



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention**

Seventh to ninth periodic reports of States parties due in 2014

Rwanda*


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Abbreviations and acronyms

ANC	Antenatal Care
BDF	Business Development Fund
CBNPs	Community Based Nutrition Programmes
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EICV	Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages
EMONC	Emergency Obstetrical and Neonatal Care
FARG	Government Fund For Genocide Survivors
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
MAJ	Maison d'Accès à la Justice
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NPPA	National Public Prosecution Authority
NWC	National Women Council
OSC	Isange One Stop Centre
PSF	Private Sector Federation
RCS	Rwanda Correctional Services
RDF	Rwanda Defence Force
RNP	Rwanda National Police
RSSB	Rwanda Social Security Board
RWAMREC	Rwanda Men's Resource Centre
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperative
SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Program

I. Introduction

1. Rwanda ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by presidential decree No. 431/16 of 10 November 1980.¹ Rwanda had already submitted three written reports before the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. It presented an oral report in 1996 given the circumstances prevailing at that time and submitted the combined fourth to sixth periodic report submitted by Rwanda in 2007 covering the period of 1994 to 2005.² The Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women considered the combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports of Rwanda (CEDAW/C/RWA/6) at its forty-third session (19 January-6 February 2009).³ The Committee expressed its appreciation to Rwanda for its report but recalled the State party's obligation to view the concerns and recommendations identified in the concluding observations as requiring the State party's priority attention between then and the submission of its next periodic report.⁴

2. The Government of Rwanda is highly committed to the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment as transpired in the June 2003 National Constitution, the National Gender Policy, the Ratification of CEDAW, the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action (BPFA), the Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II), which highlight Gender as a cross-cutting issue.⁵ Rwanda has, through its various programmes and policies, demonstrated its commitment to work towards the reduction of gender-based inequalities and promotion of gender equality and equity in all areas.

II. Response to the concluding observations of the sixth periodic report

3. This chapter contains information on the follow-up to the concluding observations and recommendations made by the Committee on the single report equal to fourth, fifth and sixth reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women submitted by Rwanda in 2007.

***Recommendation No. 14:** The Committee urges the State party to take the necessary steps to ensure the adequate dissemination and clear understanding of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations, including through awareness-raising campaigns and training for the judiciary, lawyers, the police and other law enforcement officials. It invites the State party to enhance women's awareness of their rights through, for example, legal literacy programmes and legal assistance.*

¹ Official Gazette No. 4 of 15/12/1981, Presidential decree No. 436/12 of 10 November 1980.

² Republic of Rwanda, MIGEPROFE, Single report equal to fourth, fifth and sixth reports on the implementation of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, 1994-2005.

³ United Nations, CEDAW/C/SR.884, Forty-third session, Geneva, 4 February 2009.

⁴ United Nations, CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/6, Forty-third session, Geneva, 10 February 2009 p. 3.

⁵ East African Community Secretariat, Gender and Community Development Analysis in Rwanda, January 2009.

The Committee recommends that the Optional Protocol be translated into Kinyarwanda.

4. Among other core international and regional human rights treaties ratified by Rwanda, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol was translated into the Kinyarwanda language by the Ministry of Justice and subsequently disseminated in 2011.⁶ The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office, the National Women Council and Civil society organizations regularly produce a wide range of legal literacy materials and conduct legal awareness workshops for the community on existing laws and international instruments ratified by Rwanda. For example, in 2010 the Rwandan Women Parliamentarian Forum, in collaboration UNIFEM, DFID, UNFPA, ADB and UNDP, printed a handbook in Kinyarwanda⁷ including the new laws adopted and laws amended preventing, punishing and prohibiting discrimination against women and also conducted campaigns in all Districts of the country to meet judiciary, lawyers, the police and other law enforcement officials and the population in order to disseminate and for a clear understanding of these following four laws: the law on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence;⁸ the law regulating labour in Rwanda;⁹ the organic law determining the use and management of land in Rwanda;¹⁰ and the law to institute Part five of the Civil Code regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions.¹¹ Following these legal awareness activities, a significant number of women have realized that they should enjoy their human rights as men do and fight for their rights. In the recent land registration process for example, women have been exposed to their rights to land and property ownership.

5. Since 2006, the Ministry of Justice has opened the *Access to Justice Bureaus (Maisons d'Accès à la Justice — MAJ)*. The MAJ, being present in each of the 30 Districts and counting 90 lawyers (three lawyers per district) improved universal access to legal advice and assistance. There has been established in the said MAJ specific desks to deal with legal assistance for women, especially related to cases of gender-based violence.

Recommendation No. 15 and 16: Constitutional and domestic legislation.
The Committee urges the State party to accelerate its law review process and to work effectively with Parliament to ensure that all discriminatory provisions in the Criminal Code, Family Code, Commercial Code, etc., are repealed so as to bring legislation into compliance with the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations. It encourages the State party to set a clear time

⁶ Republic of Rwanda, Core International and Regional Human Rights Treaties ratified by Rwanda, which are part of the Rwandan laws, May 2011.

⁷ Rwanda Women Parliamentarian Forum, UNIFEM, DFID, UNFPA, ADB and UNDP, *Munyarwandakazi menya amwe mu mategeko akurengera*, November 2009.

⁸ Official Gazette, Law No. 59/2008 of 10/09/2008 on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence.

⁹ Official Gazette No. special of 27/05/2009, law No. 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 regulating labour in Rwanda.

¹⁰ Official Gazette of 15/09/2005, organic law No. 08/2005 of 14/07/2005 determining the use and management of land in Rwanda.

¹¹ Official Gazette No. 22 of 15/11/1999, law No. 22/99 of 12/11/1999 to supplement book one of the Civil Code and to institute part five regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions.

frame for such reforms. The Committee also recommends that the State party incorporate in its Constitution or in other appropriate legislation a prohibition of discrimination against women, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination, in line with articles 1 and 2, paragraph b, of the Convention.

6. Rwanda has accelerated the process of elimination of discrimination against women through the following legal reforms to ensure that all forms of discrimination against women are prohibited:

- The land policy adopted in 2004 was complemented in 2013 by the new law governing land in Rwanda¹² and other laws and regulations with regard to access to land, land management perspectives, and to the modalities of land rights transfer. Article 4 of the land law prohibits all forms of discrimination, such as that based on sex in relation to access to land and the enjoyment of real rights.
- The law No. 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 regulating labour in Rwanda prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status or family responsibilities.
- The organic law No. 10/2013/OL of 11/07/2013 governing political organizations and politicians¹³ in its article 7 provides that “Political organizations are prohibited from basing themselves on race, ethnic group, tribe, lineage, region, sex, religion or any other division which may lead to discrimination”.
- Article 2 of the organic law No. 02/2011/OL of 27/07/2011 determining the organization of education¹⁴ provides that education of the citizen shall not be characterized by any form of discrimination and favouritism.
- In the organic law of 02/05/2012 instituting the Penal Code,¹⁵ discriminatory provisions were repealed. For example, article 245 relating to penalty for adultery provides equal penalties to both sexes, unlike the old Penal Code which provided severe penalties to females compared to males.
- The Commercial Code of 1988 was reviewed by law of 27/04/2009 and by law of 07/05/2010¹⁶ to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. With the new law, there is no need for a woman to have the authorization of her husband to start a business as was the case in the past.
- The family law which is in the last phase of revision in the Parliament removes discriminatory provisions as highlighted in the following examples from the draft of the new law governing persons and family. Article 51 states that spouses in a marriage have to mutually agree on where they will live as oppose to article 83 of the old law which provided that the residence of a

¹² Official Gazette No. special of 16/06/2013, Law No. 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land in Rwanda.

¹³ Official Gazette No. Special of 12/07/2013, organic law No. 10/2013/OL of 11/07/2013 governing political organizations and politicians.

¹⁴ Official Gazette No. 34 of 22/08/2011, law No. 02/2011/OL of 27/07/2011 governing organization of Education.

¹⁵ Official Gazette No. Special of 14 June 2012, Organic Law No. 01/2012/OL of 02/05/2012 instituting the Penal Code.

¹⁶ Official Gazette No. Special of 14/05/2010, law 14/2010 of 07/05/2010 modifying and complementing the law No. 07/2009 of 27/04/2009 relating to companies.

woman is where her husband resides; according to the new law (article 194), spouses jointly ensure the moral and material management of the household, unlike article 206 of the old law which provided that the husband is the head of the family composed by his wife and their children; article 320 of the new law provides that the father and mother, during the marriage, have the capacity to administer the property of their minor child and represent him/her in civil actions while the old law in article 352 stipulated that the authorized representative of a child and the manager of his/her property is his father.

Recommendations No. 17 and 18: National machinery for the advancement of women. *The Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its national machinery for the advancement of women, by clearly defining the mandate and responsibilities of its various components, and enhancing coordination among them. It calls upon the State party to develop a comprehensive strategy, with clear goals, timetables and monitoring mechanism, for the advancement of women and elimination of discrimination in all areas covered by the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action, and to inform the Committee in its next report of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in its implementation.*

7. The Government of Rwanda continues to strengthen the national machinery for the advancement of women composed of Ministry of Gender and Family promotion (MIGEPROF), the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) the National Women Council (NWC) and the National Commission for Children (NCC). The mandate and responsibilities of the components of national machinery are clearly defined. The Ministry of Gender and Family promotion is the government body in charge of coordinating the implementation of national policies and programmes regarding the advancement of women. The Gender Monitoring Office has the specific responsibility of monitoring on how the fundamental principles of gender are respected in all organs at governmental, private, non-governmental and religious levels; examining and monitoring the national policy and programmes intended at ensuring the promotion of gender equality; monitoring the existence of the policy, programmes as well as different projects aimed at promoting gender equality, their implementation and the system of their budget allocation; ensuring the effective implementation of the international agreements and programmes relating to the respect of the principles of gender; fighting against gender based injustice and violence; and advocating for the respect of gender equality at all levels.¹⁷ The GMO reports directly to the Office of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Machinery produces an annual gender profile of all government institutions as well as comprehensive statistics on the participation of women in Government and other sectors.¹⁸

8. The National Women's Council on the other hand serves as the collective voice and a platform for Women to raise and address issues pertaining to development. It also has a responsibility to train women to analyse and solve their own problems together; and to encourage them to participate in and have a say in the development of the country.¹⁹

¹⁷ Law No. 51/2007 of 20/09/2007 determining the responsibilities, organization and functioning of Gender Monitoring Office.

