



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

Combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports of States parties

Guinea*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.
For the combined initial, second and third reports submitted by the Government of Guinea, see
CEDAW/C/GIN/1-3 which was considered by the Committee at its twenty-fifth session.



REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Labour - Justice - Solidarity

**Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and
Childhood**

**Combined fourth, fifth and sixth reports on implementation of the
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women (CEDAW) in the Republic of Guinea (1998-2002).**

Conakry, December 2002

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AANG	Guinean Association of Retired Women Teacher Trainers
ADB	African Development Bank
ADDEF	Association for the Defence of Women's Rights
AFEG	Association of Guinean Women Entrepreneurs
AGBEF	Guinean Association for Family Welfare
AGRETO	Guinean Association for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts
AGUIPE	Guinean Agency for Employment Promotion
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APAC	Association of Professional Communicators
ASFEGMASSI	Association of Guinean Women against Sexually Transmitted Diseases including AIDS
CAAF	Women's Self-help Centre
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CENAFOD	African Centre for Development Training
CNLS	National Committee Against AIDS
CNTG	National Workers' Confederation of Guinea
COFEG	Coordinating Body of Guinean Women's NGOs
CONFETRAG	National Commission of Female Workers of Guinea
CPA	Centre for Administrative Retraining
CPTAFE	Unit against Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Children
DNCC	National Trade and Competition Directorate
DNDI	National Industrial Development Directorate
DNPF	National Directorate for the Promotion of Women
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EDS	Demographics and Health Survey
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FEG	Forum of Women Educators in Guinea
GF	Guinean francs
GFAG	Guinean Business Women's Group
GNF	New Guinean francs
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMCI	Integrated management of childhood diseases
MASPFÉ	Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood
MEPU-EC	Ministry of Pre-University Instruction and Civic Education
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework
MURIGA	Community-based cooperatives against pregnancy and childbearing risks
NAFA	“Second chance” school
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
ONFPP	National Office for Vocational Education and Retraining
OPIP	Private Investment Promotion Office

PCGeD	Gender and Development Framework Programme
PCSD/SP	Framework Programme for Private Sector Support and Development
PDRI	Integrated Rural Development Programme
PEV/SSP/ME	Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)/Primary Health Care/Essential Drugs
PNDH	National Programme for Sustainable Human Development
PNDS	National Health Development Plan
PNLS	National Programme for the Control of AIDS
PPSG	Population and Reproductive Health Project
PRG	Office of the President of Guinea
ROSIGUI	Network of Organizations Fighting AIDS
SAGE	Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education
SGG	General Secretariat of Government
SME	Small/medium-sized enterprise
SNPRV	National Office of Rural Development and Extension Services
SOTELGUI	<i>Société des Télécommunications de Guinée</i> (Telecommunications Company of Guinea)
STD/I	Sexually transmitted disease/infection
UARG	Guinean Union of Women Formerly from Rufisque
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WILDDAF/FEDDAF	Network of Women in Law and Development in Africa

INTRODUCTION

This document, combining the fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports of the Republic of Guinea concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, deals with progress achieved and difficulties encountered in implementing the Convention.

It has been prepared in line with the general directives established by the United Nations for the drafting of periodic reports on that Convention.

Since 1998, the year of preparation of the combined first, second and third reports, which were submitted in July 2001 to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Government of Guinea has undertaken some major reforms to promote full equality between women and men. Such equality has been made an overall objective of the Guinean government, and must be taken into account in all the country's policies and programmes. A general provision requiring non-discrimination has been inserted into the preamble of the Constitution (Fundamental Law) and provisions on equal treatment of men and women in employment and in the labour market have been reinforced.

Having made equality between men and women one of the pillars of public life, the government organized constitutional revisions in November 2001 to strengthen women's possibilities of enjoying the same privileges and the same advantages as men in all fields.

Several institutions have been created and reinforced as indispensable tools of a comprehensive policy for equality. Examples of such institutions are the Equity Committees in the education system, the gender focal points in ministerial departments, the Observatory on respect for women's rights in the National Assembly, and the National and Regional CEDAW Monitoring Committees.

The basis of government action and that of civil society organizations is to consolidate achievements to date in strengthening the specific rights of women.

Beyond equality of status, there is a need to strengthen the independence and freedom of women in Guinea by combating sexist violence and strengthening women's rights to take responsible decisions regarding their sexuality and procreation. Improved information and wide dissemination of contraception methods have been decided. Therapeutic abortion is a recognized right of women.

More broadly, and in the context of its Gender and Development Framework Programme (PCGeD) for achieving equal opportunity between men and women, managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood (MASPFE), the question of equal opportunity embraces all fields of intervention: political, economic, social and cultural.

It is through this comprehensive approach to equality between men and women that Guinea will build a better-balanced society based on respect for these two inseparable portions of humanity, women and men.

