

# SPOTLIGHT REPORT

## SDG achievements in Kazakhstan



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## PREAMBLE

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To assess Kazakhstan's progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Civil Society Development Association “ARGO” together with the Public Opinion Research Center (CIOM) and with the support of Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD) and the European Commission conducted a national survey based on the People's Scorecard methodology.

107 representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and the media participated in the survey.

The People's Scorecard methodology that was developed in 2016 is focused on the comparative analysis of SDG implementation, taking into account the perception and experience of civil society organizations. The approach is based on the ‘No one left behind’ principle and allows reflecting the views of the groups that are often underrepresented, which ensures the objectivity and inclusiveness of the results. The method is based on a qualitative assessment of the implementation of each of the SDG goals, using a structured questionnaire and a system of indicators. Experts discussed the results of achieving the SDGs by answering the questions presented in

- Part A. Respondents also rated progress on a scale from -5 (significant regression) to +5 (significant progress).
- The results of the assessment, reflecting the perception of progress on the SDGs by civil society, are presented in Part B of this report.

## PART A.

### General questions about the 2030 Agenda implementation process at national level:

#### 1. Overview of SDG progress

Please provide your perspective on the progress made on SDG implementation since 2015.

What are the areas that you believe need the most attention? Which of the Goals do you think will be achieved by 2030, and what has helped make progress in those areas?

#### Kazakhstan's SDG Progress since 2015 – Overview and Key Gaps

Since 2015, Kazakhstan has made structured efforts toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), marked by institutional reforms, data systematization, regional consultations, and alignment with national planning. Progress is visible in areas such as poverty reduction (SDG 1), clean energy access (SDG 7), digitalization (SDG 9), and gender policy frameworks (SDG 5). For example, maternal mortality decreased sharply from 44.7 to 11.4 per 100,000 live births (2021–2023), and gasification coverage increased from 43% to 60% (2015–2023).

Several Goals are on track for partial achievement by 2030, particularly:

- **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** – coverage of early education rose to over 98% for children aged 3-6, and extracurricular access increased to over 81% in 2023.
- **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)** – [renewable energy reached about 6.5%](#) of electricity generation, with large-scale investment in hydrogen and grid development. Nevertheless, significant barriers remain:
  - Continued **dependence on coal**, which still provides about **65-70%** of electricity,
  - **Regulatory challenges** and limited integration of renewables into the national grid,
  - **Lack of support mechanisms** for decentralized and small-scale renewable projects, especially for households and SMEs.
- **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)** – industrial value added increased, and [Kazakhstan ranks among the top 3 most innovative economies in Central and South Asia](#).

However, critical challenges remain:

- **Rising inequality (SDG 10):** the wage gap persists (24.17% between men and women); the share of labour income in GDP has fallen to 30.7%, indicating limited benefit from economic growth. As highlighted in the People's Scorecard 2025, **the top 1% owns nearly 30% of national wealth, while the bottom 50% holds only 5%**. Structural and regional disparities persist, especially for rural and marginalized groups, calling for stronger redistributive and inclusive policies.
- **Climate and water stress (SDGs 6 and 13):** sanitation in rural areas is lacking (only 5% of wastewater treated), and over 50% of transported water is lost, increasing risks of water shortage by 2029.

- **Ecological degradation (SDGs 14 and 15):** forest fires, desertification, and mass mortality of Caspian seals (over 1,000 in 2024) point to underfunded conservation (0.49% of GDP vs. EU average 0.8-2.4%).
- **Corruption and institutional trust (SDG 16):** despite legal advances, Kazakhstan's Corruption Perception Index declined to 36 points in 2024, and child protection violations have increased.

**Key enablers of progress include:**

- Enhanced statistical systems (145 regional indicators, updated national SDG framework).
- Civil society engagement (localization methodology and People's Scorecard inputs).
- Digital tools like the "Family Digital Map" and smart data platforms to target support.

**Data sources:**

- Voluntary National Review Presentation 2025 (Kazakhstan Ministry of National Economy).
- SDG platform: <https://central-asia-sdg-platform.github.io/www/>

## 2. Civil society priorities at national level

What have you identified as civil society's most crucial demands to your government for delivery of the SDGs in your country?

Civil society in Kazakhstan demands stronger accountability and inclusive governance for SDG delivery. The key priorities include reducing inequality through expanded social protection; adopting anti-discrimination legislation; ensuring women's and LGBTIQ+ rights; and protecting civic space and human rights defenders. Environmental demands focus on addressing climate risks, protecting ecosystems (e.g., Aral, Caspian, Lake Balkhash), and involving local communities in water and resource management. Civil society calls for transparent public institutions, fair justice and meaningful partnerships at all levels of SDG implementation.

CSO Statement (2025): [Link to document](#)

## 3. Governance Mechanism for SDG implementation

If you know about a formal institutional mechanism put in place for oversight of the SDG implementation process in your country, please describe it here.

Is the Governance mechanism based on an existing Council or Committee? A newly created Council or Committee? Is this a multistakeholder committee or only government-based?

Which government actor provides leadership within the governance mechanism? Head of Government or State? Individual Cabinet Minister? Multi-ministerial set up? Parliamentary Committee?

Kazakhstan's SDG governance is coordinated through a **multi-stakeholder Coordination Council**, chaired by the **Prime Minister**. The Council brings together all relevant **ministries**, civil society organizations, academia, business, and youth representatives. It includes **five**

**thematic Working Groups** aligned with the 5Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership), ensuring inclusive participation in SDG implementation.

The **Ministry of National Economy** leads the overall coordination, while the **Economic Research Institute** serves as the SDG Secretariat, and the **Bureau of National Statistics** supports data collection and monitoring. Technical support is provided by UN agencies.

In 2023, a **Parliamentary Committee on SDG Monitoring** was established, adding a new layer of political oversight to the existing governance structure.

**Source: Kazakhstan VNR 2025 Presentation (Ministry of National Economy)**

#### 4. National planning, implementation and budget commitments

How have the SDGs been incorporated into national policy, planning and implementation frameworks?

Has the government in your country incorporated the SDG framework into its national development plan and related strategies? Has the government incorporated the SDGs through a specific SDG strategy document? Is there any “cherry-picking” or do you see all SDGs as being equally covered?

What kind of budget commitments have been agreed? Has civil society been able to provide input into these processes?

Kazakhstan has integrated the SDGs into national policy through its *National Development Plan until 2029*, which includes 7 national SDG indicators. The country also approved an updated list of 131 SDG indicators and a localization methodology (Order No. 236, 2024), with 145 regional indicators developed, 25 of which are incorporated into regional development programs. A key milestone was the launch of the *first Voluntary Local Review (VLR)* in Almaty.

The government has not adopted a stand-alone SDG strategy, but integration into planning is guided by a multi-ministerial Coordination Council. While many goals are covered, some SDGs (e.g., 16 and 13) face slower progress and weaker budget alignment, indicating partial ‘cherry-picking.’ Civil society and local stakeholders participated in regional consultations and the 5P working groups. However, challenges remain in linking strategies to budgets and in ensuring meaningful participation.

Source: Kazakhstan Voluntary National Review 2025 Presentation

#### 5. Monitoring & Review

Please outline your experience of engaging with monitoring processes on the SDGs.

Are you able to access official data on SDG monitoring? Do you have opportunities to feed in your own sources of information and data to monitoring and review of SDGs?

Is data available on key communities who face being left behind and does your government include this in planning & policy-making?

Kazakhstan offers robust public access to official SDG data. [The Bureau of National Statistics](#) maintains a transparent SDG dashboard detailing ~200 national and global indicators via

[kazstat.github.io/sdg-site-kazstat](https://kazstat.github.io/sdg-site-kazstat) ([stat.gov.kz](https://stat.gov.kz)). Additionally, the Central Asian SDG Knowledge Hub and the UN Regional SDG Centre in Almaty promote data-sharing and policy dialogue regionally ([sdg.iisd.org](https://sdg.iisd.org)). [Economic Research Institute](#) under the Ministry of National Economy hosts analytical reviews and indicator metadata on its site. The SDG transformation and dash-index platforms (e.g. SDG Index) also feature Kazakhstan's data ([dashboards.sdgindex.org](https://dashboards.sdgindex.org)). Despite widespread availability, only 20% of CSOs report data to be sufficiently accessible and relevant. A dedicated mechanism for civil society to contribute local or alternative data sources remains absent. Key disaggregated data – especially on people with disabilities, rural residents, LGBTIQ+, and stateless individuals – is still sparse, limiting the effective application of the LNOB principle in planning. Institutional progress is strong; participatory monitoring must now catch up.

## 6. Overview of climate change commitments

How well do you think your country is delivering on commitments made in the Paris Agreement in terms of the Nationally Determined Contributions?

In your view, what additional policy changes are needed to address the climate emergency in your country?

Kazakhstan has pledged [Carbon Neutrality Strategy until 2060](#) and updated its [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#), aiming to reduce GHG emissions by 15% (unconditionally) and 25% (conditionally) by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. However, the implementation remains slow. Coal still accounts for about 70% of electricity generation, and the share of renewables is under 5-6%. Barriers include limited green financing, outdated infrastructure, and low private sector engagement. The 2024 floods, fires and mudslides exposed weak regional preparedness and climate resilience. There is no dedicated national climate law, and risk management remains reactive. Public participation in climate policy is minimal. Civil society calls for a climate emergency framework, legal mechanisms for just transition, and investment in nature-based and community-driven solutions. Strengthening local government capacity and integrating climate goals into budget planning are urgently needed.

Sources: Kazakhstan VNR 2025, CSO Statement 2025, People's Scorecard 2025.

## 7. Progress since last VNR

If your country has already delivered a previous VNR, please set out progress made on the agreed priorities.

Please set out areas for follow up from the last VNR. Is there a national action plan based on the SDG strategy/National Development Plan and the VNR assessment? Was there a policy and/or data-based gap analysis developed and if so, has it led to policy prioritization or broader policy dialogue?

Since its previous VNR, Kazakhstan has made notable progress: a Parliamentary Commission on the SDGs was established in 2023; the SDG localization methodology was adopted; national and regional indicators were updated (131 total, 69 currently in use); the first Voluntary Local Review (Almaty city) was presented; and a national Carbon Neutrality Strategy until 2060 was launched. However, there is no formal national action plan explicitly based on the VNR findings. While policy and data gap analysis was conducted during regional consultations and stakeholder engagement processes, this has not yet translated into comprehensive policy

prioritization. Persistent challenges include limited availability of disaggregated data, weak integration between strategic and budget planning, and low awareness of the SDGs among local authorities. These factors hinder effective SDG localization and risk reducing the VNR process to a formal exercise without a deeper impact.

### **8. Civil society engagement with government**

Has your organisation/coalition had a regular policy dialogue with relevant government ministries on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

Has civil society been invited to supply and/or review evidence and data? If yes, please provide details.

Yes, civil society was actively engaged in the preparation of the 2025 VNR. CSOs, independent experts and youth representatives participated in consultations across regions, helped identify SDG priorities and contributed to qualitative assessments. The People's Scorecard (PSC) survey, coordinated by ARGO and partners, provided civil society-led analysis of SDG progress, which was integrated into the VNR. Essay competitions and public dialogues also ensured the inclusion of diverse societal perspectives, particularly those of young people and vulnerable groups.

### **9. Key groups who face being left behind**

Please detail which groups are most often subject to marginalisation or discrimination in your national context.

In Kazakhstan, marginalisation affects several cross-sectoral groups. Low-income households face high debt and limited access to essential services. Women, especially in rural areas, are underrepresented in decision-making and face a 24% gender pay gap. The political participation of women remains below 18%. The LGBTIQ+ community experiences discrimination due to the absence of anti-discrimination legislation. People with disabilities face barriers to inclusive education, employment and public life. Youth, particularly in rural regions, suffer from high unemployment and limited access to quality education. Stateless persons and migrants also encounter challenges in accessing legal rights and services. Rural communities overall are disproportionately impacted by poor infrastructure, environmental degradation, and lack of participation in natural resource governance. Civic activists and human rights defenders operate under growing restrictions, with shrinking civic space undermining SDG 16. These overlapping vulnerabilities hinder progress across SDGs 1, 4, 5, 10, 13 and 16.

### **10. Public awareness**

How well is the 2030 Agenda publicised in your country?

Have there been any public campaigns on the SDGs? Have materials related to the 2030 Agenda been translated into local languages? Which languages? Are local governments actively engaged in the SDGs? If so, how? Are educational bodies and researchers actively seeking to analyse and share the SDGs?

The 2030 Agenda has moderate visibility in Kazakhstan. Public awareness remains low, despite campaigns such as SDG essay contests for youth, regional consultations, and digital

tools like the SDG monitoring platform. SDG materials are available in Kazakh and Russian. The localization methodology was approved in 2024, and 145 regional indicators were identified, yet local governments vary in their engagement. Educational institutions and researchers have contributed to SDG analysis, including the national People's Scorecard process. However, broader outreach remains limited, and meaningful integration into public discourse and local planning is still a work in progress.

## PART B.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Civil Society Development Association (ARGO) together with the Public Opinion Research Center (CIOM) conducted the national People's Scorecard survey. This is an independent assessment of civil society's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Kazakhstan. The research methodology was developed by the Action for Sustainable Development. The experts of this organization conduct a comparative analysis of progress in SDG implementation at the national level, using the People's Scorecard approach from the perspective of civil society. The research methodology is based on a qualitative assessment of the implementation of each Sustainable Development Goal, using a questionnaire with a system of indicators.

The object of the research is civil society organizations, experts, academia, journalists, public leaders and civic activists. The questionnaire was developed on the platform <https://docs.google.com/forms> in two languages (Kazakh and Russian). Links to the questionnaire were sent to all survey participants, and civil society representatives chose their preferred language of the questionnaire and filled out the questionnaire using the appropriate link.