¹⁸ This information is regularly published on their website: www.gmo.gov.rw.

¹⁹ Law No. 27/2003 of 18/08/2003 determining the organization, attributions and functions of the National Women Council.

9. The National Gender Policy²⁰ approved by the Government in 2010 and its Strategic Plan institutionalize the National Gender Cluster as a coordination mechanism that aims at supporting the Government of Rwanda in promoting gender equality and utilizing partner's synergies to improve gender interventions and avoid duplication. National Gender Policy defined the role of all stakeholders in the elimination of discrimination against women. The National Gender Cluster was put in place to play the role of coordinating, monitoring and guiding the implementation process of the national gender policy. The cluster is chaired the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion and it brings together other national machinery institutions (GMO, NWC,) sector ministries, development partners, the civil society organizations, and the private sector. The mission of the Gender Cluster is to facilitate the collaboration and coordination of all interventions in the area of gender by sharing experiences, generating new ideas, identifying gaps, lobbying and advocating for achieving gender equity and equality in all sectors across the country. The first Gender Cluster Strategic Plan 2010-2012 is a comprehensive strategy, with clear goals, timetables and monitoring mechanism for the advancement of women and elimination of discrimination in all areas covered by the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action. In order to ensure the elimination of all Forms of discrimination against women in all areas, other specific policies and strategies were developed such as: Girls Education Policy,²¹ Agriculture Sector Gender mainstreaming Strategy,²² Media Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Rwanda National Police Gender Mainstreaming.²³ In addition, EDPRS II priority Sectors have committed to develop Sector specific Gender Mainstreaming Strategies.

10. In 2012, Rwanda developed a five year (2012-2017) National Implementation Plan of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) — BPfA and the Outcomes of the Twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (2000). In June 2014, Rwanda submitted a report on the implementation of the BPfA and the Outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000).²⁴ The greatest achievement since BPfA has been taking the women of Rwanda from being perceived as victims to leading actors in the reconstruction of the country, to such an extent that Rwanda is now globally considered a model for gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly as regards women's full engagement and participation in decision-making and other spheres of national development. Women have played a key role in the rebirth of Rwanda from the liberation struggle, through the reconstruction, reconciliation and peace building, to the remarkable progress in many areas of development.

Recommendation No. 19 and 20: Temporary special measures. *The Committee encourages the State party to continue to use quotas, in particular for strengthening economic life. It also encourages the State party to use other*

²⁰ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, National Gender Policy, Final version, July 2010.

²¹ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, Girls' Education Policy, April 2008.

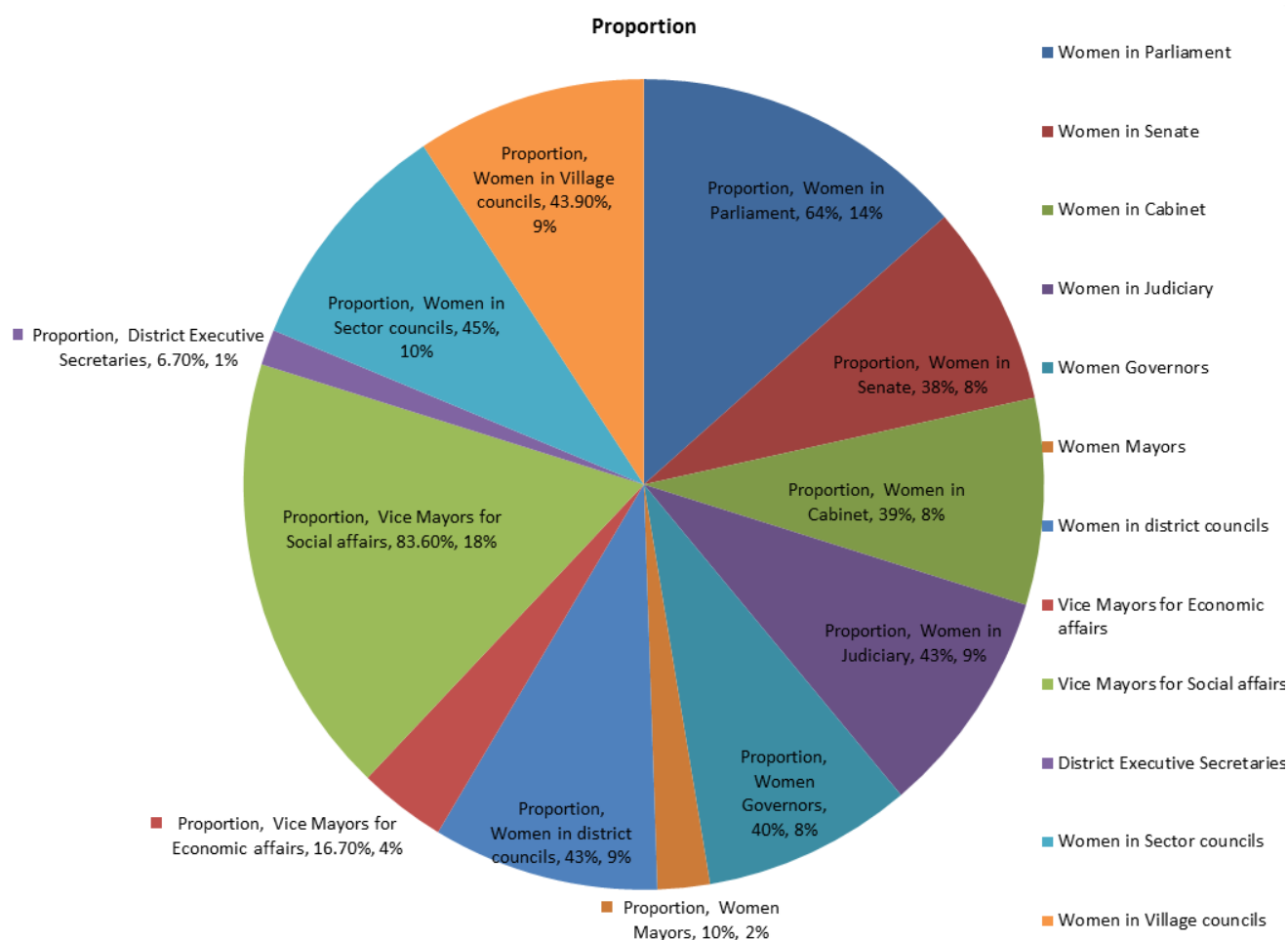
²² Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Agriculture Gender Strategy, November 2010.

²³ Rwanda National Police, RNP Gender Policy, June 2014.

²⁴ Republic of Rwanda, Country Report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), June 2014.

temporary special measures to enhance de facto equality of women with men in all areas covered by the Convention in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25.

11. One of the policies supported by the Government of Rwanda is affirmative action according to which a certain number of quotas for women should be integrated in the Parliament, District and Sector Councils as well as in the community development committees. According to Rwanda Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration submitted in June 2014,²⁵ the following data shows gender equality in decision making and governance. This provides space for women to make their voices heard and to put forward and promote women's empowerment and gender equality.



Source: Republic of Rwanda, Country Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration, June 2014.

12. Female participation in public life is illustrated by the figures relating to women in public service (45 per cent), permanent secretaries of Ministries (50 per

²⁵ Op. cit.

cent) Women in Cabinet (39 per cent) and ambassadors (23 per cent). Women represent 43.75 per cent in Kigali City Council; 33.3 per cent in the Executive Committee of Kigali City; 9.4 per cent in Executive Committee of National Youth Council and 33.8 per cent in the committee of the National Council for People with Disabilities. Women representation has increased in judiciary where female judges are 43 per cent in Supreme Court, 30.8 per cent in High Courts, 44.2 per cent in Lower Courts and 43 per cent in Commercial Courts.²⁶

13. Girls' education is a central component of the strategies to ensure that there is inclusive basic education for all, and beyond basic schooling to ensure that women are appropriately skilled to contribute positively to economic and social development. The Government of Rwanda approved the Girls' Education policy in 2008 and it forms the framework for interventions to increase girls' access, achievement, retention and completion at all levels of education as well as guide and promote sustainable actions aimed at the progressive elimination of gender disparities in Education and training and management structures. The Girls Education is also backed by the affirmative action "cut off points" to ensure girls retention and completion of in schools and Higher learning institutions.

***Recommendation 21 and 22: Stereotypes.** The Committee calls upon the State party to implement comprehensive measures directed to change the widely accepted attitudes and practices of women' subordination and the stereotypical roles applied to both sexes. Such measures should include awareness-raising and educational campaigns addressing women and men, girls and boys, religious and community leaders, parents, teachers and officials, in accordance with the obligations under articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention. The Committee also recommends that the State party encourage the media to discuss and promote non-stereotypical and positive images of women, and promote the value of gender equality to society as a whole.*

14. Comprehensive measures directed to change the widely accepted attitudes and practices of women' subordination and the stereotypical roles applied to both sexes have been implemented through a number of programmes such as "Umugoroba wa babyeyi" (an evening moment for parents to network), "Noza Imibanire" a module that guides people about how to complement each other in a family and thus live in harmony, the, annual Women and Girls Months in March where sensitization on stereotyping is undertaken, weekly broadcast programmes on National and Community Radios and TV, existence of a Gender training manual with a whole chapter on Gender Stereotypes, the National Employment Policy encourages integration of Women into Male dominated Professions/Jobs (construction, mining, Engineering etc.), to mention but a few.