Part I

General information on the status of women in Guinea

Chapter I. General indicators

The following table shows some key indicators of the status of women, with figures from previous reports included for comparative purposes.

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Previous status</i>	<i>Current status</i>
1. Population	7,200,000 (1996)	8,000,000 (2002)
2. Women as a percentage of the population	51.3%	52%
3. Number of political parties	45	47
4. Number of ministers	23	25
5. Number of female ministers	2	3
6. Female illiteracy rate	85%	80%
7. School enrolment rate		
8. School dropout rate		

Chapter II. Government policy on the elimination of discrimination against women

The Constitution adopted by referendum in 1990, and amended by another referendum in November 2001, proclaims the absolute equality of men and women. Organic statutes and ordinary laws have been promulgated to give effect to these constitutional principles, confirming the precepts of equality and non-discrimination against women. In practice, these principles have found expression in a number of governmental and nongovernmental organizations and institutions that are striving to encourage and help women to exercise their rights fully and to take an active role in all fields, on an equal footing with men. (This aspect will be examined in detail in Chapter V of this section).

Guinean women have secured a number of important advantages through State support in various areas where the women's movement is active. As well, government efforts to prepare development plans focused on women, in particular relating to education and the elimination of illiteracy, have helped to control the demographic growth rate and have contributed to the success of government programmes in this field.

Women's increasingly important and influential participation in the labour market has led to the appointment of three female ministers, two female ambassadors, and four female chiefs of staff, and several women now hold senior positions in ministerial offices and in technical departments.

Government efforts to eliminate female illiteracy and to reduce the school dropout rate have had some notable successes. Female illiteracy has been reduced to acceptable levels, and school dropout rates have declined.

Chapter III. Legal and other measures adopted for implementing the Convention

The Constitution adopted by referendum on 11 November 2001 updated and reformed the Guinean legal system to guarantee and protect the real and effective exercise of a whole series of rights, including those of women.

Article 8 of Title II of the Constitution, on " Fundamental Freedoms, Duties and Rights", provides that "all human beings are equal before the law. Men and women enjoy the same rights. No one shall be afforded privileges or suffer disadvantage on account of his or her birth, race, ethnicity, language, or political, philosophical or religious beliefs and opinions."

Among the legislative measures adopted by the State since the previous reports were submitted, relating to the application of constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination against women, are amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, strengthening punishment for crimes against the recognized rights of women and against their physical integrity, as well as Law L/2000/010/AN of 10 July 2000 on Reproductive Health.

The Criminal Code also prohibits spreading ideas based on ethnicity, race, or religion, and committing or inciting acts of violence against any person or group of persons of another race, colour or ethnic origin.

The Constitution gives the courts the task of protecting life, liberty, dignity, honour, property, family relations, and other legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

With respect to modesty and morality, the Criminal Code bans procuring but does not yet punish prostitution. Persuasion and education are used among women and girls who engage in prostitution.

On 27 July 2000, the National Assembly created a Guinean Observatory on Respect for Women's Rights. This observatory, made up of elected deputies, officials of the ministerial departments concerned, and representatives of civil society selected for their expertise and experience, is responsible, among other things, for compiling an inventory of all legal barriers to the emancipation of women, for overseeing the correct application of existing laws in favour of women, and for lobbying decision makers and the Parliamentary Network on questions of population and development, and drafting or proposing laws for making gender equity and equality a fact.

This Convention has also been translated into the country's eight national languages through the "passport to equality", and it has been widely distributed among the entire population.

Chapter IV. Institutions or authorities responsible for overseeing respect of the principle of equality between men and women

As noted in the combined initial, second and third reports, the country's institutions, prosecution offices, courts and tribunals are responsible for enforcing the principle of equality between men and women.

Specifically, it is the duty of the Attorney General's Office (Ministère Public) to see to the strict application of the law and of other legal provisions.

Article 16 of the Constitution declares that marriage and the family constitute the natural foundation of life in society and are protected and supported by the State.

Marriage is a union into which a man and a woman who have the required capacity may enter, of their own free will, in order to live together.

According to Article 280 of the Civil Code, the minimum age for marriage is 18 years for men and 17 years for women. Only officials of the civil registry are authorized to solemnize a marriage.

Chapter V. Methods employed to promote and guarantee the full development and progress of women with a view to guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms in all fields, on the basis of equality with men.

To promote the rights of women in Guinea, the following methods have been used, among others:

1. Awareness campaigns
2. Surveys
3. The census
4. Case studies on the violation of women's rights

1. Awareness campaigns

To promote women's participation in national development and in their own self-fulfillment, the Guinean authorities and organizations of civil society regularly sponsor public seminars and workshops for women, men, young people, religious leaders, opinion leaders, traditional communicators, etc.