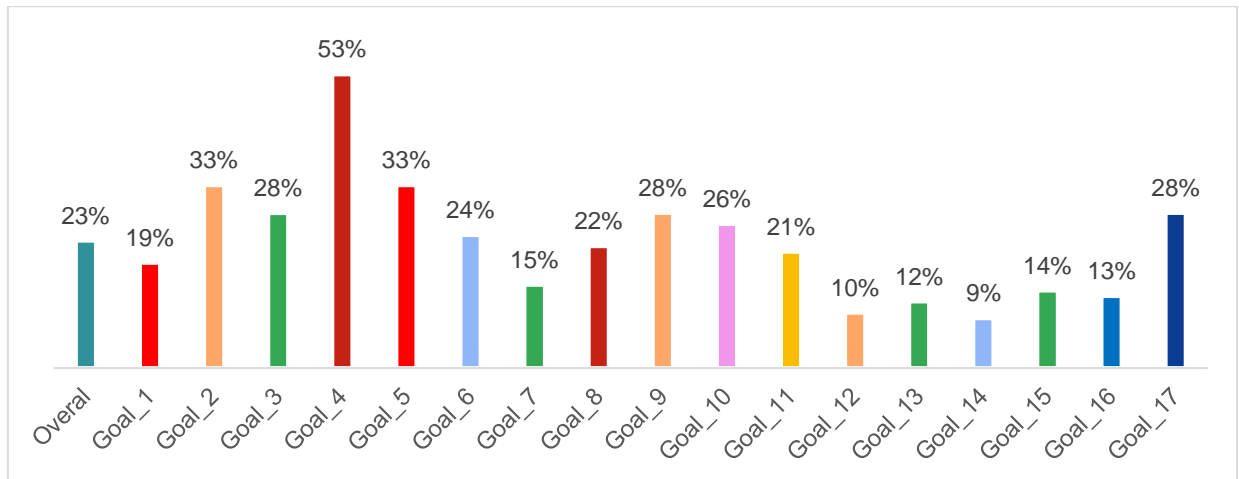
The survey included two stages:

- At the first stage, quantitative research (survey) was conducted, where 107 representatives of various sectors of the country participated: non-governmental organizations, public associations, scientific and educational organizations, mass media and businesses. The survey sample represents various fields of activity of public organizations.
- At the second stage, qualitative research was conducted (focus group discussions): after processing the quantitative survey data, experts were invited to discuss the survey results and adjust the data if necessary.

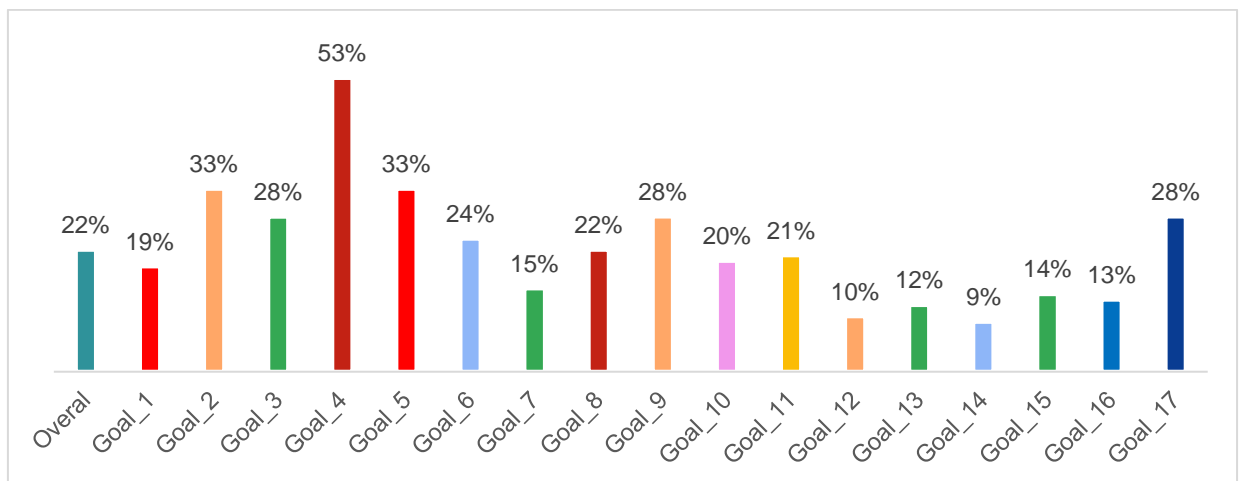
It should be noted that in 2022 the quality and scale of the SDG implementation process was assessed based on key factors such as policies, budgets, institutions, transparency, participation and partnerships – this was a process-oriented assessment. Since 2023, the indicator framework has been focused on measuring results, and survey participants were asked to assess the tangible progress made since 2015 on each SDG. Thus, the People's Scorecard is still a tool based on the perception of SDG implementation, but now the assessment is aimed at identifying general trends in the progress of achieving the SDGs rather than the quality and scale of this process.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Figure 1 shows comparative data on the assessment of SDG achievement based on the survey results. When discussing the results, civil society representatives confirmed the indicated data, correcting only the achievement of SDG 10, noting that it should be reduced from 26% to 20%. As a result, the total SDG achievement indicator decreased from 23% to 22%. The assessment data after discussion with experts are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 1. Comparative data of SDG assessment based on the survey results**



**Figure 2. Comparative data of SDG assessment after discussion of the initial survey results**

**END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE**

According to the assessment of civil society representatives, Kazakhstan has achieved this goal by 19%.

The country continues to experience high levels of economic vulnerability and poverty, especially in rural and remote regions. The main causes of poverty include inflation, rising prices for products and utilities, low purchasing power, and stagnating real incomes. Unemployment remains an acute problem, especially in small towns and rural areas. The system of social protection and state support is facing fragmentation and insufficient efficiency. Since 2025, there have been disruptions in the provision of social services due to new licensing requirements, and corruption and inefficiency of public administration undermine the implementation of social programs.

Inequality and restrictions in the labor market particularly affect women over the age of 49, pensioners, people with disabilities, rural residents, migrants and the self-employed. The inclusiveness of the environment and equal access to services remain at a low level. Vulnerable groups of the population are more affected by the effects of natural disasters and climate change, such as flooding, droughts and heat waves. Emergency response mechanisms are not transparent and insufficiently effective. Vulnerability reduction programs exist, but their implementation is weak, and funding often does not reach citizens.

**General conclusion on SDG 1 in Kazakhstan**

The adoption of the new Social Code and laws on protection of women's rights are positive steps aimed at improving the social situation in the country. However, to achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty, it is necessary to carry out systematic work, including comprehensive measures, more targeted support for vulnerable groups, reducing social inequality and strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Official data on poverty may underestimate the real situation, which requires more careful monitoring and assessment of the situation on the ground. It is important to take into account the opinions and needs of various social groups, as well as to ensure transparency and effectiveness of social programs implementation.

The outlined conclusions are based on the comments of the survey participants:

- *According to statistical data for 2024, the poverty rate in Kazakhstan is currently low at 5.4% of the total population. This indicator has decreased over the years. The cost of living and the minimum wage increased, with a daily*

*threshold of 1,540 tenge (\$3.34). This is a low indicator, given current market prices, the threshold is considered low because this indicator does not cover the daily cost of basic needs per person. Also, according to statistics, the average salary in the country is 434,982 tenge, but this figure varies greatly in different regions. Especially the situation in rural areas is deplorable, in private organizations people receive from 60,000 to 120,000 tenge, and food prices are even more expensive. Secondary education in the country is free of charge. But after secondary school, higher education is fee-based, or you may receive a grant, but there are few of them, which is probably why we have few specialists in socially significant professions because it is very difficult to get a grant, and not everyone can pay for their studies. In terms of gender equality, the situation is improving. The law "On Amendments to Ensure Women's Rights and Child Safety" was adopted in 2024, and women are increasingly participating in public processes and have more opportunities for realizing their potential.*

- *I think there is very little progress. It may be higher in big cities of Kazakhstan, but since I live in a small district center and work/communicate more with the rural population, the standard of living is very different. It is almost close to poverty in the provinces due to the lack of work opportunities, unfavorable conditions for small businesses and farmsteads, as well as high prices of goods and services, including basic necessities (delivery to the rural areas is more expensive).*
- *90% of the population earns less than 151,000 tenge (\$284) per month, and about 1 million people live below the poverty line with incomes below 45,000 tenge (\$90). Analysts at Halyk Finance note that 10% of the richest citizens control almost 25% of all incomes, while the incomes of 50% of the population are below the minimum wage in 2023 (70,000 tenge, \$134).*
- *According to the World Bank's report on poverty in Kazakhstan, the situation requires further measures to ensure a more even distribution of income and effective social support mechanisms.*  
[https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext\\_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/current/Global\\_POVEQ\\_KAZ.pdf](https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/current/Global_POVEQ_KAZ.pdf)
- *The standard of living of the population has improved over the past 10 years. Nevertheless, this indicator is still low. Equal rights and access are not guaranteed.*
- *There is equal access to education, but there is also a division of society into income strata, and hence elite or ordinary secondary schools with different levels of education.*



### END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

There is no hunger in Kazakhstan in its classical global sense, but there are problems of hidden hunger and malnutrition among vulnerable groups of the population, especially in rural areas, among children, the elderly and low-income families.

High food prices and low incomes of the population limit access to high-quality, nutritious food. Government nutrition programs in schools and kindergartens are working, but their coverage is limited, and the quality of nutrition does not always meet scientifically sound standards.

Programs and strategies are developed, but not systematically implemented. Agriculture is often monopolized, and small farms lose access to subsidies. Support programs exist but they do not provide a steady increase in the incomes of small producers. In some regions, there has been progress and growth in cooperation, especially through international partnerships.

#### **General conclusion on SDG 2 in Kazakhstan**

Despite the absence of mass hunger in Kazakhstan in the global sense, sustainable access to high-quality and nutritious food remains a serious challenge, especially for vulnerable groups of the population. The problems of malnutrition, an unbalanced diet and rising food prices reflect the vulnerability of the country's food system. Agriculture faces many structural and climatic barriers: land degradation, water scarcity, high dependence on imports and insufficient support for small producers.

There are government programs in place but they are often not implemented systematically, do not cover all target groups and do not provide sustainable results. The lack of effective implementation of strategies, as well as weak integration of climate and adaptation measures hinder the achievement of sustainable rural development goals.

To advance SDG 2, it is necessary to revise approaches to food policy, provide more active support for local farmers, expand the coverage of social programs, invest in sustainable agricultural infrastructure and systematically work in regions and on the ground to adapt the rural sector to climate change.

The outlined conclusions are based on the comments of the survey participants:

- *There are no obvious problems with hunger in Kazakhstan, in my opinion, but the development of agriculture and the introduction of new technologies are under threat due to high corruption. This also applies to the development of sustainable food production systems.*

- *Although overall progress is observed in the form of diversity through the import of products, there are significant differences between urban and rural areas. In remote areas, access to diversity remains a challenge, but rural residents still have access to quality and nutritious home-made food due to livestock keeping. In recent years, Kazakhstan has been investing in the infrastructure for storing agricultural products to provide citizens with vegetable products. This is important for ensuring the food security of the population.*
- *Vulnerable segments of the population face limited access to nutritious food due to low incomes and insufficient social support.*
- *Impacts of climate change, droughts and other environmental factors have a negative impact on agriculture. This leads to lower production volumes and food insecurity. The need to plan adaptation measures is still not a priority for decision makers.*
- *There is such fact: in organizations where orphaned children are kept, meat consumption rates are almost significantly lower than scientifically based standards.8. The daily norm of meat consumption is set at 100 g. At the same time, the daily meat consumption rate set by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for preschool children is 105 g, children of school age – 125 g. Therefore, the actual daily norm established in the Institution is lower than that established by the Government by 5 g and 25 g, respectively, and considerably lower than the scientifically based daily consumption rate determined by Order of the Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 503 dated December 9, 2016. For preschoolers, it is 146 g, for schoolchildren the average norm is  $(171+204+247)/3=207.3$  g. Thus, the daily meat norm in the nutrition of preschoolers in the Institution is underestimated from the scientifically based one by 31.5%  $(146-100=46/146*100=31.5\%)$ , schoolchildren – by 51.7%  $(207.3-100)=107.3/207.3*100=51.7\%$ .*
- *Malnutrition is an urgent problem for the population of Kazakhstan. The minimum wage in Kazakhstan is 85,000 tenge, according to official statistics, a huge number of people live at the minimum wage level. Accordingly, they cannot afford to buy a full nutritious food basket, i.e. meat, vegetables, fruits, and other healthy products, since most of the money is spent on other monthly expenses (utilities, travel, daily meals, monthly tariff for the mobile operator, household expenses and other necessary things). This salary is not enough to provide even half of a person's needs. According to the data for 2023, the number of farms has increased, but there is a decrease in subsidiary farms, as livestock keeping is very expensive. Farming methods are gradually improving, modern farms are appearing, and technologies are introduced in large farms, but their number is small.*

- *Agriculture is a very sensitive industry to changes in the market, logistics, and prices. At the moment, the state is returning pastures to public use, however, there is no instrument for their distribution and effective use. There are many lands in Kazakhstan that are being degraded, and therefore there is an uncontrolled decrease in valuable plant species. In the northern regions, the population is decreasing in 2025, 44 villages were abandoned in North Kazakhstan region. The production of private farms (personal subsidiary farms) is decreasing, but it still takes more than 50%. In 2017, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Agriculture, as part of the program for the development of the agro-industrial complex of the Republic of Kazakhstan, noted a low workload of meat processing plants in the Agricultural Processing Map, which amounted to 171. Their average load is estimated at 38% (of the total capacity of 260 thousand tons). The share of meat processing is 12% of the total volume of meat produced (800 thousand tons). According to Russia's Federal Center for the Development of Agricultural Products Export, following the results of 11 months of 2024, the Russian Federation exported over \$190 million worth of finished meat products. The growth in money increased by almost 30% over the year.*
- *The country is highly dependent on imports and their prices, as well as on the exchange rate. The seeds used are 90% imported, as well as genetic material in livestock breeding. Support through subsidies does not work, it is more correct to switch to cheap loans. The GDP from agriculture is below 5%. Currently, animal husbandry is significantly inferior to crop production in terms of state support, although the more developed a country is, the higher is the share of livestock production in agriculture and gross product. For example, in Germany, crop production accounts for 30-40% and animal husbandry - 70%. It is also necessary to take into account that as of January 1, 2025 the volume of wheat in the domestic market amounted to 15.7 million tons. This is a 34.6% increase compared to the same date last year. However, exports in 2024 decreased by 18% compared to 2023. 5.9 million tons of grain were exported abroad. Given that in 2023, farmers asked to extend loans due to the fact that heavy rains did not allow them to gather a good harvest, there was a lot of sprouted grain in the farms, and in 2024 farmers repeated the request. The reason given was the inability to sell grain and arrears on subsidies. Thus, agriculture in Kazakhstan is unstable, sustainability is low and strongly depends on government support, imported genetics and imported finished products.*
- *Working in a children's institution (I am the founder of the Umai orphanage), analyzing the anthropometric data of children over the past 25 years, I observe a deficiency of height and weight, deterioration of indicators (the symmetry of hands, face, volume) according to WHO standards. At the same time, the work in the project to support children suffering from iron deficiency anemia, iodine*

*deficiency, bronchial asthma and diabetes mellitus has shown a significant deterioration in the situation. Excess weight in children as an indicator of an unbalanced diet is a problem among schoolchildren and students. In Kyzylorda region, the amount of pasture and cultivated land is decreasing, which negatively affects the work of farmers.*

- *In Kazakhstan, there are government programs to support motherhood and childhood, such as a universally progressive model of patronage visits for pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years old. First of all, it promotes early detection of risks by allowing caregivers to visit families regularly and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the health of the mother and child, including risk factors such as malnutrition, stunting and anemia. The individual approach of the program takes into account the social, economic and medical characteristics of the family, which makes it possible to provide targeted assistance and recommendations on nutrition, care and development of the child. An important aspect is the support of breastfeeding – healthcare workers carry out information work with mothers, helping to strengthen this practice, which reduces the risk of malnutrition in children. In addition, the program includes education and counseling for parents on nutrition, childcare and disease prevention, which in the long run contributes to improving the overall health of children. It also helps identify cases of social vulnerability, including poverty, domestic violence and food shortages, ensuring timely involvement of social services and the provision of necessary support. As a result of regular visits and preventive work, child mortality and morbidity rates decrease because possible health problems are identified and eliminated at an early stage. However, lack of funding limits the coverage of this program, which may reduce its effectiveness in combating malnutrition among vulnerable groups.*



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

### General conclusion on SDG 3 in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is showing some progress in the healthcare sector: digital technologies are developing, coverage through the compulsory social health insurance (CSHI) system is expanding, and access to high-tech types of medical care is improving. Nevertheless, the achievement of SDG 3 is fully hampered by a number of persistent barriers, especially in the context of unequal access to medicine between urban and rural regions, as well as among vulnerable groups of the population.