15. The mass media has been a major channel to change stereotypes. In 2012-2013 the Gender Monitoring Office conducted a study to examine and assess the attitudes and perceptions towards gender equality to examine and assess the attitudes and perceptions towards gender equality among Rwandans.²⁷ The study revealed that 77 per cent of Rwandans, 79.9 per cent of the male respondents and 74.8 per cent of the female respondents, have heard of the principle of gender equality. The majority of Rwandans (95.6 per cent) are of the view that people should be treated equally

²⁶ National Gender Statistics, 2012 developed by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.

²⁷ Republic of Rwanda, Gender Monitoring Office, Annual report 2012-2013.

regardless of their sex. The majority of respondents (88 per cent), with 87 per cent and 88.8 per cent among males and females, respectively, support the quota system that allows women to occupy at least 30 per cent in decision making positions in all sectors both public and private. This shows a continuing change in attitude regarding the role and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in the wider community.

Recommendation 23 and 24: Post-genocide reconstruction and prosecution of perpetrators. *The Committee calls upon the State party to take all necessary measures, as emphasized in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and in conformity with the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action, in order to ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in the reconstruction and socioeconomic development of the country. The Committee also urges the State party to continue to ensure appropriate protection and support, as well as equal access to justice, for the women victims of sexual violence during the genocide.*

16. Rwanda is among countries that has elaborated an action plan on the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The national action plan was adopted in 2009 to create an appropriate framework for the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The great achievement of the National Action Plan was the significant contribution of women in the implementation of various strategies in order to restore unity and reconciliation among Rwandans including psychological, legal, economic and medical support to women survivors of rape during the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

17. Women became a driving force of the socioeconomic development of the country after the 1994 genocide. A vast network of women groups such as NGOs, associations and cooperatives at the grassroots level played a pivotal role in providing empowerment initiatives. *Profemmes Twese Hamwe*, an umbrella of 58 women's organizations proposed the Campaign for peace programmes aimed at promoting respect for human life, tolerance, collaboration and mediation and open discussion and negotiation to resolve conflicts rather than use violence. Associations such as *DUHOZANYE* assisted women genocide survivors to repair damaged houses and build new ones. *AVEGA Agahozo*, the association of the Genocide widows of Rwanda, worked actively for the progress, empowerment and re-integration of Genocide widows into Rwanda society, improving and ameliorating their psychological and economic conditions of living which in turn made them live in perfect harmony, solidarity, justice, peace and stability. *DUTERIMBERE* association held trainings for women loan applicants and organized workshops on management of small business endeavours.

18. The Government of Rwanda demonstrated its goodwill towards women and gave them a stake in the rebuilding process by ensuring that women are elected or appointed to different leadership positions. For example, women participated massively as members of the judiciary and witnesses, which contributed to the success of Gacaca Courts. The impact of Gacaca on women leadership has been especially important: almost 40 per cent of Gacaca Courts judges were female, and this is an important achievement given that women did not serve as courts judges traditionally, as those judges were reserved for community's wise and respected men. In Rwanda, rape and sexual torture were labelled "category one" crimes, or

among the most serious crimes committed during the genocide. In a bid to expedite the remaining trials and to provide justice long overdue for survivors of sexual violence together with resource constraints, an amendment to the Gacaca law in 2008 provided for the transfer of these cases from ordinary courts to Gacaca. The amendment also incorporated several procedural rules that were meant to protect survivors of sexual violence and their families. Among these was the rule that victims of sexual violence could only testify against their rapist in closed session. During a closed session, trauma counsellors were allowed to support survivors. Because cases involving sexual violence were among the most difficult cases for judges to try and potentially traumatizing for the victims involved, it was decided in early 2008 that the Gacaca judges were to receive training — with legal and psychological components — about how to deal with cases of rape and sexual torture.

***Recommendation 25 and 26: Violence against women.** The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to prevent and address all forms of violence against women, in particular sexual violence and domestic violence in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 19, including by utilizing the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1). It calls upon the State party to put in place a comprehensive strategy and action plan to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women, including in refugee camps, as well as an effective institutional mechanism to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of measures taken. The Committee encourages the State party to intensify its awareness-raising efforts with regard to all forms of violence against women, which represent violations of women's human rights. The Committee invites the State party to intensify its efforts to provide support services and a sufficient number of shelters for women victims of violence, staffed by expert personnel and provided with adequate financial resources for their effective functioning. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the systematic collection and publication of data, disaggregated by type of violence and by the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, and to use such data as the basis for monitoring the implementation of current and future policy and support measures. With respect to the Bill on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence, the Committee requests the State party to urgently review the provisions likely to generate direct or indirect discrimination against women.*

19. In 2011, the Government of Rwanda adopted the National Policy against Gender-based Violence. The objectives of the policy cover the following three main areas: foster a prevention-focused environment where gender-based violence is not tolerated and reduce vulnerability of groups most at risk to GBV; provide comprehensive services to victims of gender-based violence; improve accountability and eliminate impunity for gender-based violence; and build coordination and monitoring system. In the same year, the Strategic Plan for fighting against gender-based violence (2011-2016) and an anti-GBV action plan which puts much emphasis on training in trauma management and sensitivity to victims in handling sexual violence cases were put in place. The law on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence²⁸ legislates for zero tolerance of gender-based violence and provides

²⁸ Op. cit.

legal sanctions against gender-based violence perpetrators. The GBV law has made it possible for the population to understand that violating a woman is a crime. The law of 27/05/2009 regulating labour in Rwanda²⁹ prohibits gender-based violence and sexual harassment at the work place. The Law relating to the Code of Criminal Procedure³⁰ gives a procedure to those who wish to report their cases to the authorities. The law relating to the civil, commercial, labour and administrative procedure is under review to remove the provisions that promote discrimination against women. The law No. 22/99 of 12/11/1999 to supplement book one of the Civil Code and to institute part five regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions is also under review to enable the excellence of women's rights, e.g. under the new law a wife can inherit from her husband. The land law is on a brighter note because both men and women are on the same level, they have both equal rights to land and the transaction on it (article 4). Rwanda ratified the International Convention relating to the status of Refugees on 3 January 1980. The law relating to refugees is under review in Parliament. The National Action Plan 2009-2012 on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security adopted in 2012 includes measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women, including in refugee camps.

20. In order to coordinate, monitor and assess the effectiveness of measures put in place for fighting against gender-based violence, the Gender Monitoring Office conducted in 2011 a study on GBV indicators and baseline³¹ to ensure the systematic collection and publication of data, disaggregated by type of violence and by the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, and to use such data as the basis for monitoring the implementation of current and future policy and support measures. The purpose of this study was to equip the office and country in overall with a GBV monitoring framework, enabling the office to effectively collect information on GBV. The following institutions were identified to be responsible of source of data: Ministry of Health, Rwanda National Police, National Public Prosecution Authority, Supreme Court, Gender Monitoring Office, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Administration, District level, Ministry of Gender and family Promotion, Ministry of Public Service and Labour, Immigration Office.

21. Rwanda security forces have embraced this commitment and placed it among the country's top security concerns. The Rwanda Defence Forces and the National Police have undertaken Anti-SGBV awareness campaigns and advocacy within and outside Rwanda. To this effect, various fora have been organized to deliberate on the issue of GBV. For instance, a high level International conference on the role of security organs to prevent SGBV was held in Kigali in 2010 and produced "the Kigali Declaration on the role of security organs in fighting SGBV". This declaration will also accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Secretary General's campaign on Ending Violence against Women. The Kigali International Conference Declaration (KICD) on the role of security organs in ending violence against women and the launch of the Africa UNiTE campaign in Rwanda, initiated by the security organs (RDF, RNP and RCS) has now been institutionalized into a continental mechanism with a permanent Secretariat in Kigali, and has been

²⁹ Op. cit.

³⁰ Official Gazette No. 27 of 08/07/2013, law No. 30/2013 of 24/05/2013 relating to the Code of Criminal Procedure.

³¹ Republic of Rwanda, Gender-based violence indicators developed by GMO, August 2011.

endorsed by over 20 African countries. The United Nations Secretary General and the President of the World Bank laid the foundation stone for an African Security Organs' Centre for Coordination of Action to end Violence against Women and Girls (AFSOCCA) in Kigali in May 2013. Rwanda National Police and Rwanda Defence Force that participate in peace keeping missions undergo special training on GBV prevention and protection. Rwanda has a high female representation in peace keeping missions who are trained on special skills in GBV protection and prevention.

22. In June 2011, the City of Kigali together with UN-Women launched the innovative "Safe Cities". This is a programme in five cities around the world, and Kigali was one of these "Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls" Project. This project is to run for four years, and extend to sectors around Kigali City and its pilot programme is intended to increase women and girls safety in public spaces. The umbrella Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) was set up in 2006 to coordinate the growing engagement of men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. It is a key driver in fighting GBV by changing the patriarchal mindset in the community.

23. A multi-service centre commonly known as *Isange One Stop Centre (OSC)* was created in 2009 within the National Police Hospital to receive and assist GBV survivors with all the relevant services needed including medical, legal, psychological and social assistance. The OSC services are available 24 hours a day and are free of charge. By cutting down on procedures and providing services under one roof, these OSC are more victim-friendly, provide rapid response, making victims more willing to seek services and to report GBV cases. Every district hospital delivers the OSC services and in those areas where the OSC have yet been constructed, the victims of gender-based violence may approach the main hospital. Rwanda has also safe houses to provide shelter and protection for the victims. Anti GBV/Child Protection Committees and Anti GBV clubs were established at the grassroots level in all Districts and schools, respectively. Community policing are operational at every Village (Umudugudu) countrywide. The Access to Justice Bureau (MAJ) operating in all Districts since 2006 has specific desks to deal with gender-based violence.