The recommendations from these sessions often deal with participants' commitment to create and reinforce civil society organizations, to programme activities more effectively, to combat poverty and illiteracy, to promote their economic activities, and to play a greater role in the exercise of power.

2. Surveys

Surveys are conducted in order to identify and, if possible, resolve problems in certain areas that are holding back women's development in Guinea. These surveys have identified the following problems:

- Illiteracy.
- Low school enrolment rates.
- Social and cultural barriers.
- Poverty.
- Violence.
- Reproductive health.
- Lack of awareness of women's rights.

3. The census

The census can be used to evaluate the numbers of women in all sectors of activity in order to improve their working conditions and their representation in the various branches of the economy.

The last general population census conducted in Guinea found, for example, that Guinean women are active in all productive sectors, but predominantly in agriculture.

4. Case studies on violations of women's rights

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood conducted a study of cases where women's rights have been violated, as reported to the Ministry during the period from 1998 to 2000.

That study involved gathering complaints filed by women with the department and analyzing them, determining their nature, and identifying the solutions found. On the basis of the study, the department prepared a report on complaints submitted to the government, to be used for the effective application of women's rights recognized in the Republic of Guinea and for making revisions to the Civil Code's provisions relating to the rights of women in marriage.

Chapter VI. Application of the Convention by the courts

The provisions of the Convention may be invoked before the courts, because they have been incorporated into domestic Guinean law and are translated into the eight national languages, through the Passport to Equality. The wide publicity given to the Convention has reinforced this possibility. However, further efforts at dissemination are needed in order to reach the grassroots level.

Part II

The second part of this report describes the progress achieved and offers detailed comments, under individual articles of the Convention, citing references to information contained in previous reports as appropriate and in order to avoid repetition.

A. Legal questions

I. The definition of discrimination

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Although the Constitution was amended by referendum of 11 November 2001, discrimination has still not been defined.

As mentioned in the preceding reports, the four successive constitutions or "fundamental laws" of the Republic of Guinea to date guarantee to all Guineans, without distinction as to sex, the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely:

- The right to free development of the personality.
- The right to life and to physical integrity. No one may be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Freedom of belief and of thought, and freedom to profess a religious faith, and political or philosophical opinions.
- Freedom to express, to declare and to disseminate ideas and opinions orally, in writing and through images.
- The right to a fair and equitable trial, in which the right of defence is guaranteed.
- The right to participate in processions and demonstrations.
- Freedom of circulation, enterprise, information, association and assembly, with due respect for the law, public order, and morals.
- The right to pursue justice through the courts.
- The right to marry and found a family with the person of one's choice and of the opposite sex.
- The right to education and instruction, to individual or collective property, to the sanctity of the home, and the privacy of correspondence.
- The right to work and the right to strike under the conditions established by law.

The preceding reports have described the constitutional provisions relating to the obligation of the State to ensure equality for men and women in all fields. The Supreme Court, which oversees the constitutionality of laws, guarantees judicial protection for these constitutional principles against any infringement by a new law.

The Criminal Code has provisions for punishing violence against women.

Government policy with regard to women is based on its desire to encourage women to exercise their rights effectively. All Guinean laws must conform to constitutional principles, which stipulate that legal rules must be applicable to all, without distinction as to sex.

The law guarantees to women, as to men, the right to appeal to the courts, without any restriction, whether formal or procedural, or based on the marital status of the parties.

Women may also demand reparations under criminal law in cases where the violation of their rights and freedoms constitutes an offence. They may sue for damages before the civil courts.

Judges are required in their judgments to apply prevailing laws, which include the Convention to which this report refers, and which, as noted earlier, is considered an integral part of domestic law.

Judges are independent. They enjoy certain immunities, and interference in their affairs is prohibited. The judgments handed down by the courts may, under certain circumstances and conditions stipulated by law, be enforced through coercion.

The organization of the judiciary respects the principles of unity of jurisdiction, collegiality, the right of appeal, the independence of the courts, and the free dispensation of justice.

Consistent with the Constitution, as well as with legislative principles and the regional and international juridical instruments to which our country is party, the competent authorities (executive and legislative) have initiated draft laws dealing with:

- Amending the Civil Code in order to harmonize national and international legal instruments by correcting legal provisions that discriminate against women, and filling legal voids where they exist.
- The Code of the Child, which includes all international legal provisions dealing with the rights of children and gives primacy to the interest of the child, including girls.
- Promotion and protection of the rights of handicapped persons, harmonizing domestic legal provisions with international legal instruments for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, the majority of whom are women.

The Criminal Code and special laws covering certain violations define the nature of violations, their main constituent elements, and the penalties applicable to their perpetrators. However, the judge has the right to impose a penalty that falls between the maximum and minimum penalties established by legislation.

