at integrating the ultra-Orthodox population into academic frameworks which are adapted for them. As part of the plan, ultra-Orthodox frameworks were established near universities and colleges, under their responsibility.

340. A 2016 evaluation of the program reveals that the program exceeded most of its goals. Several petitions were filed to the HCJ against these programs, claiming, inter alia, that these programs permit gender separation. These petitions are still pending before the Court.

341. The PBC also established a program for scholarships and loans for ultra-Orthodox students. During 2016 2,500 ultra-Orthodox students participated in this program, 50% of whom were women.

Integration of women in higher education

342. In 2013, the Committee for the Promotion and Representation of Women in Higher Education was established in order to examine the main issues and obstacles to the representation of women in Academia. In July 2015 it published its recommendations focusing on three (3) prominent issues – encouraging women towards academic research,

recruiting women into the academic staff and promoting women in the senior academic staff.

343. In July 2015, the PBC and the CHE approved several resolutions on the basis of these recommendations. For details, see Annex I.

Access of students with disabilities to higher education

344. For a number of recent legislative amendments improving accessibility of higher education to PWD, see Annex I.

Adult and continuing education

345. For details, see Annex I. For further education programs offered to Arab and Bedouin women, see Article 6.

National expenditure on education

346. The MoE allocates funding in accordance with clear and transparent criteria which ensure equality, whilst providing additional budgets where needed for educational and socio-economic reasons. In recent years, the MoE has allocated a major part of its additional resources differentially, giving preference to peripheral areas, weaker populations, and accordingly to the Arab population. Thus for example, in the MoE's budget for 2018, 69.3 Million NIS (19.25 Million USD) were allocated by the MoE for additional education services for the Bedouin population in the Negev. Also in 2018, 239.3 Million NIS (66.47 Million USD) were allocated for the establishment of new classrooms in Arab and Bedouin localities (together with additional budget of 178.1 Million NIS (49.47 Million USD) as an authorization for budget obligation), and additional 27 Million NIS (7.5 Million USD) were allocated for the establishment of new classrooms in Druze localities (together with additional budget of 13.5 Million NIS (3.75 Million USD) as an authorization for budget obligation). For data on national expenditure, see Annex II.

Investment in schools for Arab, Druze, Bedouin and Circassian populations

347. Data – For disaggregated information on pupils by level of education, see Annex I. For data relating to numbers of classrooms, see Annex II.

348. National plans – 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. For details, see Annex I.

349. Financial assistance – The MoE oversees a scholarship assistance plan to assist pupils from weak families from all populations, including the Arab, Bedouin, Druze and Circassian populations. These assist in funding general parental payments, learning aids and assistance in payments for field trips and socio-educational activities. In 2015, an estimated 44% of the budget was allocated to pupils of Arab, Bedouin, Druze and Circassian populations.

350. Construction of new Schools – In its concluding observations, the Committee recommended that measures be taken to address the shortage of classrooms in schools for Arab Israeli children. In this regard, there has been a steady increase in the number of schools. From 2010 to 2015, the number of schools in the Arab system rose by 15.1% (from 878 to 1,011). By way of comparison, the number of schools in the Hebrew system rose by 9.3% (from 3,480 to 3,807).

351. Schools in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem – New schools have been constructed in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. These schools contain approx. 800 classrooms. An additional 1,000 classes are in planning and construction stages. New sport halls were also established in Beit Safafa, Al-Issawiya, and other neighbourhoods.

352. Every year, the Jerusalem Municipality opens on average more than 100 new classrooms. Temporary solutions are provided where needed, including adding transportation to existing schools, renting buildings and “evening schools”. In the years

2011–2015, 20 Million NIS (5.6 Million USD) were allocated for the renting of 255 classrooms.

353. For initiatives to improve the quality of education in the eastern neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, including the distribution of computers, lengthening the school day, science programs and scholarships, see Annex I.

354. New Schools for the Bedouin Population – In the last five (5) years, over 30 new schools were established for the Bedouin population, in addition to new kindergartens. Most of the schools are equipped with science laboratories, computer classrooms and other advanced educational tools.

355. Schools serving the Bedouin population which have adopted specially developed educational programs receive budgetary priority and pedagogical support, as part of the Marom program for elementary schools and middle schools. Over the last three (3) years and during the next two (2) years, these schools will receive additional school hours as part of the differential budget.