24. The Anti-GBV Directorate was established in the Rwanda National Police to respond to cases of SGBV and the rights of the victims. The Directorate has focal points in all police stations in the country who work closely with hospitals and health centres to facilitate access to medical expertise. Anti-GBV desks have been established in the RDF and National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) to provide similar services, especially the protection component. Toll free telephone hotlines have been put in place for emergency reporting of crimes and accessing information through the Ministry of Health, RNP, RDF, GMO and Public Prosecution Authority. The later has also a special unit of prosecutors in charge of GBV and a department of protection of victims and witnesses. Sexual violence cases are given special consideration at all levels and in court there are held in isolation to avoid stigmatization of the victim. Service providers in GBV receive training on orientation and care to victims and on collaboration with other key stakeholders such as the Police. Other initiatives include community policing, anti-GBV and child protection committees at village level to provide an opportunity for awareness raising, gathering information and coordination anti-GBV services. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on GBV were developed in 2012 to guide stakeholders' interventions in humanitarian assistance situations and refugee camps.

The Rwandan Penal Code provides that Sexual Gender-Based Violence cases be exclusively tried in court proceedings which are closed out of the public so as to protect the victims from social stigma. These strategies have culminated to a decrease of gender-based violence. They reduced by 3.9 per cent in 2012 to 3,444 from 3,585 in 2011 mainly because of public awareness campaigns and law enforcement.³² The Rwanda Defence Forces and the National Police have undertaken Anti-SGBV awareness campaigns and advocacy within and outside Rwanda. To this effect, various fora have been organized to deliberate on the issue of GBV. For instance, a high level International conference on the role of security organs to prevent SGBV was held in Kigali in 2010 and 2014 and produced “The Kigali Declaration on the role of security organs in fighting SGBV” This declaration will also accelerate the implementation of the United Nations Secretary General’s campaign on Ending Violence against Women and Rwanda hosted the same.

Recommendation 27 and 28: Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution.

The Committee urges the speedy enactment of the Bill on the Suppressing, Prosecuting and Punishing in human beings, and the introduction of effective prevention measures, timely prosecution and punishment of traffickers and the provisions of protection and support to victims. It recommends that information and training on the new bill when adopted be provided to the judiciary, lawyers, and the law enforcement officials, including border police as well as public officials, social workers and community development officers. It further recommends that the State party adopt comprehensive measures to address trafficking as well as exploitation of prostitution and ensure the allocation of sufficient human and financial resources for their effective implementation, including collection of sex-disaggregated data. It also recommends that the State party to address the root causes of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution of women and girls and take measures for the rehabilitation and social integration of women and girls who have been victims of such activity.

25. The Government has put in place preventive measures for any case related to women trafficking that may arise in Rwanda. The Penal Code provides punishment for offences of abduction, arrest, detention or transporting any person in order to make them slaves, sell them as slaves, force them into begging, illegally adopt them on payment of a consideration, take them indecent pictures, in dangerous sports, in armed conflicts, live together as husband and wife for the purpose of torturing them or selling their organs. Rwanda National Police has put in place a department to deal with transnational crimes and works with police of other countries through Interpol to bring such criminals to book. Police and immigration officials maintained strict border control measures that are a key component to prevention of cross-border trafficking. The Government of Rwanda provides training for judiciary, lawyers, and the law enforcement officials, including border police as well as public officials, social workers and community development officers to increase awareness of the nature of human trafficking and to provide practical skills for responding to it. The incitement to prostitution by encouraging, inciting or deceiving for the purpose of prostitution another person even with his/her consent is illegal. The Penal Code punishes any hindrance to the action of prevention, assistance and rehabilitation efforts of persons engaged in prostitution or in danger of becoming prostitutes (article 207). The law regulating labour in Rwanda prohibits slavery, forced labour, forced prostitution and child prostitution.

³² Police statistics, 2013.

Recommendation 29 and 30: Political participation and participation in public life. *The Committee expresses concern that women are still underrepresented in local public administration and in senior managerial posts in the private sector. The Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its efforts to increase participation of women in decision-making posts, in particular at the local level, and in senior managerial position in the private sector, including through the use of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25.*

26. Institutional mechanisms like Imbuto Foundation's Toast Master clubs, under the leadership of the First Lady Jeannette Kagame, *FAWE* (Forum for African Women Educationalists) and *Plan International Rwanda* play a key role in building leadership qualities among young women and girls. These Imbuto Foundation's Toast Master clubs have helped young girls to realize their potential in different fields including leadership and participation and public speaking. Trainings were carried out through organized debates on national and global issues. According to National Gender Statistics (2013), the participation of women in decision-making posts at the local level is increasing: women are 33.3 per cent in the Bureau of the Executive Districts Council, 44.8 per cent in the Districts Councils and 37.7 per cent as Cell Executive Secretaries.³³

Recommendation 31 and 32: Education. *The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to ensure de facto equal access of girls and young women to all levels of education, overcome traditional attitudes hampering women and girls fully enjoying of their right to education, retain girls in schools and implement re-entry policies enabling young women to return to school after pregnancy. The Committee further urges the State party to take measures to increase the enrolment of girls at all levels, and recommends the introduction of temporary special measures, in accordance with its general recommendation 25. It also encourages the State party to take measures to increase the number of female teachers, especially at secondary and university levels and in leadership positions.*

27. The Girl's Education Policy and its Strategic Plan were adopted in 2008³⁴ to guide and promote sustainable action aimed at the progressive elimination of gender disparities in education and training as well as in management structures. The Ministry of Education conducted a study on factors influencing poor performance of school children especially girls and found that sanitation facilities was a very critical issue leading to late arrivals, absenteeism and drop outs. Construction of sanitation rooms containing first aid equipment for young girls faced with issues of menstruation and separate toilets for both boys and girls has been done in most of primary schools in Rwanda. A counsellor for that purpose has been appointed in majority of primary schools and sensitization campaigns for boys on menstruation as a normal thing have been conducted across the country. This has allowed a sizable number of girls to continue with secondary education after Primary Six (P6) which was not the case before as few school children especially girls could continue schooling after P6. Given that the primary education is free of charge this had a very positive impact on children from poor families especially girls who were to stay at home and let the brothers proceed with schooling due to limited finance.

³³ National Gender Statistics, 2013.

³⁴ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, Girl's Education Policy, 2008.

28. The promotion of private higher education paired with that of gender equality made it possible for women to access higher education especially through their evening programmes. This has led to increased participation of women in private higher education amounting to 53.38 per cent as compared to 45.30 per cent for men in 2012.³⁵ As a result women graduating from private universities are actively involved in public administration at both central and decentralized levels, in private sector as well as in the civil society. Imbuto Foundation has developed some strategies to encourage women and girls to attend and perform in science and technology including awarding best performers in examinations and providing scholarship to girls with excellent performance from poor families to improve access, retention and performance especially in science and technology. Mentorship programmes are also provided to stimulate girls/women to break the gender stereotypes and adventure in traditionally male-dominated fields including ICT sector. Curriculum and training material are scrutinized to eliminate discriminative tendencies and special efforts have been made to improve access of children from poor families.

29. To close the gender gap in education and reduce the drop-out rate of girls, the Government of Rwanda has undertaken a variety of activities and strategies aimed at reducing pregnancy related school drop out of girls by addressing issues behind the dropping out of girls due to pregnancy as a major hindrance to girl's education. In the past period, girls were penalized for their pregnancies because they were thought to be a corrupting influence on their peers, but now there are more progressive measures taken for rehabilitating and reintegrating the girls after birth and recuperation and punishment for men responsible for the pregnancy, particularly teachers. Pregnancy prevention strategies include teaching reproductive health, family life and sexuality. Under a re-entry strategy, a girl during her pregnancy continues her education and is temporarily suspended from school when approaching the time of confinement. After birth and one year of child-care, the girl has the right of re-entering. The table below compares the progress in access of girls to secondary and tertiary education.

Students	Sex	Year				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Lower secondary	Female	49.3%	50.2%	51.7%	52.5%	53.4%
	Male	50.7%	49.8%	48.3%	47.5%	46.6%
Upper secondary	Female	45.3%	46.5%	48.1%	49.3%	49.9%
	Male	54.7%	53.5%	51.9%	50.7%	50.1%
Net enrolment rate	Female	13.8%	13.7%	23.7%	24.2%	30.0%
	Male	13.9%	12.8%	21.6%	27.2%	26.0%
Tertiary education/ public institutions	Female	32.1%	32.7%	32.9%	34.0%	33.4%
	Male	67.9%	67.3%	67.1%	66.0%	66.6%
Tertiary education/ private institutions	Female	50.9%	53.4%	54.9%	52.9%	54.7%
	Male	49.1%	46.6%	45.1%	47.1%	45.3%

Source: MINEDUC, *Statistical Yearbook 2012*.

³⁵ MINEDUC, *Education Statistics Yearbook*, February 2013.

30. Female teachers are present at primary, secondary schools and university as illustrated in the tables below:

School staff by sex in primary education from 2008 to 2012

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
School staff	35 672	35 664	36 352	40 299	40 397
Male	16 711	16 770	16 838	19 513	19 066
Female	18 961	18 894	19 514	20 786	21 331
% of Male	46.8%	47.0%	46.3%	48.4%	47.2%
% of Female	53.2%	53.0%	53.7%	51.6%	52.8%

Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistics Yearbook 2012.

School staff by sex in secondary education from 2008 to 2012

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
School staff	10 187	14 426	14 477	20 522	23 335
Male Staff	7 691	10 324	10 600	14 818	16 936
Female Staff	2 496	4 102	3 877	5 704	6 399
% of Male Staff	75.5%	71.6%	73.2%	72.2%	72.6%
% of Female Staff	24.5%	28.4%	26.8%	27.8%	27.4%

Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistics Yearbook 2012.