Significant progress has been made in the field of maternal and child health, but challenges remain in providing quality care in remote areas where mortality rates remain high. The rise of chronic diseases, limited prevention and the weak mental health system require systemic solutions and a sector-wide approach.

Of particular concern is the increase in drug addiction and the decrease in the age of onset of substance use among adolescents, as well as the latent spread of HIV. Lack of sexual education, poor preventive work and low parental involvement exacerbate the situation. At the same time, positive practices are emerging, such as early family planning involving men and the development of men's health rooms in rural clinics.

Environmental risks also remain significant: air and water pollution directly affect public health but is not accompanied by systematic monitoring. Despite the availability of Compulsory Social Health Insurance (CSHI), access to medical care still depends on income, a region of residence and citizen status. People without permanent registration, the unemployed and victims of violence are often excluded from the system.

Corruption, inefficient spending of funds, overburdening of medical institutions and weak integration of medical and social care continue to undermine the effectiveness of reforms. To achieve the objectives of SDG 3, it is necessary to ensure:

- Equal access to quality medical care;
- Development of prevention programs, especially in the field of mental, reproductive and adolescent health;
- Strengthening civil society engagement in program monitoring and evaluation;
- Sustainable financing and combating corruption;
- Implementation of innovative, inclusive and interdisciplinary approaches in healthcare.
- *The State implements maternity support programs, including a universally progressive model of patronage visits for pregnant women and children under 5 years of age, which contributes to early detection of risks and improvement of medical care. However, lack of funding limits the coverage of this program,*

*especially in rural areas. The CSHI program has improved the population's access to medical services. However, questions remain about the uniformity of their quality and accessibility in different regions of Kazakhstan. There is still a shortage of qualified personnel in the healthcare system. It is necessary to remove social workers of the healthcare system from the category of "Other workers" and increase salaries in order to attract qualified specialists who will be able to provide professional support to patients, provide counseling and support to vulnerable groups of the population, as well as effectively interact with medical personnel to comprehensively address social and medical problems.*

- A significant reduction in maternal and perinatal mortality has been achieved, innovative approaches in the field of healthcare are introduced, youth health centers have been established, but there is insufficient access to free contraceptives (there is no unified procurement system). This issue is being worked out by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which has been implementing the Analar Saulygy program since 2025. Under this program, there are 8 key areas, namely strengthening the reproductive health of adolescents and youth, preparing couples for pregnancy, antenatal care, providing contraception, public awareness campaigns on prevention of STIs, HIV, and abortions.*
- Hospitals and medical institutions are modernized in the country, digital technologies are introduced, which should improve the quality of medical services and optimize the work of the healthcare system. The introduction of medical applications helps improve coordination between different specialists, increase the transparency of services and quickly obtain information. Despite these improvements, there remains a difference in the quality and accessibility of medical services between urban and rural areas. In remote regions, access to modern medical technologies and highly qualified care remains limited. High dependence on the import of medicines poses risks to the safety of the people's life.*
- There is no evidence base for morbidity caused by air, water and soil pollution. Environmental fines of enterprises are not going to restore environmental justice.*
- 3.1. Pregnant women are under the supervision of doctors before giving birth. All women have equal access to medical care and childbirth. 3.2. Children from birth to adolescence are registered in polyclinics at their place of residence. 3.3. Diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and hepatitis are monitored and treated at the state level in Kazakhstan. 3.6. Road safety also depends on citizens driving. The state, in turn, builds and repairs roads. 3.8. Some categories of Kazakhstan's citizens receive free medicines, for example, diabetics or patients with cardiovascular diseases registered in polyclinics. You can also get permission to perform surgical operations for various diseases through the portals.*

- *I cannot give a high score because the healthcare system is not efficient enough, and the reason for this is corruption in the system, a catastrophic decline in the professionalism of doctors and regular environmental problems.*
- *The rate of teenage pregnancy is slightly decreasing, the quality of knowledge and behavior of young people in the field of reproductive health is improving, Universal healthcare coverage is available, but getting a range of services means a lot of difficulties, more problems during visits. There is a growth of problems in this area - on the way to significantly reducing the number of diseases and deaths associated with environmental pollution. Such growth is observed in Almaty and East Kazakhstan region, and many regions, especially cities, have high levels of pollution.*
- *Road deaths are increasing, as well as synthetic drug production, and the problem of environmental pollution is poorly addressed.*
- *The healthcare system is operating extremely inefficiently: high levels of corruption, poor quality of medical services, total commercialization of the system, embezzlement of allocated funds at all levels.*
- *Coverage of the population with medical services is constantly expanding; the birth rate is growing (about 30% of Kazakhstan's population are people under the age of 18); objective 3.9 - there is an understanding at all levels, but more needs to be done.*
- *Kazakhstan has all the conditions to ensure thorough screening of pregnant women, patronage is provided after the birth of a child, and access is free under the CSHI. The infant death rate was 8.1% in 2023 - this is not a low indicator in comparison with other countries. The main causes of death are circulatory diseases, neoplasms, respiratory organs, etc. Measures are needed to detect such serious diseases early, to educate women about the need for early screening during pregnancy, pregnancy planning, awareness of the consequences for the child, and to follow a healthy lifestyle during pregnancy.*
- *Unfortunately, the share of expenditures on basic services (education, healthcare and social protection) in the total amount of government spending is decreasing: in 2021 – 56.6% and only 51.8% in 2023. However, maternal mortality and other indicators have relatively stabilized compared to the COVID-19 period.*
- *We must admit that Kazakhstan has been able to reduce child mortality. On the other hand, we take a leading position in Central Asia in suicide among adolescents. The fight against tuberculosis has gone well. However, it is not possible to reduce deaths from car accidents due to the quality of roads and their maintenance. Healthy lifestyle and sexual and reproductive health are promoted at a low level. According to the Ministry of Health's reports, the coverage of CSHI and the guaranteed volume of medical services is high, but the quality suffers greatly in the regions with an acute shortage of doctors and equipment. There is a shortage of vital drugs. As part of the instructions of the President of the country, the national project "Modernization of Rural Healthcare" is being actively implemented in North Kazakhstan region,*

*however, it is not possible to put all facilities into operation at present. There are significant corruption risks in this industry. The maintenance of cattle burial grounds gives cause for major concern, more than 900 foci of particularly dangerous diseases have been registered in Kazakhstan over the past three years. And this is based on official data only. As stated by Baurzhan Mukashev, senior prosecutor of the Department for supervision of compliance with environmental legislation, during a meeting of the Mazhilis Committee for Agrarian Issues on Tuesday, in 2023 alone, anthrax outbreaks occurred in Akmola, Zhambyl, Turkestan and Karaganda regions, resulting in the deaths of 100 cattle, while 37 people were infected and one died.*

- *The country's healthcare system is developing, but significant challenges remain in ensuring equal and high-quality access to medical services. Maternal and child mortality rates are improving, vaccination coverage is increasing, but problems remain with the prevention of chronic diseases, mental health and access to medical care in rural areas. COVID-19 has exposed the vulnerabilities of the system, and staff shortages, overloaded institutions and lack of funding remain barriers. It is also necessary to strengthen work on the formation of a healthy lifestyle, prevention and improvement of conditions for providing assistance to vulnerable groups of the population.*
- *The construction of new hospitals and the creation of conditions for young doctors are positive aspects, but the lack of CSHI transparency, incompetent requirements for doctors in the form of endless certifications, advanced training, excessive reporting when admitting patients, ill-conceived protocols, inflexibility of the system, low-skilled personnel reduce the productivity of medical care.*



**ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

Primary and secondary education are provided for all children and are compulsory. Access to preschool education is uneven: coverage is high in cities, and there is a shortage of places in kindergartens in rural areas. The possibility of acquiring vocational education and retraining for adults through employment centers is expanding.

The quality of education remains a problem, especially in overloaded schools, in rural areas and among children with special needs. Curricula change frequently and are not always adapted to the requirements of the labor market. Career guidance and practical skills are poorly developed; sustainable development skills, financial literacy and social responsibility are not a priority.

There is a shortage of qualified teachers, especially in rural areas. The increase in teachers' salaries is a positive trend, however, the psycho-emotional burden and reporting remain high. Schools in a number of regions are overloaded, with a three-shift study. The infrastructure needs to be updated.

Digital platforms and distance learning courses are being introduced, but their availability and quality are mixed. There exists an insufficient coverage of digital skills and weak digital infrastructure in the regions.

Formally, gender equality has been achieved, but gender stereotypes persist in remote regions. Education for children with disabilities is limited – there are not enough adapted programs, specialists, and an inclusive environment. There is no national sex education program, especially for teenagers.

Higher education remains expensive, and the number of grants is insufficient. Kazakhstan's universities are losing out in terms of competitiveness, especially in terms of graduate employment. There is a 'brain drain' – talented young people go abroad.

### **General conclusion on SDG 4 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is showing progress in education coverage, especially at the primary and secondary levels. However, the quality, equality and practical orientation of education remain challenges. Without systemic reforms and priorities for sustainable development in education policy, achieving SDG 4 by 2030 is in doubt.

Some comments by the survey participants:

- *In recent years, Kazakhstan has been taking measures and reforms to improve access to basic education. Education digitalization programs contribute to modernization of the educational process. The introduction of distance learning*

*platforms, e-learning materials and online courses helps students adapt to modern requirements. The Government is implementing projects to update curricula and improve teaching methods, taking into account international standards, through which teachers must constantly prove their professionalism, which, unfortunately, affects their mental state. The reforms should help improve the quality of education focused on the development of critical thinking and practical skills among students needed in modern life. There is still a problem of uneven access to quality education between cities and remote rural areas. In some regions, the infrastructure and equipment of educational institutions require significant improvements and budget injections.*

- *The low level of education. The use of teaching methods for children with mental disabilities for all children will lead to the emergence of uneducated youth in the future.*
- *4.1. Every child in Kazakhstan has access to primary and secondary education, and it is compulsory. 4.2. Children in big cities receive early education; in rural areas, children do not have such an opportunity. 4.5. There is no gender discrimination for school education in Kazakhstan. 4.7 Education itself is already a sign of sustainable development. All items are confirmed by the fact that many schoolchildren in the country continue to study in different countries.*
- *There is access to education, but its quality is not always sufficient. There are certain problems with access to education for young people from rural areas, as well as for girls from the southern regions.*
- *In terms of getting grants, education is difficult to access, after completion of the study there are no jobs available.*
- *Digitalization of educational programs at all levels leaves much to be desired. Also, as of Q1 2025, only 1 university has a license to provide distance learning. I am not a parent myself, but I have seen many violations against teachers in the media and on the Internet.*
- *Extreme shortage and low accessibility, there are no places in kindergartens to ensure high-quality preschool education so that children are ready for primary education – Low quality. Schools require experts at the entrance, and kindergartens do not provide appropriate training. Weak – girls and boys have received primary and secondary education; there is no complete focus on high-quality universal public education, a shortage and overload of schools, a desire for indicators rather than reality. It is necessary to fully provide all districts of Almaty with public schools and to reduce private schools, to develop comprehensive schools of the highest level for the nation. In this area, the improvement of the system of vocational training and the preparation of young people and adults for employment and entrepreneurship exists at the level of major cities but not in the regions. There is no system, no quality, no real multi-step approach to the development of a young person. Lack of care from the state*

*and coverage of everyone. Parents are agonizing over how to give their children a good education and keep up with their own work, as you have to pay for good quality.*

- *Kazakhstan ranks 62nd out of 93 in the ranking of countries in terms of the quality of the education system.*
- *Some progress has been made with higher salaries for teachers, but this measure will have an impact in at least 7-10 years. In other respects, the educational system, like healthcare, is extremely corrupt at all levels. Again, as a result of its commercialization. The level of school education is still low.*
- *100% enrollment, but there is a dangerous trend - reducing hours in mathematics, physics, and chemistry (The Ministry of Education demonstrates weak competencies and is going to combine chemistry, physics and biology into one subject - natural science; this is unacceptable in the modern world of digitalization).*
- *The quality of education of Kazakhstani schoolchildren is improving, as our students take prizes at international Olympiads in various disciplines. Programs and competitions are implemented for the comprehensive development of children. New educational institutions are opening. Our technical education is affordable, but young people are not eager to work in rural areas or in a factory. There is also a shortage of qualified personnel with higher education, as higher education is fee-based, and not enough grants are allocated. There is a shortage of teachers and doctors. Kazakhstan is gradually implementing programs to achieve SDG 4.*
- *A large gap between quality education in cities and villages prevents more than 50% of young people from receiving quality education. There is also a difference in the quality of education in the north-south, west-east regions. The situation is even worse in kindergartens. There are no educational and social integration programs for children with inclusion. In higher education, universities are fighting for students, there is no discrimination based on gender and nationality. But domestic universities are not competitive in providing employment and work skills. Dual education does not work in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The student determines himself/herself only after graduation from a university. Literacy and mathematical literacy in Kazakhstan remain at a good level. Education for sustainable development cannot produce results, as there is no explanation of the SDGs in kindergartens, for example, the environmental culture is very weak, as it was, and so is social responsibility. There is no SDG training in the educational system.*
- *Kazakhstan has a fairly good level of education, but in order to fully achieve Goal 4, it is necessary to focus on improving the quality of education, especially in rural areas, expanding access to preschool and higher education, as well as ensuring gender equality at all levels of the educational system.*

- *All children have the opportunity to receive secondary education. Modern education focuses on mathematical literacy, modern technologies are used, schools are equipped with modern equipment.*
- *The outflow of talented youth is a big problem in the sphere of education.*
- *The number of grants for admission is increasing, many graduates have the opportunity to choose a place of study, including abroad.*
- *Preschool education is in a better state than school education, the quality of the curriculum needs to be reviewed.*
- *Progress is associated with greater attention to quality preschool education, but overall progress is held back by limited access to information in Russian and English for young people due to insufficient proficiency in them, and excessive testing of schoolchildren in the learning process.*
- *One part of the goal has been achieved - all children have access to schooling, the situation is different with preschool, but in both cases the quality of education is very low. This is due to the accepted educational programs and the lack of qualified teachers.*
- *In general, there has been little progress in education, but the majority of schoolchildren and students remain uncompetitive. The development of creative skills of children and students is not a priority in the educational process, which negatively affects the development of emotional intelligence. Unfortunately, school is not a safe environment, as there are facts of bullying. At the same time, the great danger of children's development is associated with social irresponsibility and maladaptation of parents.*



## ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Kazakhstan has adopted a number of legislative acts and strategies aimed at promoting women's rights and gender equality. A National Commission for Women's Affairs has been established, and international programs (CEDAW, Spotlight Initiative) are being implemented, but interaction with government agencies is often formal.