356. Special Education Frameworks Serving the Bedouin Population – A three-part rehabilitation complex for Bedouin children with special needs in Tel-Sheva is under construction in accordance with Government Resolution No. 3148 of 2011. One part is fully operational and provides education services to 270 Bedouin children. It comprises of eight (8) kindergarten classrooms, a school with ten (10) classrooms for children with mobility and/or moderate mental disabilities, and an elementary school with ten (10) classrooms for children with mental disabilities. The second part of the complex will include a rehabilitative day-care center, health and rehabilitation center, a center for art therapy treatment, and a research unit under the auspices of the Ben-Gurion University. The third part of the complex will include two (2) post-elementary schools and a sports center. One of these schools was approved for construction. In total, 550 children will attend this three-part complex upon its completion.

Language of instruction

357. For details, see Annex I.

358. Arabic language – The MoE has implemented educational programs to enhance knowledge of the Arabic language in kindergartens and in elementary schools for the Arab population. In addition, in 2015, the MoE allocated 2,156 weekly hours in order to encourage the learning of the Arabic language, including lessons on the Arab world, Arab culture, and Islam.

Mixed schools

359. For information on mixed schools in which pupils of different populations study together, see Annex I.

Investment in the education of pupils of Ethiopian descent

360. General overview – Following two (2) important Government Resolutions, a series of round tables and a public consultation exercise, below are a number of important steps that have been taken. For details of these Resolutions, and the budgets allocated, see Annex I.

361. Educational programs – The MoE undertook an examination of all existing programs, including those run by NGOs, in light of the basic tenants. A committee was also formed to examine and authorize special programs or frameworks for pupils of Ethiopian descent, both in formal and informal education. An educational unit on Ethiopian heritage was incorporated into the general curriculum.

362. Increasing parental involvement – This has included the creation of parent groups for every age-group in about 25 schools with a high percentage of pupils of Ethiopian descent.

363. Academic support – As of November 2017, a program to provide academic support in core studies, including the provision of food during the extra classes, has aided almost

7,000 pupils of Ethiopian descent in 35 areas. A similar program provides support in 162 additional schools. Additional projects at pre-school and elementary school level have focused on Hebrew language skills.

364. Matriculation – 49.24% of pupils of Ethiopian descent are eligible for a full matriculation certificate, compared to 64.2% of the general population. The MoE has created programs to enhance rates of matriculation amongst pupils of Ethiopian descent. As of November 2017, 220 pupils participated in 45 programs, run in 28 schools with a high percentage of pupils of Ethiopian descent. “Virtual coaching” is also offered in order to improve academic achievement.

365. Social support –teachers and social workers have been trained in cultural sensitivity and dialogue; seven (7) psychologists, who have also received training in cultural sensitivity, have been placed and trained in local authorities with a high percentage of pupils of Ethiopian descent in special education.

366. The Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University runs a project that trains high school girls of Ethiopian descent to aid other children of Ethiopian origin in the development of cognitive, social and linguistic skills, to better prepare these children for school.

367. Financial aid – The MoE has developed a program of coupons which enable each child of Ethiopian descent to participate in an after-school activity in her/his neighbourhood. As of November 2017, approx. 60% of these coupons had been utilized, with an expectation that over 80% will be used.

368. The MoE also allocates financial assistance to children of Ethiopian descent to the sum of 400 or 800 NIS a month (105 or 210 USD), based on their date of immigration. In 2015, a total of 10,322 pupils received this assistance.

The education of girls

369. 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. For more details, see Annex I.

370. The value of educating girls – This is generally appreciated in Israel by all segments of society.

371. Sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) – For information on the efforts made to augment the education of girls in the STEM subjects, see Annex I.

372. Prevention of Early Marriage – For details of efforts made by the MoE to prevent early marriages, which have a direct effect on the education of girls, see Annex I.

Drop-out rates

373. The Pedagogical Administration at the MoE has defined reducing dropout rates as a central objective of their work plan for the coming years.

374. Statistics – Action taken in recent years has significantly reduced, in almost every grade, the dropout rate among all the populations in Israel. The total dropout rate has decreased by 42.8% between 2010 and 2013.

375. For information on the dropout rate in Jewish and Arab populations, see Annex I. For information on the eligibility for matriculation certificates, see Annex I.

376. Attendance Officers – Attendance officers regularly visit schools in order to maintain school attendance, in accordance with the Compulsory Education Law (Section 4). For data regarding their work with different populations, see Annex I.