Tertiary education staff by sex in 2012

Status	Sex	Academic staff			Administrative and support staff		
		Rwandans	Foreigners	Total	Rwandans	Foreigners	Total
Public	Male	1 217	234	1 451	797	17	814
	Female	347	51	398	525	3	528
Subtotal		1 564	285	1 849	1 322	20	1 342
% Male		77.8%	82.1%	78.5%	60.3%	85.0%	60.7%
% Female		22.2%	17.9%	21.5%	39.7%	15.0%	39.3%
Private	Male	883	190	1 073	518	23	541
	Female	109	50	159	244	10	254
Subtotal		992	240	1 232	762	33	795
% Male		89.0%	79.2%	87.1%	68.0%	69.7%	68.1%
% Female		11.0%	20.8%	12.9%	32.0%	30.3%	31.9%
General total		2 556	525	3 081	2 084	53	2 137

Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistics Yearbook 2012.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 33 and 34: Employment. *The Committee urges the State party to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, including through the use of temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25. It recommends that the State party pay particular attention to the conditions of women workers in the informal sector, in particular in agriculture, with a view to ensuring their access to social benefits. The Committee also urges the State party to speedily enact legislation prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace, including sanctions, civil remedies and compensation for victims. The Committee further urges the State party to establish an effective monitoring and regulatory mechanism on employment issues and practices in the private sector.*

31. Rwanda's employment policy states that a person is allowed to enter the labour market at the age of 16 years. The sector has recorded a higher female employment rate over the past ten years than men. Although the change is modest, women still have a better employment rate than men since 2000. This was 85.2 per cent for female against 83.2 per cent for male in 2010-2011.³⁶ The law regulating labour in Rwanda defines the worker as "any person who commits him/herself to put his/her professional activity in return for payment under the direction and authority of another physical or moral public or private person". This definition includes the labourers in the informal sector and most women are employed in the informal sector; in this way they are provided for by the labour law. The law regulating labour in Rwanda prohibits all forms of discrimination that may result in prejudicing equality of chances in respect of employment, equal treatment or equality before legal institutions in the event of employment disputes; advocates equal pay for workers with the same competence in respect of work of equal value (articles 12 and 84); protects women workers against violence or sexual harassment in the workplace and emphasizes increased freedom and flexibility in negotiations of working and employment conditions between the employer and the employee and through a more asserted trade union freedom. The law No. 86/2013 of 11/09/2013 establishing the general statutes for public service³⁷ regulates the work of public servant pregnant women or women with breastfeeding babies. The effective monitoring and regulatory mechanism on employment issues and practices in the private sector is provided by the National Employment Policy.

32. In order to pay particular attention to the conditions of women workers in the informal sector, in particular in agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources adopted the Agriculture Gender Strategy in November 2010.³⁸ A gender Analysis in the Agriculture Sector was conducted to identify the gaps, challenges and opportunities in all agricultural programmes. It was found that while agriculture development efforts by MINAGRI and its partners are contributing to food security and wider livelihoods needs, the benefits are limited by some conditions still existing in the sector and practices, one of which relates to gender disparities. The overall objective of the agriculture gender strategy is to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development through institutionalization of gender

³⁶ Republic of Rwanda, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV 3.

³⁷ Official gazette No. 42 of 21/10/2013, law No. 86/2013 of 11/09/2013 establishing the General Statutes for Public Service.

³⁸ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Agriculture Gender Strategy, 2010.

responsive programming (planning and budgeting), implementation, monitoring and reporting systems and improve gender equality in the agriculture sector. The agriculture gender strategy enables the MINAGRI and its partners effectively respond to the practical needs and strategic gender interests of both men and women farmers. The Business Development Fund (BDF) established in 2010 by the Government supports SMEs through lines of credit, matching grants and advisory services. This facility enables women to access loans easily to start-up businesses thus job creation and economic empowerment of women. The implementation of all of these initiatives is ensured through a number of mechanisms such as evaluation of Central and Local government performance contracts, the Biannual National Leadership Retreat and National Dialogue, EDPRS Sector Cluster joint evaluation meetings, Sector Working Groups, Parliament Standing Committee, Inter Agency — Ministerial — District Planning Consultations, Joint Sector Reviews, Gender Cluster, JADF, National Taskforce on International Treaties, PS Forum, Annual Institution retreats, to mention but a few.

***Recommendations raised in paragraph 35 and 36: Health.** The Committee calls on the State party to take concrete measures to enhance women's access to health care, in particular for women living in rural areas and elderly women, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 24 on women and health. The Committee recommends that the obstacles to accessing obstetric services be monitored and steps be taken for their removal and that a strategic plan to reduce maternal mortality be put in place. It further requests the State party to take measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies, including by making contraceptives and family planning methods more widely available and by increasing awareness about family planning among women and men. The Committee recommends that the State party review its legislation relating to abortion with a view to removing punitive provisions imposed on women who undergo abortion in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation 24 on women and health and the Beijing Platform for Action. The Committee also calls upon the State Party to provide adequate information and statistical data about women's mental health in its next periodic report.*

33. Several programmes are available for the promotion of maternal and child health. These programmes include family planning, antenatal care, community health care, delivering health facilities, Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EMONC), the construction and equipment of maternity wards, capacity building of the midwives, increase in the number and quality of health professionals and the introduction of community-based health insurance. According to the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey of 2010, the rate of the use of contraceptives raised from 10 per cent in 2005, to 52 per cent in 2010. Child delivery in health facilities increased from 28 per cent in 2005, to 69 per cent in 2010-2011. Antenatal care is used at 96 per cent (at least one prenatal consultation). Community Health Workers who were appointed as voluntary workers contributed to massive use of mosquito bed nets by pregnant women and thus they have contributed to decrease of cases of malaria and maternal mortality rate. Maternal mortality has dropped drastically from 1,071 deaths per year in 2000 to 487 in 2010. Contraceptive use has also grown from 10 per cent in 2000 to 45 per cent in 2010-2011. Rwanda is among 10 countries across the globe listed as having made significant progress in reducing

child and maternal mortality rates³⁹ and its health system has become the model that other countries try to replicate.⁴⁰ The legislation relating to abortion improved as the article 165 of the new Penal Code provides an exemption from criminal liability for abortion in particular instances.

34. The mental health care framework is provided by the National Mental Health Policy (2011).⁴¹ By 2010, the country had slightly above 18,000 cases that had consulted at the mental health services. Epilepsy is the first cause of consultations, with 9,412 (or 52 per cent of) visits. The treatment of this pathology is integrated into the health package delivered by mental health services at district hospitals. Psychiatric disorders are the second cause of consultations with 3,334 cases (18 per cent), psychosomatic disorders with 2,228 cases (12 per cent); other neurological disorders with 1,403 cases (8 per cent); various psychological disorders with 877 cases (5 per cent) and other conditions with 3 per cent and post-traumatic stress disorder with 2 per cent of total consultations.⁴²

Recommendations raised in paragraph 37 and 38: Economic empowerment of women. *The Committee urges the State party to ensure that the promotion of gender equality is an explicit component of its national and local development plans and programmes, in particular those aimed at poverty reduction and sustainable development. The Committee also urges the State party to pay special attention to the needs of rural women and women heads of households, ensuring that they participate in decision-making processes and have full access to credit facilities. The Committee further urges the State party to take proactive measures to ensure that rural women have access to health services, education, clean water, electricity, land and income-generating projects. It recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to design and implement gender-sensitive rural development strategies and programmes, ensuring the full participation of rural women in their formulation and implementation.*

35. Rwanda has made a lot of effort to lift the people of Rwanda from extreme poverty, paying particular attention to women, who form the majority of the poor. In five years (2005-2010) over one million people were taken out of poverty. The percentage of female-headed households in poverty fell by 13 percentage points in five years from 60.2 per cent in 2005-2006 to 47 per cent in 2010-2011. This is a good progress in poverty alleviation processes and is 1 per cent higher when compared to all households, which fell from 56.9 per cent in 2005/6 to 44.9 per cent in 2010-2011.⁴³ This achievement resulted mostly from well-designed pro-poor programmes such as Vision 2020 Umurenge programme (VUP),⁴⁴ a social protection programme targeting poor households with a variety of financial and social development assistance and the “One cow per poor family” Program (*GIRINKA*) which aims at giving a cow to every poor family that has none. This resulted into reduction of economic dependence of women to men and increased participation of women in control over family resources. The establishment of Savings and Credit

³⁹ Partnership for maternal, newborn and child health (PMNCH) 2014, Partners’ Forum.

⁴⁰ Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation report 2014 “21st Century Progress in Africa: Achieving Millennium Development Goal 5 in Rwanda”.

⁴¹ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Health, National Mental Health Policy, 2011.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ EICV 3, Gender Thematic Report, NISR et al. Kigali, 2012.

⁴⁴ www.minaloc.gov.rw, Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme.

Cooperatives (Umurenge SACCO) at the lowest administrative governance level (sector level) has enabled proximity of financial services to the rural community especially women. By 2012 women accounted for 38 per cent membership in Umurenge SACCO countrywide, with a loan portfolio of 23 per cent.⁴⁵ The Business Development Fund (BDF) helped women to acquire loans without collateral and increase their business skills, existence of village Savings and loans Association, “*kora wigire*” Centres and the support of Business Advisors at Sector level.

36. The amendment of the Land law where land ownership as a factor that permits collateral security for loan acquisition allows 50 per cent equal share for either spouses while children remain legal beneficiaries to the same has also significantly contributed to the economic empowerment of women and thus the family in general.