Domestic violence remains one of the most acute and systemic problems in Kazakhstan. Despite the tightening of legislation, protection mechanisms are poorly functioning: there is no separate article in the Criminal Code, work programs with aggressors are not implemented, licensing procedures and financing mechanisms for special social institutions – crisis centers require improvement.

Women are formally involved in the economy and politics, but real barriers remain. Persistent gender stereotypes continue to affect women's lives, especially in traditional and rural communities. Among the acute problems are early marriages, bride abductions, and limited career opportunities.

Caring for children, the elderly and sick family members is still perceived as the exclusive responsibility of women and is not recognized at the institutional level. The opportunity for men to take maternity leave exists only formally. There are no effective measures to support women who combine work and caring responsibilities.

### **General conclusion on SDG 5 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is taking legislative and institutional steps towards achieving gender equality. However, in practice the implementation of strategies and programs is faced with formalism, lack of interdepartmental interaction and persistent cultural barriers.

Gender equality remains a declarative norm, while real progress is slowing down due to ineffective mechanisms to protect against violence, lack of funding, weak participation of women in decision-making, and threats against human rights defenders.

Achieving SDG 5 requires systematic implementation of laws, institutional support for women and crisis centers, recognition and redistribution of unpaid work, introduction of a gender-sensitive approach in government programs, and increased civic participation in shaping and monitoring the gender policy.

Some comments by the survey participants:

- *Kazakhstan has adopted legislative acts aimed at protecting women's rights. Government programs and strategies include issues of promoting gender equality, which should be reflected in improving the legal status of women. Kazakhstan actively cooperates with international organizations, such as the*

*United Nations, in the framework of SDG implementation. This cooperation facilitates the exchange of experience and the implementation of best practices in gender equality. Nevertheless, traditional stereotypes regarding the roles of men and women continue to affect women's opportunities, especially in rural areas. The problem of domestic violence remains urgent. Despite legislative initiatives, the effective application of measures to protect victims and prevent such cases requires strengthening.*

- *5.1. There is hidden discrimination. Employers are reluctant to hire young women for fear of pregnancy and child care. 5.2. Violence against women and girls has become more widely discussed in society. Many victims began to publicize cases of domestic violence, violence at work and in various situations. There are also known cases of violence against girls, and the public brings them to court. 5.5. Many women are business leaders. In politics, in my opinion, there is still a factor of mentality about the role of women in society, both among women and men.*
- *Domestic violence remains one of the main problems in the country. Despite the adopted law, there are long-standing traditions and concepts that allow the practice of violence and discrimination to continue. There are still few women represented in government leadership and top management of commercial companies.*
- *Whether the country is on the way to recognizing and supporting unpaid caregiving – there is no progress at all. It is necessary to make a leap in this direction and recognize so that all women with children sigh and believe in themselves, in the importance of their work, and this will result in the quality of education and the desire of women to take care of children.*
- *Despite the strengthening of legislation on combating domestic violence in 2024, it is still ineffective. There is still no anti-discrimination legislation in the country, with a definition of discrimination corresponding to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Combating Discrimination ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan. There are no anti-discrimination institutions and procedures. The issue of the prohibition of harassment in the workplace, etc. has not been resolved.*
- *Little progress has been made due to the recently adopted acts on increasing responsibility for domestic violence. However, the overall situation remains difficult. In particular, the high level of commercialization in healthcare makes sexual and reproductive health services inaccessible.*
- *The role of women in Kazakhstan is becoming significant. Women have enough rights and opportunities, but there is a large proportion of people with a traditional mindset, especially in the southern part of the country, where women are also considered the keeper of the hearth and men the breadwinner. Domestic violence remains high in Kazakhstan, with 100,000 reports of domestic violence filed with the Prosecutor's Office in 2024. Despite the fact*

*that the law was passed after the murder of a young girl, the situation remains deplorable.*

- *5.1. The country has adopted a framework document in the field of achieving equality between women and men. 5.2. Last year, a law criminalizing domestic violence was passed.*
- *5.3. There are NO known cases of child marriage and female organ mutilation. 5.4. There is a practice of maternity leave among dads. Housework and caring for sick family members are not recognized and, accordingly, are not paid. 5.5 There are quotas for women in politics. The areas where women hold leadership positions are mainly related to education and medicine.*
- *The law on violence has been adopted, and in general, domestic violence is not being hushed up now. Objective 5.2 is not being implemented; in terms of objective 5.5, indicators have deteriorated, women's 30% growth and leadership opportunities have not been ensured.*
- *Kazakhstan has made significant strides in achieving gender equality, especially in education and employment. Women are actively involved in the economy, hold senior positions and are represented in the civil service. However, challenges remain, such as the gender pay gap, low representation of women in politics, and persistent stereotypes about the role of women in society. It is important to strengthen measures to prevent domestic violence, expand women's economic opportunities and ensure equal conditions for career growth. Further promotion of gender equality requires an integrated approach, including legislative reforms, educational initiatives, and support for women in business and politics.*
- *Amendments have been made to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Prevention of Domestic Violence”*  
[https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=30525680&pos=3;-106#pos=3;-106](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30525680&pos=3;-106#pos=3;-106)
- *Regression consists in banning women's marches, harassment of feminist initiatives, arrests of female activists.*
- *As compared with other Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan has made some progress with gender equality. In particular, they noted the list of prohibited professions for women, extended the possibility for women to extend paid maternity leave (up to 3 years), men were given the opportunity to adopt a child on an equal basis with women, and domestic violence was criminalized (a law was passed to ensure women's rights and child safety).*
- *At the same time, the ILO Convention 190 has not yet been ratified, and a separate law on combating sexualized harassment and stalking has not been adopted. It is difficult for men to get maternity leave and access to child support during inpatient treatment. Domestic violence has a hidden nature and is often not brought to the stage of punishment. Women with disabilities have a high risk of becoming the target of various forms of violence (physical, sexualized, psychological and economic), as there are no special measures to identify and protect them. Early marriages, migrant women, and women who have been*

*released from prison do not have the necessary support and re-socialization, integration into society.*

- *On April 15, 2024, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a new law aimed at strengthening the protection of women and children from violence, including domestic violence. However, Human Rights Watch notes that the law lacks important provisions such as direct prosecution of domestic violence as a separate crime in the Criminal Code (<https://www.hrw.org/ru/news/2024/04/30/kazakhstan-new-law-protect-women-improved-incomplete>). This problem is regional in nature and is strongly affected by living in a village or city, the religiosity of a family, the economic and social status of the family and education of the parents.*
- *Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has made significant progress in protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality issues. A national model of gender policy, legal framework and mechanism for the protection of human rights have been created. A unique coordinating body is actively working – the National Commission for Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of the country. There are similar commissions under akims in all regions. A legal framework has been created to protect women's rights. By joining the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention, Kazakhstan reaffirmed guarantees for the observance and protection of women's rights.*
- *There are achievements in this goal: there are programs, new laws, new regulatory legal acts in place, but there are questions about the implementation of these programs and law enforcement practices. For example, the introduction of a 30% quota for the participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in decision-making does not work fully, including regions, political parties, etc. The norm in the law on psychological work with aggressors does not work effectively.*

**ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE  
MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL**

Officially, 99% of the population has access to drinking water. However, in reality hundreds of rural settlements, especially in North Kazakhstan region and other regions, still drink water from open sources and wells. The water in these springs is often unsafe and does not pass sanitary control.

Only 2-3% of the population consumes water that meets European standards. Problems: massive chlorination, deterioration of infrastructure, low level of purification, especially in rural areas. Water from centralized sources is often unsuitable for drinking without additional filtration.

Wastewater disposal and treatment remain at a low level. Cesspools are used, including the shores of reservoirs and mountainous areas. Massive contamination of soil and water through unauthorized discharges and septic tanks. The tourist infrastructure increases the load – there is no monitoring of the drainage and removal of wastewater.

The spring floods back in 2024 revealed the weakness of the water resources management system. There is no system for forecasting, storing flood waters and protecting dams. Droughts and climate change exacerbate water scarcity and lead to degradation of aquatic ecosystems. The irrational use of water, especially in household and agriculture, remains a serious problem.

Cities are better off than rural areas, but even in cities there is a deterioration in sanitation, a drop in water quality and an increase in tariffs. In rural areas, there is a lack of reliable supply systems, corruption in the construction of water pipes, inefficient technologies, and a lack of specialists.

The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation was established (2023), which may facilitate policy coordination, but the results are still subtle. Society is poorly aware of the importance of rational water use; there are no educational and awareness campaigns.

**General conclusion on SDG 6 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is taking steps to achieve SDG 6, but:

- Progress is extremely uneven, with rural areas in unfavorable conditions.
- Systemic reforms, anti-corruption measures, infrastructure modernization, improved wastewater management, and public involvement in monitoring and planning processes are required.
- *Kazakhstan is adapting global approaches and SDG indicators to enable monitoring and assessment of water supply and sanitation quality at the national level. The measures taken should contribute to improving water resources management and improving the quality of services provided. Despite*

*this, the problem of insufficient access to safe drinking water and safe sanitation remains in rural areas. Large cities have outdated infrastructure, despite the increased cost of services. Industrial, agricultural and domestic pollution have a very negative impact on the quality of water resources. There are big problems with wastewater treatment. Climate change leads to a deterioration of the water balance, especially in regions with limited fresh water supplies. Spring floods are observed, leading to the destruction of homes, and summer droughts, leading to steppe and forest fires. There is no use of technologies to preserve flood waters for the summer season. There are no or insufficient adaptation measures and effective management of water resources, as well as the involvement of local residents in the planning and monitoring of water resources.*

- *The environment is deteriorating and the lack of access to clean water continues.*
- *In this area, a lot of effort will have to be put into completing all the points. There is still no deep understanding and awareness of the role of water as the main resource on earth in society and among officials. But, according to the way the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan was created, it is hoped that the existing problems will be understood and discussed with a wide range of stakeholders. 6.4 The floods of spring 2024 have revealed many pressing issues that require cooperation and respect from neighboring countries. During the floods, we observed the discharge of a large amount of water from Russia. And at the same time, there is a regulation of water along the Volga to the Caspian Sea. 6.5. In recent decades, gross violations have been committed against water systems (Taldykol, Astana), residential complexes and private houses have been built in water protection zones.*
- *This problem is not acute, in my opinion, due to the fact that the country has a sufficient supply of water resources. But the protection of water systems and the management of water resources may deteriorate due to incompetence and corruption.*
- *The most difficult way is towards improving water quality, reducing pollution and promoting safe reuse of water worldwide - there are few real results, water quality is in question, more commercialization of water, private management and sale of water to the public using the example of rural areas, where no one looks or checks water, the water tariffs are rising. Full transfer and management of water resources by the state alone is needed. Water scarcity increases on a daily basis.*
- *Little progress has been made in providing the population with tap water from centralized sources. However, the water quality remains low. Only 2-3% of the population consumes water that meets the requirements of European standards. Mass chlorination is still used. If attention is paid to water supply in the country, then sanitation, which should have been solved in an inseparable complex with it, remains in the pen. Against the background of the rapid growth of opportunities for water consumption, the volume of wastewater, including*

*untreated wastewater illegally discharged into the environment, is growing rapidly. No attempts by the public to draw the Government's attention to this problem have been successful. Toilets with cesspools, which have long been banned in developed countries, continue to cover all settlements of the country with a continuous network, including in mountain gorges and coasts of open reservoirs.*

- *Access to clean water is being addressed; objectives 6.3 and 6.4 require more understanding and work; objectives 6.5 has not yet been solved in terms of restoring water-related ecosystems to conserve water resources (and even a weak understanding at the level of the Ministry of Ecology and the Ministry of Water Resources).*
- *Upon the results of 2024, 99% of Kazakhstanis have access to clean water. However, there are remote villages that drink water from open wells, and about 200 villages in North Kazakhstan alone do not have access to tap water, and there are even more throughout Kazakhstan. Water from wells can be very dangerous, as it can be contaminated. MSW problems are an urgent problem in Kazakhstan. Only 24% of MSW is sorted in Kazakhstan. We have about 50 processing plants across the country. That's quite a bit. In addition to authorized landfills, the number of spontaneous unauthorized landfills is constantly increasing. It is planned to open 37 more new plants.*
- *There are many questions about cross-border rivers. In 2024, there was a tragedy in West Kazakhstan when several cities were flooded by the Urals, and the center of Kazakhstan suffered from floods, too. There is no flood forecasting system to prevent flooding of nearby regions.*
- *Unfortunately, the improvement of water quality does not produce results, despite the huge funds allocated. The first reason is corruption. The second is that borehole technologies using filters quickly fail. The third is that laboratory tests and Sanitary Epidemiological Stations do not provide in-depth and reliable studies. 4 - Organizational reasons - after commissioning, no one wants to take over the management and maintenance of facilities, which quickly leads to high wear and tear. 5 - Dependent moods do not allow building a constructive dialogue. Improving the efficiency of water resources use and reducing water scarcity in North Kazakhstan region adopted a volume tariff per person. This is correct, but there is criticism from society. Integrated water resources management - the floods of 2024 revealed all the problems with dams operated by the Ministry of Emergency Situations and local executive authorities. All facilities do not take into account hydrology and groundwater. There are no professions and specialized universities to train respective specialists.*
- *Water quality remains problematic, especially in rural areas where access to safe drinking water is limited. Rapid changes in the area of water basins indicate a deterioration in the state of aquatic ecosystems. To achieve sustainable progress, measures are needed to improve water quality, develop infrastructure for its purification and reuse, and actively protect aquatic ecosystems.*

- *Regression, in particular, is associated with the rapid growth of tourist infrastructure in gorges, on the shores of reservoirs, and the related sharp increase in wastewater discharges in the absence of proper monitoring and control. No one controls the condition of septic tanks and the volume of wastewater removal, which must be moved out dozens or even hundreds of kilometers from the site where they were generated. Therefore, the vast majority of septic tanks are specially equipped in such a way that effluents infiltrate into the ground. The Deputy Minister of Natural Resources did not answer this question at a meeting with the public in Taraz.*
- *Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a human right, however, billions of people face difficulties in their daily lives when trying to access even the most basic services. Clean drinking water remains available only to solvent segments of the population. The problem of drinking water in rural areas remains quite urgent.*
- *Access to clean water is good in cities, but problems remain in rural areas. Water quality is deteriorating due to pollution and insufficient wastewater treatment. Water resources are used inefficiently, and there are large losses in agriculture. Water resources management requires modernization, and cross-border cooperation is weak. Water-related ecosystems are being degraded due to climate change and economic activity.*
- *The effectiveness of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Republic of Kazakhstan established in 2023 is currently not being comprehensively felt. Programs for access to clean drinking water in rural areas are delayed due to corruption risks, substandard suppliers and mechanisms. In cities, the situation is deteriorating in terms of sanitation and hygiene, and water chemical indicators have decreased in cities.*

**ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL**

Almost the entire population of the country has access to electricity, including rural and remote areas. However, there are interruptions in a number of places. Economic accessibility is declining: electricity and heating tariffs are steadily rising, while household incomes are growing more slowly, especially in the regions.