377. Guidelines and Procedures – For updates, see Annex I.

378. Encouraging achievement – The MoE runs programs to improve the achievements of pupils who are at risk of dropping out. For examples of programs, see Annex I.

Article 15

Access to cultural activities for all segments of the population

379. Broadcasting of sports events – MoCS regulations provide that sports events of national importance be aired on public channels.

Participation of older persons and persons with disabilities in cultural life

380. Senior Citizens (Reductions to Cultural Performances and Museums) Regulations 5758-1998 requires cultural institutions to offer senior citizens tickets at a reduced price.

381. The MoSE is operating an initiative titled “Tuesday in suspenders” by which senior citizens are entitled to tickets to cultural events at reduced prices (such as movie and theatre tickets etc.).

382. In the frame of the national sport week held by the Ministry of Culture and Sport (MoCS), on May 3, 2018, the 11th local children’s’ Olympic Games were opened. These games host competitions in 28 sports fields and are participated by 6,200 children between the ages 11–16 from all populations. The list of participants also includes children with disabilities and foreign representatives (this year from Greece, Slovenia and Lithuania).

383. Accessibility of sports and cultural facilities – Legislative amendments – For details of a number of important legislative amendments, see Annex I.

384. Funding – The MoCS assists in making cultural institutes and sports activities accessible to PWD. For details relating to funding approved in 2014, see Annex I.

385. 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).

386. Access to published works for persons who are blind – In March 2016, Israel ratified the WIPO’s Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled, which establishes an exception to intellectual property laws to enable the creation of a copy of a published work, in a format suitable for use and enjoyment by persons who are visually impaired without requiring the consent of the right-holder.

Enhancement of access to the cultural heritage of mankind, including through new information technologies

387. On November 2017, in a joint project of the Prime Minister’s office and the MoCS, the National Museum Internet Portal¹ was initiated. This Portal currently includes and provides access to over 63,000 items, which are located in Israeli museums that receives State financial support. This portal received international recognition by its parallel European portal – European Collections, out of the understanding that items held in Israeli museums hold profound value to the history of mankind and human history.

388. In recent years another three (3) heritage sites located in Israel were recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites: Beit Guvrin National Park, Nahal Mearot Nature reserve and Beit Shearim National Park. All of these sites as well as 22 additional recognized World Heritage Sites located in Israel, and many other sites, are open and accessible to the public.

Encourage participation in cultural life by children, including from poorer families, and migrant or refugee children

389. In recent years during the holidays of Sukkot, Passover and Hanukah the MoCS has held many festivals across Israel, with an emphasis on peripheral areas that included many free activities for children and participants of all populations. For example, during Sukkot

¹ <http://www.museumsinisrael.gov.il/he/Pages/default.aspx>.

2016, about 50 festivals were held nationwide by various local authorities and with the support of the MoCS, which included many free activities performances and shows.

390. In this regard please also see above information on the local children Olympic Games.

391. Prevention of Violence, Hostility and Racism in Sports Events – See Annex I.

392. National expenditure on culture, entertainment and sport – See Annex II.

Promotion of cultural diversity

393. Arab Heritage and Culture – In March 2016, the Minister of Culture and Sport presented the Ministry's five-year plan for the promotion of the Arab population, including an additional budget for cultural initiatives and events. The 2016 budget for cultural activities was doubled to 20 Million NIS (5.6 Million USD).

394. Andalusian Orchestra – In September 2017, the MoCS issued a new regulation, according to which the status of an Israeli Andalusian Orchestra that shall be chosen (an Orchestra playing classic Middle Eastern and Northern-African music) will be upgraded and shall be recognized as a national orchestra alongside the Philharmonic Orchestra. According to this regulation, the orchestra that shall be chosen by the music department and the council for culture and art in the MoCS will be entitled to an increased budget of five Million NIS (1.39 Million USD).

395. The Status of the Arabic Language – On May 24, 2016, the Knesset marked its first-ever Arabic Language Day. For details, see Annex I.

396. Arabic language cable channel – In September 2011, the regulatory body granted a licence for an Arabic language cable channel "Hala TV", which started broadcasting in March 2012. Note that this channel is available both through cable and satellite platforms.