At each stage of indictment, trial and appeal, the Code of Criminal Procedure provides guarantees that vary according to the nature of the offence and the

conditions established by law. None of the above-mentioned provisions makes any distinction by sex.

The Code of Criminal Procedure does however contain special provisions relating to penalties that must be applied to pregnant or nursing women, as well as to female prisoners.

Difficulties encountered in enforcing equality between men and women.

The constitutional and legislative principles mentioned above, which are binding on the legislature, no doubt demand efforts to overcome all the obstacles created by the negative aspects of certain commonly held ideas and customs which in combination can hold back the development and progress desired. Consequently, the government has formulated national plans and programmes and has taken steps to overcome and eliminate these obstacles. In light of the recommendations of the Beijing Conference on the need for governments to formulate policies to take account of women's views, a feminine component has been included in the social and economic development plan in order to guarantee gender equality and the advancement of women.

The inclusion of women's concerns in the socioeconomic development plan is intended to close the gap between the sexes by enhancing the economic, social and political independence of women, and improving their education and health, which will increase the capacity of the country to mobilize its latent productive resources, recognizing that women account for more than half of the working population. This will also help to expand investment and speed the growth of incomes, as well as to improve the country's human development indicators in various fields.

Following are some of the results achieved to date in promoting equality between men and women:

- An increase in the proportionate participation of women in the various areas of economic development, in order to help poor women.
- A notable increase in the number of girls at all three levels of the education system, thanks to the equity committees that have been created within the three ministries responsible for national education.
- Support for small projects undertaken by poor women, by facilitating their access to loans, to education, to literacy, and to training, in order to improve their living standards.
- Encouragement and support of civil society organizations devoted primarily to improving the socioeconomic status of women.

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 8 of the Constitution establishes the general principle of equality between men and women: "All human beings are equal before the law. Men and women enjoy the same rights. No one shall be afforded privileges or suffer disadvantage on account of his or her birth, race, ethnicity, language, or political, philosophical or religious beliefs and opinions."

This constitutional affirmation of equality is not always reflected in ordinary laws, such as the Civil Code, in which there are discriminatory provisions that have had to be amended. To this end, the government has revised the Civil Code with respect to those articles that discriminate against women.

At the same time it must be noted that the Criminal Code, the provisions of which are not discriminatory, provides for more severe penalties in the case of crimes where the victims are most likely to be women. Thus, the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to rape, sexual molestation, genital mutilation, beating and wounding and other crimes are very severe.

The judicial guarantee of women's rights is based on the Constitution, which provides: "No person may be arrested, detained or condemned other than for the reasons and according to the procedures prescribed by law. Every person has the indefeasible right to appear before a judge in order to assert his or her rights before the State and its representatives. Every person has the right to a just and fair trial in which the right to present a defence is guaranteed."

This constitutional rule makes no distinction between men and women, and both sexes may turn to the courts, the organization of which respects the principles of unity of jurisdiction, collegiality, the right of appeal, the independence of judges, and the free dispensation of justice.

In addition to the activities of the offices for the advancement of women at the commune, prefecture and regional levels, women's NGOs have been pooling their efforts in the field, constituting a powerful force not only to promote but also to protect the rights of women.

Generally speaking, the provisions of Guinea's Criminal Code do not discriminate against women: the code speaks only of the perpetrator ("author"), and does not mention the sex of the offender.

On the other hand, some crimes are more severely punished when they are committed against women.

Article 9

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

The conditions governing the transmission, acquisition, change, retention or loss of Guinean nationality, as established in the amended Civil Code of 1 January 1996, remain in force.

Legislation has sought to rationalize the rules governing nationality, applying the two principles of acquisition of nationality by filiation (*jus sanguinis*), and the determination of nationality by place of birth (*jus soli*).

The Civil Code respects the principle of complete equality between men and women for all questions having to do with the granting, withdrawal or loss of nationality, and it regulates the effects of marriage on the nationality of the two spouses and of their children. Marriage to a foreign man or a change in the husband's nationality during marriage will have no effect on the woman's nationality without her consent.

However, a foreign man who marries a Guinean woman may acquire Guinean nationality only by naturalization.

Under article 109 and following articles of the Civil Code, a Guinean woman who marries a foreign man retains her nationality, unless she makes a declaration prior to her marriage expressly renouncing her nationality. This she may do even if she is a minor.

This declaration is valid only if the wife acquires or is able to acquire her husband's nationality under the laws of her spouse's State of origin (Article 102 of the Civil Code).

A Guinean woman who loses her Guinean nationality through marriage may always regain that nationality if her marriage is dissolved.

The loss or withdrawal of Guinean nationality, when performed according to law, will have no effect on any person other than the person directly concerned.