Kazakhstan is developing solar, wind and hydropower: as of 2025, there are more than 130 renewable energy facilities with a capacity of 2,010 MW. The government's goal is to achieve a renewable energy share of 15% by 2030, but today it is about 3%. The main barriers to the development of renewable energy:

- Insufficiently developed network infrastructure, limiting integration;
- Bureaucratic obstacles, including difficulties in returning excess energy to the grid;
- Lack of financial incentives and investments;
- The habit of cheap coal, which still accounts for up to 70% of the generation structure.

**General conclusion on SDG 7 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan demonstrates a commitment to transition to sustainable energy sources, however, actual progress remains limited. The energy system is vulnerable to overloads, and the development of renewable energy is constrained by bureaucracy, weak infrastructure and lack of incentives. Economic availability of energy is also declining amid rising tariffs and regional inequality.

The issue of nuclear energy development requires special attention. The promotion of nuclear power plant construction projects raises serious public and expert concerns, including in connection with the country's nuclear legacy, safety risks, high cost and poorly understood consequences.

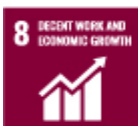
It is recommended not to consider nuclear energy as a priority solution but to focus on the accelerated development of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies. All decisions on nuclear power plants should be made solely taking into account transparent public discussion, independent expertise and evaluation of alternatives.

- *Kazakhstan plans to build several nuclear power plants, presenting this type as 'green' energy, jeopardizing the security of vast territories, as well as the infusion of huge funds, etc. The country is also experiencing an increase in investments in renewable energy, which is timely in terms of adaptation to climate change. Kazakhstan's energy sector is still based on fossil fuels. The transition to cleaner and more sustainable sources requires significant*

*investments. There are still problems with access to modern and environmentally friendly energy sources in the country.*

- *Having decided to build a nuclear power plant in Kazakhstan (some time after the referendum on one nuclear power plant, it became known about the construction of 3 nuclear power plants), the country's leadership and individual ministers crossed out achievements in the development of green technologies for the use of renewable energy sources (renewable wind and solar energy).*
- *According to the Kazakhstan Electric Power Association, serious problems have accumulated in the energy sector of Kazakhstan due to the loss-making of companies, high wear and tear of equipment and grids, high staff turnover, limited tariff setting opportunities, etc.*
- *Despite the positive developments in legislation, the use of solar energy has not been adequately developed in practice, in particular, due to various barriers to the return of unused energy to the common grid.*
- *The main source of thermal energy in the country is thermal power plants and hydroelectric power plants, as well as boiler houses. More than 130 facilities with a total capacity of 2,010 MW are currently operating among renewable energy sources.*
- *Despite the legislative framework for stimulating renewable energy sources, etc., the introduction of clean energy elements is very slow. Alternative energy is not considered as the main one because it does not cover all the needs.*
- *New regulatory legal acts are adopted in the country, and this is a plus. But the conditions for their implementation have not been created, which is a disadvantage. In the northern regions, the use of renewable energy has a lower effect. The construction of nuclear power plants is described as clean green energy, although this is not entirely true and will cost the country dearly.*
- *Energy efficiency projects do not bring practical results. Large processing plants do not use safe technologies and continue to destroy the environment. Grants allocated for energy efficiency since 2000 come to an end with the completion of projects and do not bring results.*
- *Kazakhstan is actively developing renewable energy sources (RES) as part of the transition to a 'green' economy, the concept of low-carbon development. Solar, wind and hydroelectric power plants are already operating in the country, and by 2030 the share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix is planned to increase to 15%. An auction system has been developed to attract investments, as well as state programs to support renewable energy sources. However, there are significant problems:*
  - *High dependence on coal (about 70% of generation) slows down decarbonization.*
  - *Lack of network infrastructure limits the integration of renewable energy sources into the energy system.*
  - *Lack of incentives for energy efficiency – low electricity tariffs do not motivate enterprises and the public to reduce consumption.*

- *Financing and investment barriers – attracting private investment in renewable energy is facing bureaucratic difficulties.*
- *Large-scale reforms are needed to accelerate the transition, including the upgrade of energy grids, the development of energy storage units, economic incentives to improve energy efficiency, and reduced subsidies for fossil fuels.*
- *Doubling the rate of energy efficiency improvement in the world - good technology allows switching to electric cars and solar panels in future. The increase in tariffs and prices for fuels and lubricants, etc. should give impetus to the search for alternative sources in future.*
- *The transition to a new economic system requires new industries, new industrial products that require energy, and hence there emerges the problem of building a power plant in our country, which has long been discussed in society. If the share of nuclear energy increases, the country's energy supply problem is projected to be solved. However, the main problem associated with nuclear power plants is the lack of energy sources in future. Currently, only 3 percent of Kazakhstan's energy comes from renewable sources such as wind and solar. If this volume is increased to 15 percent, then there will be no need to build a nuclear power plant in Kazakhstan.*
- *Tariffs for electricity and other utilities are increased annually. A high level of wear and tear remains in the power grids. The shortage of electricity is becoming more acute every year.*
- *Access to energy: Energy supply is stable in cities but there are interruptions in remote areas. Electricity prices remain relatively affordable, although tariffs periodically rise. Renewable energy sources: The share of renewable energy sources (solar, wind and hydropower) is slowly growing but fossil fuels still prevail. The development of green energy requires significant investments. Despite individual initiatives, energy efficiency remains low. Large energy losses are observed in industry and everyday life. Conclusion: There is progress, but the pace of change is still insufficient to achieve the goals by 2030.*



PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH,  
FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

### General conclusion on SDG 8 in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is demonstrating certain positive trends in employment and economic growth: digitalization is intensifying, startups are supported, ESG approaches are introduced, and programs for youth practice, employment of vulnerable groups and microfinance are implemented. The results of measures against child and forced labor are noted. In a number of regions (for example, in North Kazakhstan region), there has been an increase in the number of jobs, but it is explained not so much by the creation of new jobs as by demographic changes and internal migration, which affect the structure and tension of the labor market as a whole rather than directly on quantitative employment indicators.

However, significant challenges remain:

- Large-scale informal employment, lack of social guarantees for self-employed and seasonal workers;
- Low wages and rising poverty among the employed;
- High youth unemployment, especially in rural areas;
- Limited access to employment for vulnerable groups – women, people with disabilities, rural residents;
- Corruption and institutional barriers that hinder economic diversification and support for SMEs.

To move forward on SDG 8, Kazakhstan needs systemic reforms, including:

- Creation of decent, safe and stable jobs;
- Support for the manufacturing and innovation sector;
- Effective career guidance and educational reform, focused on the demand of the labor market;
- An inclusive employment policy aimed at expanding opportunities for women, youth and people with special needs;
- Transparent mechanisms for allocating resources and combating corruption in the field of employment and government programs.

Without removing these structural barriers and improving the quality of employment, sustainable economic growth will remain unattainable for the general population. These conclusions are based on the following comments from the survey participants:

- *Kazakhstan demonstrates GDP growth, economic reforms aimed at diversifying and modernizing the industry, business support programs, and the introduction of digital technologies. There are Programs in place to support startups, small and medium-sized businesses. Despite national successes, significant differences remain between urban and rural regions. Employment rates and access to jobs remain lower in remote areas. Informal employment is widespread, which leads workers to social problems. There is a need for re-*

*training and vocational training. Innovations in tax legislation indicate the possibility of reducing the number of participants in small and medium-sized businesses.*

- *As long as there is corruption, it is impossible to achieve economic growth. There is no economic growth in the country. High-quality growth is hindered by inefficient governance, all-consuming corruption and the growing social abyss between rich and poor. There is also no need to talk about sustainable economic growth, given the budget deficit and the squandering of the national fund.*
- *Young people who are not employed in the field of work, education or vocational training encounter problems with finding employment and low wages. Social projects are not supported by Atameken.*
- *According to the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, the level of employment in the informal economy is high and the level of internal migration is high, too. The improvement of indicators is ensured due to the significant contribution of Kazakhstan's large businesses (see Sustainable Development Reports, ESG Reports).*
- *According to the legislation, children in Kazakhstan can work from the age of 14 up to 24 hours a week. It is possible to observe the use of child labor in rural areas both by parents and by strangers.*
- *Major barriers to economic opportunities:*
  - *Insufficient access to finance – small businesses, especially among young people and women, have limited credit opportunities.*
  - *Education does not meet the requirements of the labor market – university graduates often face a lack of practical skills.*
  - *Low wages and a high proportion of working poverty – 9 of 10 Kazakhstanis earn less than 151 000 tenge (\$284) per month.*
  - *Gender inequality – women earn an average of 30% less than men and are less likely to hold senior positions.*
  - *Economic instability – inflation, rising food prices and the economy's dependence on the natural resources sector limit the creation of new jobs.*
  - *Recommendations: Development of flexible educational programs with a focus on practical skills and digital technologies.*
  - *Expansion of microfinance programs to support youth and social entrepreneurship.*
  - *Strengthening social guarantees and modernizing labor legislation to protect workers in the informal sector.*
  - *Programs to reduce the gender gap in the economy and promote women's participation in business.*
  - *Without solving these problems, it will be difficult for Kazakhstan to achieve sustainable economic growth and create decent jobs for all.*
- *Sustainable economic growth per capita will be very difficult to achieve due to lower prices for raw materials, and the production of finished products is not increasing rapidly. Diversification, technological renewal and innovation in the*

*country should not be expected, they have attempted to do this for more than 10 years. Whether the country is on the way to promoting a policy that would contribute to productive activities - here we can note the trend towards fair judicial decisions of past years. However, affiliated organizations participating in the state procurement remain on the ground, which reduces the quality of all work. There has been an increase in jobs, especially in North Kazakhstan region, but this is due to an aging population, high migration of young people and a shortage of skilled workers. It should be noted that the growth of SMEs occurs for 2 reasons: 1 - programs designed for beginners at low interest rates, 2 - the fragmentation of large LLPs to reduce total turnover. The protection of rights should go through digitalization of employment contracts in 'enbek' and be publicly available.*

- *The country's economy is showing positive growth, but inflation and fluctuations in household incomes are reducing the level of well-being. Overall unemployment remains stable in the field of employment, but youth unemployment and the proportion of unemployed and out-of-school youth remain problems.*
- *The country's economy is showing steady growth, entrepreneurship is developing and jobs are being created, especially in the service sector and digital technologies. However, high-quality employment and working conditions remain a problem: there is still a high level of informal employment, especially among young people and rural populations. The pace of creating decent, stable and well-paid jobs is lagging behind the needs of the market. The unemployment rate, especially among women and youth, remains above average. Programs for the development of small and medium-sized businesses, as well as professional training, are working, but require an expansion in coverage and quality improvement. It is necessary to invest more actively in innovation, technology and sustainable workplace development.*
- *The number of individual entrepreneurs and legal entities engaged in commercial activities is decreasing in Kyzylorda region, which affects the reduction of jobs. The state does not prohibit the operation of retail facilities, restaurants, shops, and service facilities on a 24-hour basis, which negatively affects the health and safety of citizens. Citizens are forced to work on employer's terms, as unemployment remains high. Seasonal workers are experiencing a huge problem. For example, in Kyzylorda region there are more than 600 fishermen who are seasonal workers, not counting workers in other fields. So, it can be assumed that there are up to 10,000 seasonal workers in Kyzylorda region. In 2023, according to the Labor Department, only 30 seasonal contracts were officially registered.*
- *There is movement, but more decisive measures are needed to diversify the economy, create jobs and raise wages.*
- *The fight against labor slavery requires increased attention. Kazakhstan is taking steps to prevent labor and sexual exploitation, but identifying and protecting victims remains a difficult task. It is important to expand preventive*

*measures, strengthen control over migration processes and ensure effective reintegration of victims, as well as strengthen work with people living on the street. There remains a serious problem of employment for people with disabilities. Despite existing quotas and government support programs, many employers are not ready to create an affordable work environment and adapted working conditions. Persons with disabilities face discrimination in employment, limited training opportunities, and a lack of inclusive workplaces. In this regard, special attention should be paid to the qualified training of social workers. They provide psychological, legal and social support, help with paperwork, etc.*

- *Sustainable economic growth per capita - Kazakhstan is lagging far behind. The reduction of youth unemployment is only on paper, and the attraction of unacceptable programs to address this issue, for example, the Zhasyl El programs that have only concluded employment contracts since 2024 in order to strengthen this indicator. The eradication of forced labor and child labor is a positive trend in this indicator. Protection of labor rights and safety is just beginning to gain positive momentum due to international programs and cooperation between international organizations and government agencies.*



## BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

### Positive changes:

- Digitalization is the most successful aspect: digital technologies are being actively introduced in public services, finance and the social sphere (for example, the "Digital Family Card").
- Infrastructure development continues: roads are built, transport and energy networks are upgraded, and participation in transnational initiatives (for example, One Belt – One Road) is underway.
- Support for innovation and industrial projects at the policy level has been announced – more than 1,500 projects within the framework of industrialization have already been launched.

### Main challenges and problems:

Low rates of industrialization and dependence on raw materials: industrial production is insufficiently diversified; services and trade prevail over production; there is no effective support for domestic producers.

The weak innovation and scientific base: funding for science and innovation remains extremely low; the level of scientific potential of universities and the Science Foundation is insufficient; strong dependence on the private sector in the field of innovation.

Uneven infrastructure development: rural and remote areas suffer from poor transport and digital infrastructure; the quality of constructed facilities is often low, projects are frozen; violations in water protection zones (Taldykol) and inefficient use of resources.