37. Access to clean drinking water increased in all provinces from 64 per cent in 2006 to 71 per cent and coverage, respectively in 2011-2012. The target for access to potable water is to reach 100 per cent by 2017. Electrification has expanded to cover 13 per cent of households, compared with 3 per cent in 2006, but is still largely limited to urban areas. Households with access to electricity (number of households) increased from 70,000 in 2006 to 308,326 in 2011/12.⁴⁶ In 2013, the Government has launched the electrification initiative targeting 70 per cent of Rwandan population to have access to electricity by 2017. The national decentralization policy and other government strategies and programmes have contributed significantly in increasing women’s active participation in decision making. The NWC is playing a key role in promoting women in leadership through awareness raising and capacity building. Members of the NWC become automatic members of the planning, policy and advocacy Consultative Committees at the level of the Cell. Rural women are participating in decision making in the Village Council at 43.9 per cent, in the Sector’s Council at 45 per cent and in the District Council at 43 per cent.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 39 and 40: Refugee women and women returnees. *The Committee requests the State party to pay particular attention to the needs of refugee women and women returnees, including those with disabilities, through the adoption of a national policy in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), and the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive plans and programmes for social reintegration, capacity-building and training of refugee women and women returnees. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the protection of refugee women and women returnees from violence and their access to immediate means of redress.*

38. The Government of Rwanda adopted the National Action Plan 2009-2012 on the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Particular needs of women in difficult were taken into consideration by implementing activities such as create special services for women refugees, women returnees and displaced women; follow up the reintegration of former women combatants and set up special infrastructure for women living with disabilities. Returnees have been resettled, given land by the Government, while

⁴⁵ Women and youth access to finance programme, MIGEPROF, Rwanda Cooperative Agency and BDF, 2012.

⁴⁶ Republic of Rwanda, Economic and Poverty Reduction Strategy, EDPRS 2 (2013-2018).

UNHCR provided them with iron sheets to construct shelter. As mentioned in paragraph 17, Rwanda ratified the International Treaty on Refugee and the law relating to refugees is under review in Parliament.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 41 and 42: Family relations. *The Committee urges the State party to speed up as a matter of priority the enactment of the legislation amending the Family Code with a view to repealing the discriminatory provisions and to take necessary steps to make them widely known in the public, the judiciary and administrative authorities.*

39. The Family Code is under revision in the Parliament with a view to repealing the discriminatory provisions as said before. After the promulgation of the family code, all necessary steps will be taken to make that law widely known in the public, the judiciary and administrative authorities.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 43: Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. *The Committee urges the State party to continue to utilize, in implementing its obligations under the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which reinforce the provisions of the Convention, and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.*

40. In 2012, the Government of Rwanda developed a five years (2012-2017) National Implementation Plan of Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000). In June 2014, Rwanda submitted a Country Report on the implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).⁴⁷

Recommendations raised in paragraph 44: Millennium Development Goals. *The Committee emphasizes that full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It calls for the integration of a gender perspective and explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention in all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Goals and requests the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.*

41. In Rwanda, the best approach was to domesticate and harmonize the Millennium Development Goals with CEDAW and BpFA, while aligning the targets and goals with the national development vision. As a result, Rwanda has made outstanding achievements in some of Millennium Development Goals and exceeded set targets in others.⁴⁸ While achieving Goal 4 on reducing child mortality, Rwanda exceeded the Goal 3 target on equal representation in parliament, and went beyond the Goal 2 target by extending it to 12 years of Basic Education (12YBE). Rwanda has eliminated gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Girls are likely to attend primary schools as boys and gender gap in secondary school is closed. Net primary school attendance for girls and boys has gone up from 86.6 per cent in 2005-2006 to 91.7 per cent in 2010-2011, boosted by the nine years free basic

⁴⁷ Republic of Rwanda, Country Report on the implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), June 2014.

⁴⁸ NISR, Publications, Millennium Development Goals in Rwanda, 2012.

education implemented since 2010.⁴⁹ As mentioned, maternal health has also considerably improved.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 45: Ratification of other treaties. *The Committee encourages the Government of Rwanda to consider ratifying the instruments to which it is not yet a party, namely, the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

42. Rwanda has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 15 December 2008. Significant progress made in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities includes policies, laws and regulations necessary to establish a strong foundation of disability mainstreaming. Rwanda has committed itself through the adoption of the law relating to protection of disabled persons⁵⁰ and the law determining the responsibilities, organization and functioning of the National Council of persons with disabilities.⁵¹ Rwanda Housing Authorities has put in place housing regulations control in 2009 and published a booklet on facilities for persons with disabilities in public buildings in 2011 to facilitate them access. Rwanda National Decade Steering Committee of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities in consultation with the Government of Rwanda and the disability movement of Rwanda developed a National Programme (2010-2019) with a vision to create a society where inclusion is promoted, where human rights and equal opportunities for people with disabilities are realized and where people with disabilities participate fully in all areas of life. In 2010, the results of the census of Persons with Disabilities revealed a total of 522,856 People with Disabilities (composed of 263,928 females and 258,928 males). The sex structure of PWD is almost equally distributed among male and female, respectively, 50.5 per cent of female against 49.5 per cent of male.⁵² With the support of the Government and the Civil Society Organizations, the disability movement in Rwanda is growing in strength and unity to support and empower people with disabilities and change social attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Consultations are ongoing for the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 46: Dissemination. *The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Rwanda of the present concluding observations in order to make the people, including Government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality of women and the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee requests the State party to strengthen the dissemination, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, of the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of*

⁴⁹ MINEDUC Statistical Year Book 2012.

⁵⁰ Official Gazette Special of 21 May 2007, law No. 01/2007 of 20/01/2007 relating to protection of disabled persons in general.

⁵¹ Official Gazette No. Special of 11/02/2011, law No. 03/2011 of 10/02/2011 determining the responsibilities, organization and functioning of the National Council of persons with disabilities.

⁵² Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of local Government, Census of People with disabilities in Rwanda, November 2010.

the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”.

43. In July 2011, GMO conducted an assessment of gender related international and regional instruments and their implementation in Rwanda⁵³ and disseminated it. The assessment sessions gathered women’s and human rights organizations, Government officials, politicians, parliamentarians in order to make the people aware of the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the Committee’s general recommendations and concluding observations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” and the steps that have been taken to ensure the elimination of discrimination against women. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office, the National Women Council, the Rwanda Women Parliamentarian’s Forum and other Civil Society organizations organize regularly consultative meetings, debates to generate increased awareness and commitment to eliminate discrimination against women.

Recommendations raised in paragraph 47: Technical assistance. *The Committee calls upon the State party to strengthen further its cooperation with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund for Women, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Statistics Division and Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.*

44. The United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the UN-Women, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund for Women, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Statistics Division and Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and multilateral and bilateral organizations give important support in the field of gender in general and in the field of elimination of discrimination against women in particular. They work closely with Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion and other key stakeholders and provide financial and technical support to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the field of gender and develop mechanisms of collaboration among themselves and with the Government on gender mainstreaming in their interventions in Rwanda. As mentioned in paragraph 4, in 2010 the UNIFEM, DFID, UNFPA, ADB and UNDP gave support to the Rwandan Women Parliamentarian Forum in order to print and disseminate a handbook in Kinyarwanda on specific laws preventing, punishing and prohibiting discrimination against women.

⁵³ The Republic of Rwanda, Gender Monitoring Office, Assessment of gender related international and regional instruments and their implementation in the Republic of Rwanda, July 2011.

III. The current implementation of the Convention

Article 2: Constitutional and legal provisions ensuring the principle of equality of men and women

45. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 as amended to date in its articles 9, 11 and 16 incorporates the principles of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and provides a strong legal, Policy and Institutional framework for mainstreaming gender. The constitutional framework provides quotas (at least 30 per cent) for women in decision making which have resulted in an unprecedented number of women being elected or appointed to decision making positions at all levels. As highlighted in paragraph 6, since the submission of the last periodic report, new domestic laws have been adopted to ensure equality of men and women and prohibit acts of discrimination. The law on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence of 2008; the law regulating labour in Rwanda of 2009; the law relating to elections of 2010; the organic law determining the organization of education of 2011 and the organic law instituting the Penal Code of 2012. Other laws adopted to accelerate the process to eliminate discrimination against women through legal reform include: the organic law No. 12/2008 of 09/05/2008 relating to election procedures of Rwandan representatives to the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) provides in articles 3 and 7 that: the number of Rwandan representatives to EALA shall be nine (9) as specified in the East African Community Treaty, and at least thirty per cent (30 per cent) shall be women; the law No. 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 relating to elections⁵⁴ that requires political parties to include at least 30 per cent of women in their list of candidates for the parliamentary elections; the organic law No. 10/2013/0L of 11/07/2013 governing political organizations and politicians⁵⁵ in its article 7 provides that political organizations must constantly reflect the unity of the people of Rwanda, gender equality and complementarily, whether in the recruitment of members, putting in place organs of leadership and in their operations and activities.

Article 3: Guaranteeing women the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men

46. The enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms as defined by the international instruments are recognized to all citizens by the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda in its articles 10, 11, 16, 25, 28, 37 and 40. In all those articles, rights provided for such as right to dignity and respect, right to education, right to access justice, right to full consent in marriage contracting, right to inheritance, right for private ownership of property and others are equally guaranteed for men as well as women. All citizens enjoy equal legal protection, and have the right to appeal to courts in order to safeguard their rights. Fundamental penal laws provide for penalties against the violations of fundamental human rights. For instance, the Penal Code that punishes the offences of the violation of the right to life and of physical integrity, those committed against property, violations of the freedom of the citizens and the law relating to the rights and the protection of the

⁵⁴ Official Gazette No. Special of 19/06/2010, Law No. 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 relating to elections.