When it comes to the nationality of minors, Guinean law reflects the twin principles of determination of nationality by filiation and by place of birth, within the meaning of international law and of comparative law. Thus, children acquire the nationality of their father, but they may choose to revert to their nationality of origin when they reach the age of majority if their father is a foreigner who takes Guinean

nationality, or if he is a Guinean who renounces his nationality for another. By virtue of *jus soli*, a minor acquires Guinean nationality if the father is stateless or of unknown nationality, or if the parents are of unknown nationality, or if the child is a foundling.

With respect to travel documents for women and minors, regulations provide that Guineans of either sex have the right to be issued a passport. The names of the children may be inscribed in either the mother's or the father's passport, and children may also be issued their own passport, with the consent of their parents or legal guardians.

There are however certain provisions that discriminate against women, in particular the fact that a legitimate child born of a Guinean father automatically acquires the father's nationality.

The draft amendments to the Civil Code have revised all these provisions, and the woman is now on an equal footing with the man when it comes to the nationality of their children.

Article 15

1. *States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.*

2. *States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.*

3. *States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.*

4. *States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.*

Equality before the law is a constitutional principle in Guinea. In legal terms, women have the same rights as men.

This principle, which is enshrined in the Constitution and reflected in most laws, is still unfortunately subject to constraints in practice. These constraints have to do for the most part with the economic status of the woman, which makes her dependent and perpetuates the superiority of the man.

Legal capacity

A woman has full legal capacity under Guinean law and enjoys all civil, civic and political rights on an equal footing with men. This capacity is protected by article 325 of the Civil Code: "A married woman has full legal capacity. She retains the administration, enjoyment and free disposal of her personal belongings and of the property that she acquires through the exercise of an independent vocational activity. She may open a current account in her own name and may freely withdraw or dispose of its funds".

The legal capacity of women is also covered in the proposed amendments to the Civil Code dealing with equality. Article 312 provides that "each spouse has full legal capacity, but these rights and powers may be limited by the effects of the matrimonial regime".

Article 315 of the draft code adds that "each spouse may freely exercise a profession, receive earnings and salaries and dispose of them, after settling household expenses". As can be seen, the legal capacity of each spouse is limited only by conjugal rights and duties and the choice of matrimonial regime.

Conclusion of contracts

Articles 660 ff of Guinea's Civil Code provide that "any individual may conclude a contract so long as he or she has not been declared incapable by law". Minors and protected adults are incapable of concluding contracts under the conditions prescribed by law. Consequently, a married woman who falls outside this category may validly conclude and execute a contract on the same basis as her husband. The legal effects that flow from the conclusion of a contract apply without distinction to all parties to the contract.

Administration of property

According to article 325 of the Guinean Civil Code, a married woman retains the administration, enjoyment and free disposal of her personal belongings and of the property that she acquires through the exercise of an independent vocation.

However, the introduction of matrimonial regimes in the draft Civil Code amendments offers spouses the opportunity to choose the status under which they will administer their property.

To this end, the code provides for three types of regime. Couples may choose contractual community of property, or separation of property; in the absence of such a choice, their property will be placed under the legally imposed community regime.

The conclusion and execution of contracts, as well as the legal effects of contracts, are governed by general principles that apply without distinction to all contracting parties, whether they are women or men.

The free movement of persons within the national territory is a constitutional principle in Guinea.

For married women, the choice of residence or family home lies with the husband, and the wife has the duty to live with him (article 331 of the Civil Code). This discriminatory provision of the current Civil Code has been corrected in the draft amendments: the choice of conjugal home is now defined by mutual agreement.

Article 16. Marriage and family rights

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) *The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;*

(c) *The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;*

(d) *The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;*

(e) *The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;*

(f) *The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;*

(g) *The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;*

(h) *The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.*

2. *The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.*

In Guinea, marriage is concluded by mutual consent, and by law that consent must be given freely by both parties.

The legal age of marriage is set at 17 years for the girl and at 18 years for the boy. The marriage must be celebrated before an officer of the civil registry and it must be formally registered. An official certificate of marriage must be issued, and a copy delivered to the couple.

"Promises of marriage or betrothals do not make marriage obligatory. However, wrongful breach of betrothal may give rise to reparations." The marriage of a child has no legal effect, because the civil registry officer who solemnizes the married must always verify the age of the intended spouses (18 years for the boy and 17 years for the girl), which is a fundamental condition for marriage.

Article 286 of the Civil Code provides that:

Registration of the marriage by the officer of the civil registry is required by Articles 214 ff of the Guinean Civil Code.

Every marriage certificate must be duly signed by the registrar, by the spouses, and by the fathers or heads of family whose consent is required at the time of celebration. The marriage certificate is registered in the civil registry of the commune. The same holds for all other certificates relating to civil status, namely birth and death certificates.

According to Guinean law, a married woman retains her financial independence vis-à-vis her husband. She also retains her given name and her family name, and she is free to manage and dispose of her finances, to conclude contracts and to take loans, as well as to conduct any legal transaction. Women have the right to custody over their children until the age of seven years, in the case of divorce. During this time, the father has visiting rights and he must provide for the needs of his children throughout the period of custody.