### General conclusion on SDG 9 in Kazakhstan

To achieve SDG 9, Kazakhstan needs:

- Acceleration of industrialization and development of the non-resource sector.
- Expanding support for SMEs, especially in the innovation and manufacturing sectors.
- Investments in science and R&D (Research and Development). Strengthening the capacity of universities and research organizations.
- Modernization and sustainable development of the infrastructure, with special attention to regions and ecology.
- Fighting corruption and improving project management are crucial for long-term success.

Comments by the survey participants with regard to this SDG:

- *In terms of modernization, the improvement of indicators is ensured due to the significant contribution of Kazakhstan's large businesses (see Sustainable Development Reports, ESG Reports); poor performance on objective 9.5:*

*Expansion of scientific research and technological potential (weak potential and competencies of universities and the Science Foundation; business today far surpasses them in its potential).*

- *In 2024, trade became the main sector of the economy, which has increased by 5.1%, followed by metallurgy and mechanical engineering, agriculture.*
- *Low accessibility for people with disabilities, construction of facilities and freezing, corruption following the example of LRT, poor quality of materials for residential buildings, sale of territories of nature reserves for construction sites.*
- *Kazakhstan is actively developing transport, digital and energy infrastructure, including regional and cross-border projects (for example, One Belt – One Road). However, problems with a worn-out road network, overloaded power grids and insufficient digital accessibility in rural areas remain barriers to sustainable development.*
- *The share of industry in Kazakhstan's GDP is declining, despite industrialization programs. The economy remains dependent on the raw materials sector, and non-resource industries are developing slowly due to low investment attractiveness and a shortage of qualified personnel. Measures to diversify the economy and support innovative industries are needed to accelerate industrial growth.*
- *Financial services for small businesses are expanding, but loans remain expensive and inaccessible to first-time entrepreneurs. The share of small and medium-sized businesses in GDP is still below target, and their integration into the production chains of large companies is limited. More affordable loans, reduction of bureaucratic barriers and development of business support programs are needed.*
- *In general, Kazakhstan is moving in the right direction, but sustained progress in infrastructure development, industrialization and financial services requires accelerated economic diversification, infrastructure modernization and active support for small businesses.*
- *At the beginning of 2024, the Minister of Transport announced the creation of a scientific organization, new approaches, but the implementation is not yet visible. The infrastructure is at a very low level, and the quality of new facilities is low.*
- *Despite the development of infrastructure, problems with access to high-quality transport and communication services remain in remote regions. Industrialization is developing slowly, and the share of industry in GDP remains stable, without significant growth. Small and medium-sized enterprises continue to face difficulties in accessing financial services and integrating into production chains. In scientific research and innovation, there is a lack of investment and weak integration of new technologies into industry.*
- *Kazakhstan continues to pursue a course towards new industrialization and production development in order to move away from dependence on raw materials. More than 1,500 industrial projects have been launched.*

- *The development of infrastructure and the industrial sector is gradually gaining momentum: roads, transport and energy networks are being modernized, and digital infrastructure is developing. The introduction of innovations and digital technologies is actively supported by government programs. However, industrial growth is still concentrated in selected sectors, while small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises face limited access to finance and technology. The gap between urban and rural areas in terms of infrastructure remains significant. To accelerate progress, more sustainable investments in scientific research, industrial modernization and support for innovative entrepreneurship are needed.*
- *Industrialization, innovation and infrastructure consist of 14 national indicators (8 relevant indicators, 6 for monitoring). There is an annual increase in the share of GVA of medium-tech and high-tech industries in the total volume of GVA.*
- *For all innovative projects to work at the proper level, it is necessary to eradicate corruption.*
- *Progress in industrialization and infrastructure remains uneven, although some industries are showing growth. Access to finance for small businesses remains limited, which hinders their development. Industrial modernization and the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies are proceeding slowly. Investments in research and innovation are increasing, but their share in GDP remains low. In general, the country is moving forward, but faster reforms and more active implementation of advanced technologies are required.*
- *Kazakhstan is actively developing industrialization and innovation, modernizing production and introducing digital technologies. For example, a Digital Family Map has been created, which helps to more effectively identify and support vulnerable families, as well as other digital solutions in public administration and the social sphere. However, challenges remain related to uneven infrastructure development, especially in rural areas, and insufficient support for SMEs.*
- *The level of digitalization of services and systems is improving day by day, which improves the quality of life and reduces corruption. However, people with disabilities encounter difficulties in obtaining banking and financial services due to stigmas and stereotypes.*



## REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

According to the survey results, this indicator was at the level of 26%. During the discussions, experts suggested reducing this figure to 20%.

### **Socio-economic inequality:**

- The gap between rich and poor is widening, while wealth and income inequality remain high.
- 10% of the richest people own almost 60% of all assets, while more than half of the population live on incomes below the minimum wage.

### **Regional and gender differences:**

- Strong differences between urban and rural areas in access to education, health care and employment.
- Women earn an average of 25-30% less than men, and low representation of women and vulnerable groups in politics and business remains.

### **Vulnerable groups:**

- People with disabilities, families having many children, migrants and the LGBTIQ+ community face systemic discrimination and restrictions on access to basic services.
- Positive measures have been taken: the ratification of international treaties (e.g., the Marrakesh Treaty), the creation of quotas, the participation of PwDs in Parliament and maslikhats, the development of inclusive education.

### **Financial and migration regulation:**

- Weak consumer protection and high household credit load of the population.
- Migration policy is not well developed, and there are imbalances and congestion in large cities.

### **Legal gaps:**

- There is no anti-discrimination legislation in the country.
- The law enforcement practice suffers: fines are more often imposed on tenants than on owners, and there is no progressive scale of taxation.

### **General conclusion on SDG 10 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is taking steps to reduce inequality, especially in terms of regulatory changes and inclusive programs, however, real social and economic barriers remain. Income growth for vulnerable groups is slow, institutional discrimination has not been eliminated, and regional and gender gaps remain significant. Achieving SDG 10 by 2030 will be difficult without comprehensive anti-discrimination measures, increased social support and a review of tax policy.

- *Despite the adoption by Kazakhstan of a number of regulatory acts and development of national indicators to monitor inequality, significant differences remain between urban centers and remote rural areas in the employment of vulnerable segments of the population. There is no dialogue involving*

*businesses, NGOs and local communities to address the real needs of the population.*

- *According to Halyk Finance, about half of the population in Kazakhstan has average monthly per capita incomes below the minimum wage, and more than half of these incomes are spent on food. At the same time, 10% of the richest people in the country own almost 60% of all household assets, which puts Kazakhstan on a par with African countries in terms of wealth inequality. Inequality is also getting worse in the context of regions, where large cities are noticeably ahead of individual regions in terms of well-being. At the same time, women in Kazakhstan earn almost a quarter less than men.*
- *Recently, there has been a decrease in household incomes, an increase in prices for food and basic consumer goods. Large businesses benefit more from the government, while small businesses face increased burdens, penalties and deteriorating conditions. The purchasing power of the population is falling, so is the profit of self-employed entrepreneurs.*
- *About inequality in the country: The Gini index improved from 30.2 to 29.4 in 2021, indicating a slight decrease in inequality. The richest 1% of citizens receive 15% of all income, almost the same as the bottom 50% (16.4%). The top 1% own almost 30% of the country's total wealth, while the bottom 50% account for only 5%.*
- *According to the Bureau of National Statistics: In 2024, the average income per family member in 90% of Kazakhstani households was 101,500 tenge (\$195).*
- *Kazakhstan has made little progress in reducing inequality, but the income gap remains significant. Although the poverty rate has decreased slightly and inclusive programs are developed, the richest 10% of the population still own a large part of their income. Measures have been taken to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups, but they require long-term implementation. Financial regulation is improving, but access to opportunities for all remains uneven.*
- *Kazakhstan is taking measures to reduce inequality, but the gap in income, access to education, health care and employment between different social groups remains significant. People with disabilities, families having many children, rural residents and people from low-income segments of the population remain particularly vulnerable. To effectively reduce inequality, it is necessary to strengthen social protection, provide equal opportunities in the labor market, expand access to quality services and develop inclusive support programs.*
- *Inclusivity and equality remain problematic in Kazakhstan. Vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and women, face discrimination and limited access to education, employment, and political participation. Infrastructure for people with disabilities is underdeveloped, and access to quality services is limited. Women are still poorly represented in leadership positions and receive lower salaries. The LGBTIQ+ community is*

*deprived of legal protection because there is no anti-discrimination legislation in the country. In addition, support programs for vulnerable groups are not effective enough, and their participation in political processes is minimal. To achieve real progress, comprehensive measures must be taken to empower all groups of the population and introduce legislative protection against discrimination. There are quotas for some groups when applying to universities, but their impact on reducing inequality is still difficult to assess. Regulation of financial markets and the country's participation in global economic institutions remain insufficient. There is also a need to improve migration policy to ensure safe and responsible migration.*

- *The consequences of low incomes: high debt burden – 53% of the total debt of 22.7 trillion tenge is accounted for by consumer loans. Problems with payments – almost 7 million Kazakhstanis are at risk of being blacklisted for non-payment of debts. Lack of savings – 69.2% of the population have no personal savings. The main expenses are for food – 54% of the family budget is spent on food, which is 7-8 times higher than in developed countries. In Astana, the average income covers only 70% of personal expenses (rent, utilities, food, transport, etc.) and the difference is made up through loans.*
- *Despite improvements in social policy, gaps remain between rich and poor segments of the population, between urban and rural areas, as well as in access to education, health care and employment. Vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities) continue to face barriers. The real mechanisms of equal opportunities are still not effective enough.*



### MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

#### **Infrastructure and housing:**

- The improvement and road repair programs are implemented in large cities, and there are positive examples of public participation budget initiatives.
- However, in small towns and villages there is an acute shortage of high-quality housing; there are outdated communications and problems with public transport and roads.
- The problem of affordable housing remains, especially for young people and needy families; new housing is often unaffordable and of poor quality.

#### **Ecology and waste management:**

- Urban air pollution is increasing due to the increasing number of cars and inefficient public transport.
- Waste disposal, separate garbage collection and sewage treatment plants are poorly developed or do not exist, even in big cities.
- Natural disasters (floods, fires) have become more frequent, and warning and response systems remain ineffective.

#### **Urban planning and corruption:**

- There are examples of chaotic and illegal development (e.g., in Almaty and Taraz), including the seizure of green areas and construction in protected areas.
- Lack of strategic urban planning, low control over the implementation of the design and estimate documentation and high corruption in the sphere of construction.

#### **Transport and accessibility:**

- The transport fleet is outdated, and the development of electric transport and bicycle infrastructure is lagging behind.
- In villages and small towns, public transport is unavailable, taxis are expensive, and there are problems with emergency services.
- Accessibility of the urban environment for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups is extremely limited.

#### **General conclusion on SDG 11 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan demonstrates some positive steps towards sustainable urban development – modernization in cities, development of cycling infrastructure, SDG localization. However, systemic problems with affordable housing, ecology, waste management, resilience to emergencies and the inclusiveness of the urban environment are hindering progress. Without major reforms in strategic planning, accessibility for all and effective anti-corruption efforts, achieving SDG 11 by 2030 will be unlikely.

- *The quality of urban roads is improving as part of government programs. Improvement projects are being implemented in large cities, which improves the living conditions of citizens, and there are success stories of projects implemented under the initiative of the public participation budget. However, for many small towns and rural areas, there is a shortage of high-quality housing, public transport and outdated infrastructure. Every year the number of vehicles that contribute to air pollution increases in cities. In rural areas, the issue of waste disposal is acute. Despite measures to improve housing conditions, the problem of affordable and high-quality housing remains relevant, especially for low-income groups and young families.*
- *Following the negative example of Almaty, when the city was built up chaotically and thoughtlessly, the lands of national parks were seized, rich residential complexes were built on the site of apple orchards, there is no need to talk about reducing negative impacts. The city is suffocating in smog and traffic jams.*
- *Unfortunately, fires, technological disasters and the consequences of floods testify to the insufficient preparedness to handle them and the lack of effective management.*
- *By 2030, countries should work to reduce the negative impact of cities on the environment. This includes taking care of air quality and effective waste management. At present, we do not have separate garbage collection.*
- *In Taraz, the only 3-4-hectare wild park was illegally built up, which was intended by the general plan as a recreational area. No one was held responsible for this. First, a kindergarten was built there, then a gas station, and then a service station, with construction being carried out almost 15-20 meters from the shore of the Karasu River, which the authorities call a 'channel' to justify violations. In other words, corruption is rampant in this area as well.*
- *In Kazakhstan, gasoline-powered vehicles and diesel-powered buses are the main means of transportation. Some cities have bike lanes and 2 cities have trams. In 2024, major floods occurred in Kazakhstan, reservoirs were not ready for such a water level, and the authorities were not ready to protect the populated areas from flooding.*
- *The risks of natural disasters are increasing, partly due to the lack of experts in the right field and adoption of substandard measures. It is worth noting that in the provinces the population buys very old cars because cannot afford new ones, resulting in negative consequences. After the quarantine in 2020, buses stopped running in many localities, and taxis are expensive, which also contributes to aggravating the situation. In many villages, there remains the problem of poor-quality roads and access to emergency services, etc.*
- *Kazakhstan is taking steps to achieve Goal 11, aimed at creating sustainable cities and human settlements. However, despite efforts, progress in ensuring*

*safe and affordable transport systems, inclusive urbanization, protection of cultural heritage, reduction of urban environmental impacts, and access to green spaces remains low.*

- *Even cities have no sewage treatment plants. They have been planning their construction in Taraz for decades, and the design and estimate documentation (DED) was developed several times, but the result is zero. A small part of MSW is recycled.*
- *Urbanisation and transport infrastructure in cities are at a high level, but disaster preparedness (as shown by the last year's flood events) is not.*
- *Effective implementation of the adopted goals is closely related to the quality of strategic planning in the country. In this regard, Kazakhstan is actively working on SDG nationalization and localization. Amendments and supplements were made to Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 790 dated November 29, 2017 "On Approval of the State Planning System in the Republic of Kazakhstan" regarding the application of target indicators of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the documents of the State Planning System.*
- *Rural development should be a priority topic in all spheres. At the same time, it is necessary to reduce private housing construction in suburban areas.*
- *Almaty is developing towards a sustainable city, however, a number of challenges remain. Public transport is expanding but its accessibility and convenience still need to be improved. The city continues to have problems with air quality and waste management, despite the measures taken. Green areas are gradually being improved, but they are not enough for all city districts.*
- *There are still problems with affordable housing, the development of public transport, the level of air pollution and accessibility of the urban environment for people with disabilities. To achieve SDG 11, it is necessary to expand housing construction programs, modernize public utilities, and create an inclusive urban environment for all residents. For example, people with disabilities cannot leave their homes in winter because the roads and infrastructure are inaccessible to them.*

## SDG 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



### ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

10%

**SDG national integration:** Kazakhstan includes SDG 12 indicators in the national monitoring system, but practical implementation remains weak and formal. The main activity is on the part of NGOs.