⁵⁵ Official Gazette No. Special of 12/07/2013, Organic Law No. 10/2013/0L of 11/07/2013 governing political organizations and politicians.

child⁵⁶ that contains a chapter on penalties against the violations of the rights of the child, and other particular laws whose criminal provisions are applied by national courts. The legislation relating to institutional mechanisms of the promotion and protection of human rights such as the National Commission for Human Rights;⁵⁷ the Office of the Ombudsman;⁵⁸ and the Public Service Commission⁵⁹ has been reviewed to ensure the full advancement of the women. Basing on the complaints made to it and inquiries conducted into the violations of human rights in general and women rights in particular, the National Commission for Human Rights can file them with the competent courts. Other mechanisms of the development and advancement of women put in place include the establishment of “Women Access to Finance Department within the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the adoption of “Women and youth access to finance strategy” in 2011 and the requirement to all public institutions to make their Gender Budget Statements (GBS) as a mandatory annex of the Budget Framework Paper to be submitted to both chambers of Parliament.

Article 4: Adoption of special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women

47. Special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women have been taken by the Government of Rwanda and the population still thinks that these measures should continue as mentioned in paragraph 13.

Article 5: Modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women

48. Increased investment by the government in raising awareness on gender equality and the elimination of gender-based discrimination has resulted in significant improvement of people’s attitudes on the role of women and girls in society. Intensive campaigns and advocacy by Rwandan civil society are making progress in changing the patriarchal mindset. Reaching out to men as partners in promoting gender equality has been one of the most efficient strategies for ensuring sustainability of gender equality gains in Rwanda. Men are now among leading advocates for gender equality and ending violence against women and girls. Rwanda Men’s Resource Centre⁶⁰ (RWAMREC) was founded in 2006 by Rwandan men and took a grassroots approach to the sensitization of men and women in civil society, in both rural and urban communities. RWAMREC seeks to help men to understand that women can and should be empowered, and that if women have more power, it does not mean that men will then be subordinated to their female counterparts.⁶¹ Measures were taken by various institutions (MIGEPROF, IMBUTO Foundation, etc.) to encourage women and girls to undertake activities that were traditionally

⁵⁶ Official Gazette No. 26 of 25/06/2012, Law No. 54/2011 of 14/12/2011 relating to the rights and the protection of the child.

⁵⁷ Official Gazette No. 14 bis. of 8 April 2013, Law No. 19/2013 of 25/03/2013 determining missions, organization and functioning of the National Commission for Human Rights.

⁵⁸ Official Gazette No. special of 18/10/2013, law No. 76/2013 of 11/9/2013 determining the mission, powers, organization and functioning of the Ombudsman.

⁵⁹ Official Gazette No. 39/2012 of 24/12/2012 determining the responsibilities, organization and functioning of the Public service Commission.

⁶⁰ www.rwamrec.org.

⁶¹ RWAMREC, Masculinity and gender based violence in Rwanda, Experiences and perceptions of men and women, September 2010.

considered as done by men like construction, taxi driving and to undertake courses that were traditionally left to men or boys such as engineering, science courses in general.

Article 6: Appropriate measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women

49. The Government of Rwanda has made significant efforts to prevent and eliminate women trafficking by enacting legislation that create an easily understandable legal regime with clear definitions of human trafficking and enforce it as developed in paragraphs 23. Article 206 of the Penal Code contains penalties for encouraging, inciting or manipulating a person for the purpose of prostitution. The same penalties shall apply to any person who keeps another for prostitution purposes, even with the consent of that person. Articles 208 to 214 of the Penal Code provide penalties for running, managing or investing in a brothel, sharing the proceeds of prostitution, sharing the proceeds of prostitution by a child, aiding, abetting and protecting prostitution and providing a facility for prostitution. The Penal Code considers as aggravating circumstances: the minority of the victim; lack of consent of the victim; plurality of victims; committing this offence outside the national territory or against a person on his/her arrival or on the following day of his/her arrival from abroad; plurality of perpetrators, accomplices; apparent or concealed carrying of weapons; the quality of parent, authority or servant of the victim; and the quality of the civil servant or religious leader. As mentioned above, Rwanda National Police has put in place a department to deal with human trafficking and exploitation of prostitution.

Article 7: Elimination of all forms of discrimination in the political and public life of the country

50. Special legislative measures have been adopted for the minimum number of women to sit in the Parliament and participate in decision-making institutions. The law No. 27/2010 relating to elections⁶² requires political parties to include at least 30 per cent of women in their list of candidates for the parliamentary elections. The National Women Council facilitated female candidate in parliamentary elections of 2013 with training and transport facilitation during the period of campaign. Freedom of association is guaranteed by the Constitution and a number of NGOs remain actively involved in promoting sustainable development in Rwanda as mentioned in paragraph 15.

Article 8: Appropriate measures to ensure women the opportunity to represent their Government at the international level

51. Rwanda women have the opportunity to represent their Government at international level. Currently, 23 per cent of Rwanda Ambassadors are women and other Rwandan women are high ranked in international organizations such as Clothilde Mbaraga Gasarabwe, the Assistant Secretary-General for Safety and Security; Valentine Rugwabiza was formerly Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization from 2005 to 2013 and Rwanda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Switzerland; and Aisa Kirabo Kacyira who is the Deputy

⁶² Official Gazette No. Special of 19/06/2010, Law No. 27/2010 of 19/06/2010 relating to elections.

Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General for the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

Article 9: Acquiring, changing and retaining nationality, equal rights with respect to the nationality of children

52. Dual nationality is permitted under the article 7 of the Constitution of Republic of Rwanda. No person shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her nationality or of the right to change nationality. The Organic Law No. 30/2008 of 25/07/2008 relating to Rwandan nationality⁶³ in its articles 1 and from 8 to 12 grants Rwandan women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Article 10: Education

53. The Government of Rwanda is determined to fight gender disparity in all sectors of education and is very committed to addressing education issues affecting both girls and boys equally as mentioned in paragraph 25, 26 and 27. The new law governing organization of education adopted in 2011⁶⁴ outlines family education provided by the parents of a child and his/her neighbourhood, formal education provided in pre-school, primary, technical, secondary, special and higher education schools or other types of schools that may be established by the law as well as non-formal education including public education and continuous education. The National Women Council and partners have undertaken various activities of mobilizing and teaching how to read and write for illiterate women. The Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project which is a new programme supported by a Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Adolescent Girls and implemented by the Government of Rwanda, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Workforce Development Authority, and the Imbutu Foundation, through its vocational training component aimed at improving employment, incomes and empowerment of disadvantaged young women and girls (aged 15-24 years), trained several girls in TVET (food processing, arts and crafts, culinary arts and agri-business).⁶⁵ Owing to savings provided to these girls, some obtained jobs while others started cooperatives and income generating activities. In partnership with the Government, different NGOs help girls who have dropped out of schools to reintegrate.

54. Free and compulsory primary education, introduction of *Nine Year Basic Education* (9YBE) first in 2007 and *Twelve Year Basic Education* (12YBE) in 2010 allow girls to attend six years of primary education, three years of lower secondary education and three years of upper secondary education. The multiplication of centres of excellence for girl's education giving awards to girls with best performance in sciences; construction of more facilities to address the thorny issue of accommodation for women and girls' students are part of programmes that have boosted women's participation in education. Statistics with disaggregated data by sex are available at all levels of the education system.⁶⁶ Student Financing Agency

⁶³ Official Gazette No. special of 05/09/2008, Organic Law No. 30/2008 of 25/07/2008 relating to Rwandan nationality.

⁶⁴ Official Gazette No. 34 of 22/08/2011, organic law No. 02/2011/OL of 27/07/2011 governing organization of education.

⁶⁵ MIGEPROF, Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project, 2014.

⁶⁶ MINEDUC, 2012: Education Statistics Yearbook.

for Rwanda (SFAR) established by the law No. 50/2006 of 05/10/2006⁶⁷ (functions took over by Rwanda Education Board in 2011) has been entrusted with the responsibility of financial support to students in local and foreign high learning institutions based on budget availability and Government priority areas of study. Female and male students have the same opportunities to benefit scholarships and other study grants, applications are processed and decision taken on who should benefit the bursary/loan on the basis of equality of men and women. Talented young women from Rwanda gain access to university scholarship opportunities including Harvard University in the United States of America and then return home to become agents of change. In Rwanda, sports and physical education are part of the education curricula from primary school to secondary school and girls enjoy the same opportunities as boys to participate actively in sports and physical education. A sport and physical activity programme in Kigali, for example, changed local gender stereotypes by choosing to engage girls and women in playing football, since at the time sports involving the use of one's legs and feet were generally only acceptable for boys and men.⁶⁸

Article 11: Elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment

55. The right to employment as an inalienable right, the right to free choice of employment as well as the right, with the same competence and ability, to equal pay for equal work without any discrimination, are guaranteed by the Constitution in its article 37. The new law regulating labour as mentioned in paragraphs 6 and 28 prohibits all forms of discrimination that may result in prejudicing equality of chances in respect of employment; ensures equal pay for workers with the same competence in respect of work of equal value; recognizes the right of any worker to a paid leave at the employer's expenses; regulates the protection of health and safety of working conditions; regulates the work of pregnant women or women with breastfeeding babies. The Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) was established by the law no 45/2010 of 14/12/2010 offers benefits under the different branches, such as old age, invalidity, survivorship, work injuries and work related diseases and health insurance benefits. The Ombudsman Office provided a free toll line through which people can report harassment, sexual corruption or gender based discrimination at work places.

Article 12: Elimination of discrimination against women in the field of health care

56. As mentioned in paragraphs 30 and 31, the Government of Rwanda has continued its efforts to improve the health status of Rwandans by improving the national health system, the maternal health, family planning, community health, and reproductive health status in line with Millennium Development Goals. Specific innovations were introduced to improve maternal health, such as the introduction of "Phone for Health", a real time alert system for improving maternal health and the "Rapid SMS alert system" to track the maternal and neonatal life cycle, ensuring that critical points in the cycle are documented and sent electronically to a central

⁶⁷ Official Gazette No. 24 bis. of 15/12/2006, Law No. 50/2006 of 05/10/2006 establishing determining responsibilities, organization and functioning of Student Financing Agency of Rwanda (SFAR).