The man and the woman are both fully responsible for the obligations arising from their marriage, including the maintenance and support of the family as well as decisions on the number and spacing of their children. The scope and import of this joint responsibility depends on the level of information, education and culture of each spouse. Development programmes sponsored by the Guinean government are aimed at eliminating female illiteracy, especially among poor women and those living in rural areas. The government also strives to ensure that men and women share the responsibilities of family life and the upbringing of their children.

It must be noted, however, that there are still some obstacles that women and men face in exercising the right to contract marriage with their full and free consent. This is particularly true in the case of child marriages and forced marriages.

With respect to other practical difficulties, the government has undertaken to promote all aspects of economic, social and cultural development for women, recognizing that they constitute more than half of the population and that, as citizens, mothers and workers, they play an important and effective role in all areas of community life. Nevertheless, women still face problems and difficulties such as child marriages, illiteracy, and low living standards, which prevent them from freely expressing their opinion about their intended husband. Such problems are found for the most part in rural areas. Through its various development programmes, the government is attempting to eliminate illiteracy and to promote greater awareness among women and girls in order to surmount and eliminate these problems.

Reference must be made to Law L/2000/010/AN of 10 July 2000 on Reproductive Health, which gives women the right to decide freely and knowingly the number and spacing of children, in other words the size of the family.

It is important to bear in mind the draft amendments to the Civil Code that have been prepared and submitted to the government. The new draft retains all aspects of the current Civil Code, with certain improvements relating to the following aspects:

- There is greater sharing of marital responsibilities among the spouses, and the husband is no longer the sole head of the family.
- When a marriage is dissolved, the monetary aspect will now be governed by the matrimonial regime selected by the spouses or, if there is none, by the legally imposed community regime.
- On matters relating to children, paternal authority is replaced by parental authority.
- Child custody, in case of divorce, will be entrusted to either one of the parents, giving primacy to the interests of the child.

Parents' responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children are fairly shared in the revised Civil Code.

Parental authority, which replaces paternal authority, is understood as protecting the child in terms of its security, health and guardianship, and this right belongs to the father and mother (article 528 of the amended Civil Code).

In practice, however, there are difficulties in exercising these rights, relating most often to customs, literacy, and poverty.

Article 316 of the amended Civil Code provides that "each spouse may freely exercise a profession, receive earnings and salaries, and dispose of them, after settling household expenses".

Article 319 of the draft code provides that "marriage does not authorize the wife to take the family name of the husband. She retains her maiden name and given name."

The right to property is guaranteed by article 13 of the Constitution. There is no legal difference between men and women when it comes to acquiring property. However, in practice there are problems with a widow's succession to her husband's estate, a problem that is particularly noticeable in the case of a childless widow. When it comes to real property, for example, there is a mistaken notion that it reverts by law to the boys.

With respect to the woman's administration and disposal of her property, article 325 of the Civil Code declares: "A married woman has full legal capacity. She retains the administration, enjoyment and free disposal of her personal belongings and of the property that she acquires through the exercise of an independent vocational activity. She may open a current account in her own name and may freely withdraw or dispose of its funds".

B. Political questions

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

The Constitution of the Republic of Guinea was adopted by referendum on 23 December 1990 and promulgated by Decree No. 250/ PRG/ SGG/ 90 of 31 December 1990. Its preamble proclaims the equality of men and women before the law and the adherence of the people to the ideals, principles, rights and duties established in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

The political will in favour of gender equality finds expression in all adopted legislation. Thus, Law L/91/002 of 23 December 1991 on the organization of political parties stipulates (article 26) that every Guinean of either sex who has reached voting age and is in possession of his or her civil, civic and political rights,

except for military and paramilitary personnel and serving magistrates, is free to join or to quit a political party.

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

In the Guinean civil service, the general regulations establish no restriction or discrimination against women in terms of employment (recruitment, salary, advancement and promotion), training or other aspects of human resource management.

However, the question of the political and administrative advancement of women at decision-making levels continues to pose real problems, despite the institutional, legal and organizational provisions made for this noble cause. The African Platform and the recommendations of the Fourth Beijing Conference have however paved the way and have identified solutions for involving women in the decision-making process.

The fundamental question, then, is whether women really want to exercise power: despite these provisions, the overall picture of women in decision-making positions is not encouraging. There is no doubt that some progress has been made along this rocky road. Today, women are represented in government, in political parties, in labour unions, in the National Assembly, and in senior administrative structures. But does their presence reflect their demographic weight (more than 51 per cent) and their electoral clout (55 per cent)?