**Poor development of waste recycling:**

- The level of solid household waste recycling remains low, despite the growing amount of waste.
- In 2023, the share of recycled waste decreased from 40% to 30%.
- There are no processing plants in most regions, waste disposal and environmentally hazardous landfills continue to exist.

**Lack of sustainable production practices:** Most large enterprises do not implement sustainable technologies and do not report on their environmental footprint. Local authorities have little control over compliance with environmental legislation; fines are ineffective.

**Low culture of sustainable consumption:** Society lacks a culture of reasonable consumption and caring attitude to resources – water, food, energy. Practices of conscious attitude to waste (including separate collection, reduction of food losses) are just beginning to develop.

**Resource management issues:**

- Oil, coal and gas productions remain an economic priority, which increases the burden on the environment.
- Depletion of water resources, air pollution and land degradation are becoming serious challenges.
- The infrastructure for the sustainable management of chemicals and waste remains insufficient.

**Low effectiveness of RLAs and strategies:**

- Although laws, concepts and norms have been adopted, their compliance in practice is minimal.
- Environmental awareness and energy efficiency measures do not cover a wide range of people and businesses.

**General conclusion on SDG 12 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is at an early stage of implementing SDG 12. Despite the availability of programs and regulations, the country lacks a systematic approach to sustainable production and consumption. The main problems are the low level of waste recycling, weak regulation of industrial pollution, irrational use of resources and formal fulfillment of obligations. Without increased control, business involvement and large-scale public awareness, achieving the goals by 2030 remains questionable.

- *Kazakhstan has included indicators of rational consumption and production in the national SDG monitoring system. Programs are being implemented aimed*

*at raising public awareness of the principles of sustainable consumption and the need for rational use of resources, mainly by non-governmental organizations. Natural resources are still being intensively used. Recycling and reuse of materials are poorly developed.*

- *Large enterprises in the city do not implement sustainable working methods and do not include information on sustainable development in their reports.*
- *The quality of food continues to deteriorate. It is impossible to buy really safe food in stores.*
- *There is a lack of understanding of sustainable consumption and production patterns at all levels – government, business, society. There are no strategies in place here.*
- *Waste recycling – there are almost no initiatives at either the local executive authority or the country level. Household waste is not sorted, government agencies and many companies do not even recycle paper, everything goes to the general garbage.*
- *Lack of waste-processing enterprises, landfills near populated areas, deterioration of the environment and ecosystems.*
- *Kazakhstan has rich natural resources but their sustainable use remains a challenge. Oil, gas and coal productions remain the backbone of the economy, leading to depletion of reserves and environmental risks.*
- *Main problems:*
  - *Depletion of water resources – water scarcity is exacerbated by climate change and poor management.*
  - *Environmental pollution – a high proportion of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to coal-fired power and industry.*
  - *Land degradation – desertification and overuse of agricultural land.*
  - *Needs to be done:*
    - *Implement resource-efficient technologies in industry and agriculture.*
    - *Develop renewable energy sources to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.*
    - *Strengthen environmental standards and incentives for businesses to manage resources sustainably, develop MSW recycling and effectively manage production and consumption waste.*
    - *Without urgent measures, Kazakhstan risks facing a shortage of natural resources and a deteriorating environmental situation.*
- *Weak control, lack of laboratories and initial data. A low culture of waste-free production and non-compliance with the environmental code prevents progress in this area.*
- *Food waste reduction and recycling remain low, as most of the waste is not recycled but sent to landfills. Chemicals and waste management requires major improvements.*

- *Kazakhstan is actively developing cooperation with international partners in the field of 'green' energy, the potential for introducing advanced technologies and attracting investments, a great deal of rules, regulations, RLAs and other documents were issued but no one is complying with them.*
- *In addition to 14 million tons of phosphorous industry waste stored in the territory of Taraz, phosphogypsum waste is now growing at a doubled rate. The regional administration admits its impotence to force the owners of the plant to comply with the law. Penalties do not work.*
- *The practices of rational consumption and sustainable production are just beginning to be introduced. The level of waste recycling is low, and the culture of conscious consumption is poorly developed. Environmental awareness and energy efficiency measures are being taken, but they do not yet cover broad segments of the population and businesses.*
- *Responsible consumption and production consist of 6 national indicators (5 relevant indicators, 1 for monitoring). There are no data available for the indicator "(a) Food Loss Index and (b) Food Waste Index".*
- *In 2023, indicators related to recycling and waste disposal deteriorated sharply. Thus, in 2022, the share of processing and disposal of industrial waste to their generation was 40.03%, in 2023 it decreased to 30.38%.*
- *In Almaty, the work is underway to reduce waste and develop recycling, but the overall level of responsible consumption remains low. Natural resource management faces challenges related to pollution and wasteful use. Large companies are starting to implement sustainable practices, but so far this is not a massive phenomenon. The issue of food waste is still pending.*
- *The level of waste recycling remains low, and a culture of reasonable consumption is just being formed. It is necessary to raise public awareness about the rational use of resources.*

## SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION



### TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

12%

The Carbon Neutrality Strategy until 2060 has been adopted: Kazakhstan has declared a course for low-carbon development and expansion of the share of renewable energy sources.

However, implementation is slow for the following reasons:

- High dependence on coal (about 70% of generation);
- Weak involvement and awareness of businesses, especially SMEs;
- Lack of investment and technology;
- Natural disasters in 2024 (floods, fires) showed the critical unpreparedness of the regions;
- Outdated approaches to risk management (diking, reinforcement);
- Poor planning and lack of specialists;
- Limited resources and equipment in local executive bodies;
- Insufficient coordination and involvement of the regions;
- Many akimats are not aware of the approaches, tools and mechanisms for implementing national climate policy at the local level;
- Actions by local executive bodies are formal and often not accompanied by the implementation of real adaptation measures;
- Compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Code regarding the assessment of climate vulnerability at the regional level would significantly increase preparedness for climate risks and accelerate the implementation of adaptation solutions.

#### **General conclusion on SDG 13 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is taking politically important steps towards climate sustainability, including the Carbon Neutrality Strategy, renewable energy development and regulatory update. However, in practice, the implementation of measures to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change remains fragmented and slow, especially at the regional level.

Frequent natural disasters, the deteriorating environmental situation and the lack of sustainable infrastructure require an immediate transition from declarations to actions. It is especially important to ensure that the provisions of the Environmental Code are implemented in the regions, to raise awareness of local authorities about climate risk assessment and to include adaptation measures in territorial planning.

Without a systematic approach that includes public awareness, modernization, civil society participation and coordination between levels of government, achieving SDG 13 by 2030 will remain under serious threat.

Comments by the survey participants with regard to this SDG:

- *Kazakhstan has adopted the Strategy to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. But the implementation of large-scale climate projects requires large financial resources and advanced technologies, which is still an obstacle. Alternative energy helps improve the environmental situation. Kazakhstan's economy has traditionally been heavily dependent on the extraction and processing of fossil fuels. Climate change has a negative impact on agriculture, water resources and ecosystems. Kazakhstan has begun to implement adaptation measures, such as developing climate change monitoring systems and improving infrastructure to protect against extreme weather conditions.*
- *Natural disasters in 2024 showed the low readiness of our region where many villages were flooded. We are waiting for spring of 2025 with fear, preparatory work with the population is not underway.*
- *Water-saving technologies, in particular, in sanitation, which are widely used in the world, are not developing at all in Kazakhstan, although this requires just a little attention and the introduction of several norms into legislative acts.*
- *Although the strategy for achieving low-carbon development has been adopted, many manufacturers do not understand what they will have to face in case of tax obligations, and moreover, they do not understand how to work effectively with these issues. While big businesses have an understanding, SMEs do not have it.*
- *Recurring annual emergency management problems in each region, budget allocation, corruption, lack of effective emergency prevention measures and infrastructure preparation.*
- *Kazakhstan has adopted the goal of carbon neutrality by 2060 and is developing renewable energy sources (RES).*
- *Measures are introduced to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and tighten environmental standards. Adaptation programs to climate change are developed, especially in agriculture and water resources management. But there are serious problems: high dependence on coal (70% of electricity generation) slows down decarbonization. Lobbying for the construction of nuclear power plants in Kazakhstan. The risk of a water crisis due to climate change, melting glaciers and inefficient management of water resources. Lack of funding and adaptation strategies, especially for vulnerable communities.*
- *Community adaptation: water-saving technologies and sustainable farming methods are introduced in rural areas. Measures against drought and extreme weather conditions (landscaping, drainage systems) are strengthened in cities. More investments are needed to protect infrastructure and increase the resilience of the economy to climate risks. In general, Kazakhstan is taking steps to combat climate change, but for effective adaptation of communities it is necessary to accelerate the development of climate-resistant technologies, modernize infrastructure and strengthen support for vulnerable regions.*

- *Focus on increasing the country's ability to confront climate-related risks, including natural disasters, and adapt to them. Unfortunately, 2024 did not become a landmark year. New management was created in the Emergency Department, the issue of equipment was resolved, but there are no new fundamental approaches or changes. Risk management has remained the same in practice: diking and reinforcement of protective structures. In 2025, there is no accurate forecast of how the flood will pass.*
- *The country is taking steps to increase resilience to climate risks, integrate measures into national policies and raise public awareness. However, for sustainable development it is necessary to strengthen adaptation measures and involve the general public.*
- *Financing. The country allocates a budget at the state level for programs and activities related to the environment and climate. Adaptation to dangerous climatic events and natural disasters. Infrastructure projects such as schools, kindergartens and hospitals often require more capacity to adapt to climate change, such as energy efficiency and flood resilience. Public awareness and dissemination of information. Public awareness, information dissemination and the capacity of people and institutions to mitigate, adapt to and prevent climate change are improving. Monitoring. The Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan monitors the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 13.*
- *Steps are taken in the country to integrate climate change measures into policy but their implementation is slow. Public awareness of climate change is growing, however, practical measures to adapt and reduce risks from natural disasters remain limited. Despite active discussions and individual initiatives, a systemic approach to reducing climate impacts has not yet been achieved. There are no words to deal with smog in our city anymore. You can just take a ready-made model of other cities (Beijing, London) and take similar measures here.*



CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEA AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### **The Caspian Sea:**

- Kazakhstan participates in regional initiatives to protect the Caspian Sea.
- The main threats are oil, leaks, emergency discharges and lowering the water level.
- Biodiversity is suffering (in particular, sturgeon).

### **The Aral Sea:**

- The consequences of the environmental disaster are still being felt: desiccation, salinization, dust storms.
- The Kokaral dam has stabilized the northern part, but it is impossible to restore the full volume.

### **Lake Balkhash:**

- Under threat due to reduced inflow from the Ili River and industrial pollution.
- The plan to build a nuclear power plant in Balkhash is arousing the society's concern.

### **Common water problems:**

- Pollution of rivers, lakes and irrigation canals (aryks) with plastics and waste.
- Insufficient control and monitoring, weak implementation of international obligations.
- Threats from cross-border water use (with China, Russia, Uzbekistan, etc.).

### **General conclusion on SDG 14 in Kazakhstan**

Despite the fact that Kazakhstan has no direct access to the ocean, the country is responsible for protecting its inland and marine aquatic ecosystems, especially the Caspian Sea, Aral and Balkhash. Pollution, overexploitation of resources and climate change threaten the environmental sustainability of these systems. To implement SDG 14, it is necessary to strengthen transboundary water cooperation, environmental monitoring, support scientific research, and abandon projects that threaten unique water bodies (such as the Balkhash NPP). Real improvements are possible only when environmental principles are integrated into politics, business, and local self-government.

Comments by the survey participants:

- *The country participates in regional initiatives with other coastal states (Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkmenistan) aimed at joint management and protection of the Caspian Sea. But oil production remains the main source of pollution. Leaks, waste discharges and emergency situations negatively affect the water quality and ecosystem of the Caspian Sea. Heavy exploitation of natural resources and insufficient attention to coastal restoration result in loss of biodiversity, destruction of marine habitats and deterioration of ecosystems.*

- *We don't have a sea and oceans, I can't answer. As for Lake Kopa, I can say that a lot of funds were allocated for the construction of the embankment. In fact, I want to cry, probably a couple of million were spent with billions of funds that had been allocated.*
- *Environmental disaster in the Aral Sea.*
- *There are rules and limits of fishing in the legislation of Kazakhstan.*
- *Kazakhstan does not go to sea, but the problem of shallowing the Caspian Sea has been on the agenda for many years.*
- *Water pollution and reduction of biodiversity in rivers, lakes and seas. Drainage of rivers in the regions of Kazakhstan affecting agriculture. The absence of dams to preserve the volume of water and eliminate emergencies, flooding of settlements.*
- *There are serious problems with Kazakhstan's marine and aquatic ecosystems, for example, the Caspian Sea: A decrease in its water levels due to climate change and increased water intake. Oil and industrial waste pollution. A threat to biodiversity, including a decrease in the number of sturgeons. The Aral Sea: Catastrophic drying up due to unsustainable water use. Soil salinization, dust storms and deterioration of public health. Partial stabilization with the help of the Kokaral dam, but restoration of the full level is impossible. Lake Balkhash: The threat of shallowing due to a decrease in the inflow of water from the Ili River (depends on China). Environmental instability due to industrial pollution and changes in the hydrological regime. Cross-border problems: Water scarcity due to uneven distribution of rivers with neighboring countries (China, Uzbekistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan). Lack of effective international mechanisms for regulating water use. It is obvious that without comprehensive solutions and international cooperation, Kazakhstan risks losing important aquatic ecosystems, which will negatively affect the environment, economy and people's lives.*
- *Kazakhstan, being a landlocked country, nevertheless makes efforts to protect its water resources, including the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea. Water pollution and ecosystem degradation remain a serious problem.*
- *Adoption of national and regional action plans and programs for the management of ocean resources and coastal zones. Negotiating and signing regional and international legally binding agreements to accelerate substantial investments in reducing environmental pollution, restoring natural habitats, and managing fisheries.*
- *There is an incredible amount of plastic in the oceans, seas and even in our aryks.*
- *The decision to build a nuclear power plant on Lake Balkhash poses a threat to its existence.*

- *One of the tools is the 'Public Participation Budget' project. The main goal of implementing the Public Participation Budget is to involve the community in the allocation of local budget funds as part of its formation. Businesses are involved in the process of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on the ESG principle, which covers social, environmental and economic issues.*
- *Progress in implementation of SDG 14 in the country remains limited. Although measures are taken to combat water pollution and regulate fisheries, effective management of marine ecosystems, protection of coastal areas and minimization of ocean acidification remain insufficient. The level of monitoring and compliance with environmental standards requires significant improvements.*
- *The main challenges are related to water pollution, loss of biodiversity and the effects of climate change. It is necessary to strengthen measures to protect marine fauna, control industrial emissions and sustainable management of fish resources.*



PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

### Positive changes:

- The network of protected areas (reserves, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries) has been expanded, now they occupy about 9.6% of the country's territory.
- The program of planting 2 billion trees is being implemented.
- There are positive examples of the restoration of populations of rare species (e.g., saiga).
- The fight against poaching is underway, although its effectiveness is limited.