⁶⁸ Women Win, Empowering Girls and Women through Sport and Physical Activity, December 2008.

database with an auto-response alert of each critical event sent to the nearest health centre. Other best practices include the provision of ambulances for delivery of quality health service through the Emergency Medical Services; maternal death audit which aims the knowledge of causes of maternal death in health facilities in order to decrease maternal mortality. The prevalence of modern-methods of family planning has increased from 4 percent in 2000 to 27 percent in 2008 and to 45 percent in 2010 according to the DHS 2010. Because of this performance, total fertility rate dropped from 6.1 in 2005, to 5.5 in 2008 and to 4.6 in 2010, respectively. Strategic interventions with direct impact on women include strengthening and scaling up Community-Based Nutrition Programmes (CBNPs) to prevent and manage malnutrition in pregnant and lactating mothers. MIGEPROF institutionalized an annual family campaign. In 2013, the focus was on fighting malnutrition in families. Among other activities during that campaign included: cooking demonstration on balanced diet and the community-based initiative of “kitchen garden” (*Akarima k’igikoni*) campaign which encourages every household to grow vegetables in their backyards. Another initiative called “*Umugoroba w’Ababyeyi/parents’ evening forum*” is a platform operationalized in 2013, where parents within neighbourhood come together and discuss different issues affecting them, including: fight malnutrition, hygiene issues, positive parenting, family planning, working with financial institutions, promoting the use of health insurance (*Mutuelle de santé*) and mobilizing parents on vaccination especially on cervical cancer in young girls.

Article 13: Family benefits; bank loans and credit; recreational activities

57. Since 2009, GMO has monitored the respect of gender principles in the land registration process⁶⁹ and a study conducted in 2011 has revealed that land registration has provided some gender equality best practices, including the increased awareness of women of their land ownership rights; that parents are secure in the knowledge that their children can inherit their land; and that land registers have increased knowledge of gender principles. With the land registration process, women are now able to use the land as collateral for securing loans from banks. Further protections in the case of mortgages are found in the Mortgage Law⁷⁰ that contains provisions which protect the matrimonial home as long as mortgage is in effect. In order to address challenges faced by women to finance access, MIGEPROF and MYICT in collaboration with the Business Development Fund (BDF) and the Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA) have sketched out a programme for women and youth access to finance (2012) that has various components including credit guarantees, microloans, matching grants, quasi equity participation, business advisory services and training women in financial literacy. There are also Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) and other institutions which can provide finance to women for starting up or developing an income-generation activity. As of February 2012, women accounted for 38 per cent membership in Umurenge SACCO countrywide, with a loan portfolio of 23 per cent.⁷¹

⁶⁹ GMO Annual Report 2010-2011, November 2012.

⁷⁰ Official Gazette No. special of 14/05/2010, law No. 07/05/2010 on mortgages.

⁷¹ Women and youth access to finance Programme, MIGEPROF, Rwanda Cooperative Agency and BDF, 2012.

58. The Rwanda Sports Development Policy⁷² has been developed in 2012. Among the guiding principles and values of this policy are equity and equality. The policy promotes equal, fair and just treatment of all categories of people in sports irrespective of their status (able bodied or disabled) and put emphasis on the promotion of equal opportunities for both females and males. It shall remove barriers to the full participation of girls and women and shall ensure that equity, equality and inclusiveness are promoted in all sports disciplines. Women association “*Association Nationale de Promotion du Sport Féminin*” as member of National Olympic Committee continues to raise women’s awareness about the relevance of sports to the body and to identify, through matches organized by them, talented girls to ensure their training. In 2013, the Rwanda National Sports and Olympics Committee conducted an awareness on gender balance and women involvement in leadership positions in Sports and Olympics which had the objective of empowering women through sports and Olympics to involve them in leadership and decision making position. Through the National Paralympic Committee of Rwanda, which is an umbrella organization for people with a disability co-coordinating national sports associations representing all types of disability, girls and women living with disabilities are involved in sports for people with disabilities.

Article 14: Rural women

59. Through the national decentralization policy adopted in 2000 and revised in 2013, rural women are included in grassroots level decision making organs within which they are invited to participate in formulating community development programmes (at village, cell, sector and district levels). Poor females head households are beneficiaries of the “*One cow per poor family*” Program (*GIRINKA*) which aims at giving a cow to every poor family that has none, in a bid to increase nutrition levels through milk drinking and to increase family income by selling surplus milk. Women living in extreme poverty are beneficiaries of the *Rwanda’s Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP)* whose objective is to reduce the number of Rwandans living in extreme poverty. The *Government Fund for Genocide Survivors (FARG)* also contribute in providing assistance to vulnerable female widow genocide survivors by providing food, shelter, medical care and tuition fees for children and teenagers. Since 2012, starting on 8 March (the International Women’s Day), one month campaign activities are carried out nationwide focusing on women and girls empowerment. For example during this month, the National Women Council supports vulnerable rural women with livestock (cows, goats and pigs).

60. Access to clean drinking water and sanitation increased in all provinces from 64 per cent in 2006 to 75 per cent coverage in 2011/12.⁷³ The National Energy Policy and Strategy (2011)⁷⁴ has recognized gender as a cross cutting issue. In recognition of this reality, prominence is given in this energy policy to specifically address the needs of women: the diversification of energy sources for cooking and lighting in the home has a high priority and will be promoted; in developing alternatives for household energy, attention will be paid to health and safety as well as efficiency, cost and convenience; women are will be sensitized on energy issues

⁷² Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Sports and Culture, Rwanda Sports Development Policy, October 2012.

⁷³ Republic of Rwanda, Economic and Poverty Reduction Strategy, EDPRS 2 (2013-2018).

⁷⁴ Republic of Rwanda, MININFRA, National Energy Policy and Strategy, 2011.

as well as being given opportunities to try out new technological options before they are disseminated more widely. Rural women learned to weave beautiful baskets at the hand of their mothers and grandmothers, carrying on a tradition that had been passed down from generation to generation. Rwanda's baskets symbolized a coming together of Rwanda's women to provide for the needs of their families while also instilling a love and respect in their children for their country and their culture. The creative arts industry employs a good number of rural women who produce "Agaseke baskets". They are unique pieces of art woven by women in groups and making performing arts profitable.

Article 15: Equality of women and men before the law

61. As already stated above, equality of men and women before the law is enshrined in the Constitution in its articles from 10 to 44 that provide for equality between men and women and their rights to life, citizenship, freedom of movement, marriage, free choice of employment, equal employment and pay for equal competence and ability, and prohibits any form of discrimination. As mentioned in the paragraph 5, a legal assistance system has been established to ensure access to justice by vulnerable groups through the *Access to Justice Bureaus* in all districts with specific desks to deal with gender-based violence and children rights. Civil Society Organizations also, with the support of different partners, put in place a Legal aid Forum, with the mission for delivering legal aid to the vulnerable people including women. Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 002/08.11 of 11/02/2014 on Court fees in Civil, Commercial and Administrative matters exonerates court fees for claims related to GBV and children's rights.

Article 16: Marriage and family relations

62. The State protects the family as the natural foundation of the Rwandan society. The Constitution in its article 26 paragraph one, lays down the principle of recognizing that no person may be married without his or her consent, and accords to both spouses the same rights and duties upon and during marriage and at the time of its dissolution. The institution of marriage in Rwanda is governed by law. The law on Matrimonial Regimes, Succession and liberalities give equal rights to succession to all boys and girls. The law also gives to women options for the ownership of property at the dissolution of the marriage. Property rights are governed by several laws including the law governing expropriation for public utility and the law determining the use and management of land in Rwanda. The Company Law of 2009 allows a woman to carry out commercial activities without seeking authorization of her husband. The article 34 of the Land Law and article 5 of the Mortgage law⁷⁵ give to the women the same rights as men.

IV. Difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Convention and way forward

63. Despite the national efforts gathered to promote gender equality, there still are challenges including poverty and limited access to finance; and limited skills and capacity for employability. Since 2006, the Government of Rwanda has invested

⁷⁵ Official Gazette No. Special of 15/05/2009, law No. 10/2009 of 14/05/2009 on mortgages.

considerable efforts to break the cycle of poverty, ignorance and vulnerability among women, by empowering them socially, politically and economically. Nevertheless, women still constitute the majority of the poor with about 47 per cent of women-headed household poor, compared to the 44 per cent average for all poor households.⁷⁶ Women are still disproportionately financially excluded (32.2 per cent female compared to 22.4 per cent for men),⁷⁷ without sufficient capital or adequate collateral to obtain loans and other financial services.

64. Another challenge is the limited skills for women that reduce their employment and income opportunities. Poverty and illiteracy reinforce patriarchal tendencies, gender-based discrimination and vulnerability to violence, thereby reducing the impact of positive laws and policies in place. According to the DHS 2010, the proportion of men and women with no education is higher in rural areas (17 per cent for women, 11 per cent for men) than in urban areas (7 per cent for women, 6 per cent for men). Additionally, a higher proportion of women than men cannot read (23 per cent of women, 18 per cent of men).⁷⁸

65. EDPRS 2 (2013-2018) in the thematic area of rural transformation focuses on the foundations of income generation in rural areas, ensuring that new approaches and innovations towards family and gender are promoted. Youth and Women Access to Finance Strategy developed in 2012 is intended to consolidate these foundations through capacity building in financial literacy and financial access, credit enhancement programmes, credit guarantees, micro-loans, matching grants, quasi equity participation and business advisory services. The national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy⁷⁹ (2008) provides for special programmes to “enable women to update their knowledge and professional skills for entering the workforce, executing income generating activities or occupying better position”.

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⁷⁶ Republic of Rwanda, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV 3, pp. 14-16.

⁷⁷ FINSKOPE Report 2012.

⁷⁸ Republic of Rwanda, Demographic and Health Survey 2010, pp. 39-40.

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