I. National mechanisms for the promotion of women

These mechanisms have evolved over time. From a purely political mechanism, affiliated with the Single Party, the Guinean government created for the first time in 1992 a structure specifically responsible for sponsoring, coordinating and regulating efforts for the advancement of women.

In his address to the nation on 22 December 1985, the Head of State proposed to Guinea a policy for a society based on traditional forms of solidarity. Thanks partly to this opening, a number of organizations have sprung up such as NGOs, local development associations, groups and cooperatives.

1. The government mechanism

In 1994 the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Women was elevated to the status of Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Childhood and in July 1996

its remit was extended to include Social Affairs. The Ministry, which was established by Decree No. 96/111/ PRG/ SGG of 29 August 1996, has the mandate to design, coordinate, implement and monitor government policy as it relates to social affairs and the advancement of women and children. To that end it is to:

- Prepare and monitor the implementation of social affairs legislation and regulations;
- Design and implement social development and social protection policy;
- Provide assistance to the poor and other social victims;
- Make provision for and protect vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, through the development of appropriate support structures;
- Identify and mobilize the technical, material and financial resources needed for programmes and projects designed by associations, women's groups and organizations working on behalf of children.
- Through its partnership with the World Bank, the government has decided to make the Women's Ministry an eligible department under the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for receiving funds from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

The government also adopted a National Policy for the Advancement of Women in 1996, based on the four strategic objectives described below.

1. To improve the legal framework with a view to ensuring the advancement of women;
2. To support the economic advancement of women;
3. To strengthen the family, social and cultural role of women and improve their status in society;
4. To reinforce institutional support for the advancement of women.

The policy is based on a candid analysis of the social and economic situation of Guinean women, who make up 51.4 per cent of the population: 75 per cent of women live in rural areas and over half of urban women live in the capital city.

The law does not discriminate against women in any way as regards access to education, employment, property and security. The real issue for Guinean women is ensuring that their rights are recognized and respected. According to the Department of Statistics of the National Directorate of Higher Education, in the academic year 1996/97, out of a total of 8,228 students, 871, or 10.58 per cent, were women.

This national mechanism has been operating since 1997 in the context of an action plan covering the 12 areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. This action plan was incorporated into the Gender and Development Framework Programme, inspired by the National Human Development Programme, and aimed at reducing inequalities between men and women by broadening the range of opportunities and options open to every citizen. The cost of this framework programme is estimated at 27 billion Guinean francs, of which only one-quarter has been raised.

Implementation of the national policy for the advancement of women is managed by a national directorate supported by three divisions responsible, respectively, for economic advancement, training and education, and the promotion of women's rights.

This organic framework spans the entire national territory. Each of the seven administrative regions has its own inspectorate for social affairs and the promotion of women and childhood. There are directorates for social affairs and the promotion of women and childhood in the 33 prefectures, and Conakry has five local municipal offices. Every prefecture in the country has a women's self-help centre (CAAF), open to women's groups and to girls with little or no education, who can take 3-year courses covering arithmetic, reading, writing, home economics, nutritional and environmental education, functional literacy etc.

In view of the cross-cutting nature of questions relating to the advancement of women, the Ministry has identified focal points in all other ministerial departments.

2. *NGOs*

The new thrust of national policy, based on the Presidential Address of 22 December 1985, favoured among other things the emergence of various kinds of organizations: NGOs, local development associations, cooperatives, etc. Most women's NGOs are part of the umbrella structure COFEG (Coordinating Body of Guinean Women's NGOs), which fosters partnership among its members and promotes and oversees activities, and also helps to prepare policies and to generate support for project implementation. COFEG is involved as well in monitoring and evaluating the activities of its members. It serves as a forum for discussion and consensus building, while working to strengthen the institutional capacities of NGOs, enhance the skills of field workers through training, and carry out advocacy activities for improving the status of women.

A number of NGOs have been formed to provide liaison and reinforcement for the national mechanism in the field:

- ADDEF (Association for the Defence of Women's Rights).
- The network of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDDAF/FEDDAF) fights for women's equality and defends their rights, and provides training for paralegal personnel.
- The Unit against Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (CPTAFE) runs awareness campaigns on female excision and other degrading practices.
- The Association of Guinean Women against Sexually Transmitted Diseases including AIDS (ASFEGMASSI) runs education campaigns and workshops on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- The Guinean Union of Women Formerly from Rufisque (UARG) and the Guinean Association of Retired Women Teacher Trainers (AANG) are actively involved in educating young women, especially those with little or no schooling.
- The Guinean Association for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts (AGRETO).

- The Guinean Business Women's Group (GFAG) and the Association of Guinean Women Entrepreneurs (AFEG) provide training and coaching for women in income-generating activities.

In addition to these women's NGOs, nearly all of which are members of COFEG, there are the women's branches of the labour unions. The one with the highest profile is CONFETRAG, which is very active in promoting awareness among female workers.