### Critical problems:

- Land degradation and desertification remain an acute problem in most regions. The measures are implemented point-by-point and not systematically.
- Deforestation and fires, lack of control over deforestation.
- Weak government support for scientific institutions, insufficient competence of key ministries.
- Corruption hinders effective environmental management and project implementation.

### General conclusion on SDG 15 in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is taking steps towards the implementation of SDG 15, including the expansion of protected natural areas and individual projects to restore land and protect biodiversity. However, progress is being held back by the lack of a systemic approach, a weak scientific base, low levels of interagency cooperation, and corruption.

To achieve a sustainable result, it is necessary:

- Ecosystem management needs to be promoted and implemented,
- Strengthen government support for science and environmental organizations,
- Ensure sustainable and controlled land use,
- Systematically combat desertification and poaching,
- Develop environmental education and awareness.

Without serious reform in ecosystem management and financing, the country risks losing its unique natural landscapes and species.

Comments by the survey participants on SDG 15:

- *Kazakhstan has increased the area of nature reserves, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, which contributes to the preservation of unique ecosystems and biodiversity, helps protect nature, create conditions for scientific research and the development of ecological tourism. Projects are implemented to combat land degradation, desertification and ecosystem restoration, mainly by non-governmental organizations. The irrational use of natural resources leads to land degradation and a reduction in biodiversity. Climate change increases the*

*threat of drought, desertification and land degradation, which negatively affects terrestrial ecosystems and requires adaptation measures.*

- *The low progress is due to inefficient and expensive government measures, in particular, the creation of another republican state structure for land monitoring.*
- *There is no particular progress; the work is carried out locally in separate areas without a special system and modern scientific data. The leading scientific centers (Institute of Soil Science, Institute of Botany and Phytointroduction, Institute of Zoology) are not supported at the state level. The Ministry of Ecology and the Ministry of Education and Science have little potential and competence to work at the level of eco-systemic thinking.*
- *The conservation of ecosystems is an urgent problem, as anthropogenic impacts affect them and the habitats of many animals. Forests occupy only 5% of the country's territory, and their share is declining due to deforestation and fires. Pilot projects on ecosystem conservation are launched.*
- *There is some progress in Kazakhstan: The area of protected natural territories (national parks, reserves) has been increased – now it is about 9.6% of the country's territory. Forest restoration projects are being implemented, including a program to plant 2 billion trees by 2025. Measures to protect rare species (saiga, snow leopard, jeyran) are continuing – the saiga population has been restored after a critical decline. However, there are problems such as deforestation and land degradation – desertification and loss of pastures due to overgrazing and climate change. Illegal poaching continues to threaten saigas and other rare species. Industrial and agricultural pollution is particularly impacted – the destruction of ecosystems due to mining, agricultural chemicals, and uncontrolled urbanization. A decrease in water levels in reservoirs (the Caspian, Balkhash, and Aral) threatens coastal ecosystems and biodiversity. It is obvious that Kazakhstan is taking steps to preserve ecosystems, but effective protection of biodiversity requires increased control over environmental management, anti-poaching and sustainable management of water and land resources, protection of mountain and forest natural ecosystems.*
- *Projects are implemented in the country to restore degraded lands and combat desertification. However, these measures are not yet sufficient to fully neutralize the effects of environmental threats. Also, the problem of poaching remains very difficult, despite the existing restrictions, measures to combat illegal wildlife trade are ineffective.*
- *Creation of protected areas. They have contributed to the protection of biodiversity. restoration of degraded lands. This led to a 10-fold increase in yield. Key strategies contributing to the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems: promoting sustainable forest management; raising awareness of the ecological importance of land; promoting sustainable land use; supporting nature reserves and protected areas.*
- *Mountain systems are degraded due to poorly controlled grazing and livestock growth. There are literally only a few units of the Nedzvetsky Apple Tree left on*

*the Kyrgyz Alatau and Karatau ridge, the Siverts Apple Tree has almost disappeared, the juniper and pistachio are disappearing.*

- *The conservation of terrestrial ecosystems consists of 11 national indicators (1 relevant indicators, 10 for monitoring). In general, there is a positive trend, with the exception of the "Change in net forest area" indicator.*
- *Strengthening rivers and combating desertification should be included in the rural development program.*
- *Progress towards SDG 15 remains limited. Although efforts are underway to combat desertification and conserve biodiversity, efforts to protect mountain ecosystems, combat poaching and invasive species require significant strengthening. Problems include insufficient funding, weak monitoring and limited measures to restore degraded land.*
- *Problems of land degradation and illegal deforestation persist. It is necessary to develop sustainable land use and expand funding for ecosystem restoration programs.*

## SDG 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

13%

### Positive changes:

- Digitalization of public services has improved public access to documents, registration and services, especially in cities.
- Anti-corruption initiatives, training programs and prevention are implemented in schools and government institutions.
- Kazakhstan has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and strengthened measures to protect the rights of children and vulnerable groups.
- The National Preventive Mechanism is actively working; self-help groups and advocacy initiatives are developing.

### Systemic problems:

- Corruption remains deeply rooted in all spheres, including the judicial system, public procurement and budget allocation.
- Freedom of speech and assembly is limited. Harassment of activists, arrests for unauthorized pickets, and control of the media.
- The independence of court and transparency of justice are in doubt: most of the verdicts are guilty, and there is a selective application of the law.
- Lack of equal access to justice and protection of rights, especially for vulnerable groups and in rural areas.
- The level of citizen participation in decision-making remains low, and the dialogue is formalized.

### General conclusion on SDG 16 in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan demonstrates some progress in digitalizing public services, documenting the population, and protecting certain rights of vulnerable groups. However, corruption, restrictions on civil liberties, and a weak judicial system continue to undermine the stability of institutions and public confidence.

To achieve SDG 16, it is necessary:

- Strengthen the real fight against corruption, not the formal one;
- Ensure freedom of speech, assembly and citizen participation in decision-making;
- Create an independent and fair judicial system;
- Increase access of vulnerable groups to justice, information and protection of rights.

Without these steps, achieving sustainable peace, justice and strong institutions for SDG 16 will remain an elusive goal.

Comments by the survey participants:

- *The introduction of an e-government system and digital platforms has improved citizens' access to public services and reduced bureaucratic procedures. But access to public services remains lower in rural areas.*
- *Combating corruption remains one of the main and unresolved problems in Kazakhstan. There are no stable institutions and systems. Freedom of speech and expression is almost completely controlled by the state, which is adopting more and more restrictive and repressive laws.*
- *There have been some success in documenting the population, implementing the concept of a 'hearing state', digitalizing services, etc. At the same time, the fight against corruption is ineffective because it is rooted in the political system, and fundamental human rights: the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and the right to participate in the management of state affairs, as supported by international indexes.*
- *Progress has been made in the field of justice due to the fact that the number of judges who have been criminalized has increased. But in general, the justice system remains the same: highly corrupt and unfair. The independence of judges from the authorities is not guaranteed.*
- *16.2 Corruption and bribery are moral issues but the main approach to solving them is to develop effective tracking mechanisms. Fundamental concepts concerning society, individuals and institutions need to be reviewed. They will influence approaches to the eradication of corruption in society. 16.4. Religious communities are not included in the discussion of issues related to the life of society, in which religion can play a positive role. There is a general lack of awareness and prejudice towards different faiths in the country, which determines interaction with state institutions and civil society institutions. 16.5. There are no problems with obtaining legal identification of citizens. 16.6. According to the Constitution, these freedoms are guaranteed in the country. The state takes measures to ensure that the interests of citizens are not infringed in this regard. Religious legislation is being improved. At the same time, its pace remains very slow. The main measures to raise awareness among citizens regarding religion are aimed at education in the field of Islam. There is no widespread coverage of the diverse religious palette in the country, which is almost equivalent to the fact that public access to information is limited due to the ignorance of both the competent authorities and the population.*
- *Legislation in this area is improving in the country, as well as cooperation between many stakeholders, for example, between government agencies and civil society. There is progress, dialogue is developing, but practical implementation still requires effort and time.*
- *Corrupt state system, embezzlement of budget funds, affiliation in public procurement, contradictory decisions of judges, selective application of the norms of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, corruption in the judicial system.*

- *There are examples on the ground of granting more powers, but they cannot use them effectively. The institution of political parties is slowly gaining momentum. Transparency and engagement are more about political will but in practice the implementation pace is very low.*
- *The country is taking measures to combat corruption and organized crime, but unfortunately, the level of corruption and criminality remains high.*
- *To build a peaceful, fair and open society, it is necessary to ensure the protection of fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms. In the light of the right of everyone to work, as well as remuneration for work, enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the participants discussed the existing mediation institutions and the possibility of establishing the facts of labor relations. Thus, the current legislation of Kazakhstan stipulates that if it is impossible to document the existence of an employment relationship, such a dispute can be resolved in court without contacting the organization's conciliation commission. Despite the complexity of disputes, if there are signs of an employment relationship, as well as compliance with the deadlines for applying, this institution not only provides an opportunity to protect the rights and interests of an employee, but also effectively contributes to the restoration of violated labor rights.*
- *Little progress has been made in strengthening the fight against financial irregularities at the local level. However, there are still no significant changes in returning assets illegally exported from the country and illegally acquired in the country. Access to high-quality protection of the rights of vulnerable segments of the population has not been provided, and additional barriers have been created.*
- *The work of public services and e-government is improving. However, problems remain with the level of trust in justice, corruption, and access to legal aid. Vulnerable groups are not always protected, especially in matters of violence, discrimination and fair trial.*
- *There is also a positive trend towards this goal. Thus, during the analyzed period, the proportion of court cases resolved through conciliation procedures is increasing.*
- *It is not so easy to root out corruption. It is necessary to create conditions where it is not profitable to give and take bribes.*
- *When serious documents and programs, laws and bylaws are adopted, a full-fledged analysis of corruption risks is not carried out.*
- *Kazakhstan has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The introduction of payments to children from the National Fund has strengthened the social support system, providing additional economic stability for families with children. The National Preventive Mechanism under the Commissioner for Human Rights is actively working. The Alliance of Social Workers actively implements advocacy initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of children and women, preventing human trafficking and strengthening social control over*

*human rights. It also develops self-help groups that promote social integration and support for vulnerable segments of the population. It is also important to integrate social workers into the penitentiary system to support vulnerable groups.*

- *Issues of peace and justice are considered within the framework of the work of the Consultative and Advisory Body "Dialogue Platform on Human Dimension" (CAB DPHD), established at the initiative of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is attended by about 100 representatives of CSOs, Parliament, government agencies and international organizations. The Ministry of Information and Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan also organizes meetings on the implementation of SDG 16. However, despite the fact that Kazakhstan's constitutional guarantees of such freedoms as assembly, movement and expression of opinion, elections (see sections 5, 12, 20, 21, 32, 33 of the Constitution) and Kazakhstan prepared the fourth Universal Periodic Review in 2025, where there are many cases of civil society representatives concerning prosecution and illegal arrests. The Law "On the Procedure for Organizing and Holding Peaceful Assemblies in the Republic of Kazakhstan" dated May 25, 2020 introduced legal definitions of public events such as "assembly", "rally", "march", "picket", "demonstration". The practice regarding peaceful assemblies is unreasonably restrictive. Even for a single picket, prior permission was required, and holding or simply planning an 'unauthorized' meeting or picket was punishable by arrest.*

## SDG 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



**STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE  
THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

28%

### **Positive changes:**

- A Coordination Council for the SDGs has been established that unites government agencies, businesses and NGOs for strategic planning and monitoring.
- Kazakhstan actively participates in international partnerships, cooperates with the United Nations, donors, develops the ‘South-South’, ‘North-South’ relations and concludes numerous cooperation agreements.
- Digital monitoring and reporting tools are being introduced, and the green technology sector is developing.

### **Systemic problems:**

- Poor coordination between strategic planning, budgeting and resource management.
- Insufficient involvement of NGOs and local communities, especially in regions and rural areas.
- There is no open system for monitoring SDG achievements that is accessible to the general public.
- Problems with financial resources, external debt, as well as attracting investments in the interests of vulnerable regions.

### **General conclusion on SDG 17 in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan demonstrates commitment to global and sub-regional cooperation and is taking steps to localize the SDGs. However, without the active participation of civil society, systemic financing, data transparency and the involvement of local communities, progress on SDG 17 will remain limited.

For sustainable success, the country needs:

- Strengthen interaction between the Government, the private sector and NGOs;
- Provide access to international investments and technologies;
- Develop inclusive partnerships, especially at the local level;
- Ensure transparency and accessibility of SDG implementation data;
- Increase the participation of civil society in achieving the SDGs at the local level;
- Mobilize additional resources and strengthen institutional capacities at all levels.

SDG 17 is not just a goal, but the key to achieving all other goals and requires strategic efforts from all sectors of society.

Comments by the survey participants on SDG 17:

- *Kazakhstan has formed a Coordinating Council for the SDGs, which unites government agencies, attracts representatives of businesses and civil society.*

*This should help in developing solutions and monitoring indicators for the implementation of sustainable development. Despite this, there is no interaction between government planning, budgeting and cost control to ensure that resources are allocated more efficiently. There are no modern monitoring and reporting systems available to the public, which would allow for better control over spending.*

- *There is a need to build capacity to implement all SDGs. This goal highlights the importance of international support through ‘North-South’, ‘South-South’ and triangular cooperation. Government agencies should work closely with the public.*
- *Kazakhstan is strengthening international cooperation, actively involving regions to localize the SDGs at the regional level. However, to achieve the objectives of SDG 17, it is necessary to expand funding, share technologies and strengthen dialogue with the civil sector, especially at the level of local communities and local self-government.*
- *The country actively participates in international partnerships and initiatives, but in order to achieve sustainable progress, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation in science and technology, improve access to global markets, step up the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies and improve the efficiency of data collection.*
- *There is no healthy competition, the state declares partnership with NGOs but in fact it does not exist.*
- *International partnerships are established and cooperation with donors and UN organizations is developing. Digital monitoring and reporting tools are actively implemented. However, the participation of civil society and businesses in achieving the SDGs requires greater consistency and support.*
- *Mobilize additional financial resources from a wide variety of sources for developing countries. Assist developing countries to ensure long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at encouraging, as appropriate, leveraged financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, and addressing the external debt problem of heavily indebted poor countries in order to alleviate their debt burden. Adopt and apply investment promotion regimes for the benefit of least developed countries.*

# SPOTLIGHT REPORT

## SDG achievements in Kazakhstan

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