School and professional education in culture and the arts

397. The Committee for the Empowerment of the Heritage of Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews – This Committee was appointed in February 2016 in order to examine ways to enrich the national curriculum (especially in history and literature) regarding Mizrahi and Sfaradic Jewish culture. The recommendations, submitted in June 2016, included the recommendation to make the study of Mizrahi and Sfaradic history and culture compulsory in the Hebrew education system; creating an educational television series on the history of Mizrahi and Sfaradic culture; increasing research within humanity faculties; and establishing a Mizrahi and Sfaradic heritage museum.

398. The MoE – In order to encourage and present cinema productions made by persons of Ethiopian descent, the MoE decided to publish a tender for the operation of friendly environment cinema incubators, which will assist creators of Ethiopian descent, present their works and creations and allow them to provide contents to TV and Internet networks.

399. The MoCS – The Ministry published a tender for the establishment of financial assistance fund for independent creators. In the frame of this fund a sum of 500,000 NIS (139,000 USD) will be allocated to creators of Ethiopian descent. Note that the Ministry supports festivals and cultural events celebrating the heritage of the Ethiopian Jewry; the Ministry's work plan regarding the establishment of a society for the commemoration of the Ethiopian Jewry is in advance stages and several project in this frame are already being implemented (religious poetry festival, festival to commemorate the Sigd holiday etc.). In addition, the Ministry provides scholarships to pupils of peripheral areas, including those of Ethiopian descent.

400. Essay and research competition – The Unit for Israeli Communities' Heritage in the MoE holds an annual essay and research competition on issues relating to the heritage of all of Israel's communities.

Affordable access to the benefits of scientific progress

401. 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-curricular activities aimed at making science more accessible to youth, with special emphasis placed on the inclusion of minority groups. These programs include the promotion of digital literacy in outlying areas; informal education in the exact sciences, particularly in areas ranked in low socio-economic brackets; improving accessibility to the ultra-Orthodox population and space-related activities for the general public, including pupils from Arabic schools.

402. For details, see Annex I. For a summary of science related activities, including budgets, see Annex II.

Measures to prevent the misuse of scientific and technical progress

403. National Council for Civil Research and Development – as detailed in our third periodic report, the role of the National Council is to make recommendations on national policy in the fields of civil research and development, including the development of infrastructure for research and projects in science and technology.

404. The National Council for Medical Bioethics – This council was established in 2004 to make recommendations to all branches of Government on ethical issues and social and legal ramifications of research developments in biology, bio-technology, medicine and genetics.

405. The High Committee for Human Subject Experiments (Helsinki Committee) – This multi-disciplinary committee examines research proposals in the fields of human genetics, reproductive technologies and other fields, as requested. It also examines policy in these fields. It serves as an advisory committee to the Minister of Health and to the Science and Technology Committees of the Knesset on developments in medicine, science, biotechnology, bioethics and more.

Effective protection of the moral and material interests of creators

406. According to the Copy Rights Law 5768-2007, regulates the protection of the moral right of the creator, by which the creator is entitled and may also collect a fee for the use made in her/his right. The moral right consists of two (2) rights: the right to attribution (credit) and the right to perfection of the creation so that no alteration or misrepresentation that harms the name or dignity of the creator is made.

407. The Rights of Performers and Broadcasters Law 5744-1984, regulate the protection of the right of the performer, which includes, inter alia, the right to receive proper royalties for the presentation or playing of his/her performance, as well as the moral performance right.

Freedom of scientific research and creative activity

408. No change has occurred in this area since the submission of the third periodic report.

International contacts and cooperation in the scientific and cultural fields

409. The Foreign Scientific Relations Department in the MoSTaS initiates and carries out a wide range of international collaborations. These include membership in international organizations working in the field of gender equality (such as the Helsinki Group advising the European Commission on the advancement of women and gender); membership in international and multinational science and technology organisations (for example, CERN, Horizon 2020, European Molecular Biology Laboratory, the European Cooperation in Science and Technology and many more); state-level scientific collaboration agreements; bi-national funding of joint research programs (for example, in 2016 Israel took part in 59 new bi-national studies in neuroscience, Nano technologies, remote learning, communication, material engineering and many more areas, in addition to ongoing studies initiated in previous years); and hosting and assisting international scientific meetings and conferences.

410. In addition, the Israel Space Agency promotes collaborations with its international counterparts.

411. The MoFA works to enhance cultural relations with different countries, in conjunction with the artistic, literary and scientific community, professional organisations and other Government Ministries. For example, projects in 2016 included music, literary and film festivals around the world.