The results of the various awareness, information and lobbying activities of these NGOs were evidenced for the first time in the great number of female candidates who joined the election campaigns of June 2002, and their encouraging standings on the electoral lists. Indeed, these strategies for taking the gender factor into account in the equitable sharing of elected positions were successful in nearly all prefectures:

- Of the 604 councillors elected 118, or 19.78 per cent, were women;
- 17, or 26.15 per cent, of deputy mayors were women;
- three, or 8.10 per cent, of the 35 mayors were women.

Encouraging as they are, these results have not blunted the drive and determination of women to move ahead and to play a still greater role in political life. The legislative elections of June 2002 confirmed this point: women accounted for 5.8 per cent of candidates in these elections, and our National Assembly now has 21 female deputies, resulting from a heightened awareness of their living conditions and their conviction that full participation can result only from adequate information and training.

Article 8

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

On the eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, Guinean women could boast of a series of promotions to decision-making positions: five ministers, one ambassador, three departmental secretaries general, four chiefs of staff and...

These figures reflected the government's determination to polish its image internationally, but they declined sharply in less than two years, despite women's efforts, executive, managerial, supervisory and advisory positions in government remain largely in the hands of men:

- State Councillors and Inspectors General: 3/14.
- Regional Inspectors: 2/48.
- National Directors, Units: 12/155.
- Chiefs of Staff: 2/26.
- Secretaries General and Directors of Ministerial Office: 0/29.
- Secretaries General of Prefectures and Communes: 1/65.

It is clear, then, that there are still a series of gender disparities in Guinea when it comes to the exercise of power, where women fall far short of the 30 per cent of positions recommended in 1995 by the United Nations ECOSOC.

The Gender and Development Framework Programme (PCGeD), which has been in effect since 2000, has served to introduce an institutional framework specifically focused on the promotion of women and children. This programme provides a strong reminder that power has a sex: "In light of the minimal place that women occupy in elected bodies, and more generally in the structures of power, it may be said that, in the absence of a determined and realistic policy for reversing this trend, the quality and sustainability of democratic achievements will be lost (...). Guinean women are among the poorest of the poor: they are not only poor in the economic sense but they are also less powerful, if we consider their relative position in the decision-making process."

Statistical indicators are useful for measuring inequality. From the results of a study conducted in August 2000, and information that was updated in 2001, it is apparent that in 1998 four of the 22 ministers of government were women, while today only three are women. Similarly, instead of three female mayors in a total of 38, there are now only two. In the National Communication Council there are no women at all. The Economic and Social Council has 11 women out of 31 members; three of the 14 judges of the Supreme Court are women; four of the 35 presidents of courts of first instance and justices of the peace are women; and there is one woman among the 12 presidents of the boards of directors of national companies.

Data on labour unions and on other corporations show that the marginalization of women in the decision-making process extends to all spheres of public life, even if the CNTG (the country's main labour federation) is headed by a woman. The reason for this under-representation of women in decision-making bodies in Guinea lies not in the legislation itself, for appropriate laws and regulations exist, but rather in the lack of knowledge of that legislation, and the failure to enforce it.

Looking at non-farm employment, a comparison between men and women shows that women are more likely to perform unskilled jobs.

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Professional, technical, administrative	10%	52%
Sales and services	75%	14%
Unskilled manual labour	15%	34%

According to an August 2000 study by the Women's Ministry, women account for only 10 per cent of the workforce in the modern sector. There are very few women professionals. The proportion of female lawyers in Guinea is four in 10, female bailiffs four in 41, and female notaries one in five. In the private schools, 408, or 10 per cent, of the teaching body of 4121 are women. In the tourism sector, to take one example, only seven, or 18 per cent, of Novotel's 38 department heads are women. In the para-public sector, SOTELGUI has only one female in its seven top management positions; six of its 52 department heads are women, and nine, or 13 per cent, of its section heads are women.

Guinea has already ratified 52 international conventions on fundamental labour rights, yet of its 51,000 civil servants, only 11,373 are women. In the public and private sectors alike, Guinean women are underrepresented among salaried staff, and are largely concentrated in the lower and middle-ranking positions.

Women represent only 22 per cent of employees in the civil service, distributed as follows:

- Contract workers: 20 per cent.
- Operating staff: 37 per cent.
- Middle-level managers: 24 per cent.
- Executive personnel: 14 per cent.

Structure of public employment by hierarchy and by service:

<i>Hierarchichal structure</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Senior (HA) 32%	86%	14%
Middle (HB) 40%	76%	24%
Junior (HB) 17%	63%	37%
Contract positions	79%	20%

When it comes to unemployment, there are no reliable statistics relating to women. It is known however that in 1992, 87 per cent of girls with higher education degrees were looking for their first job, compared to 61 per cent of boys.

In conclusion, gender relationships in society reflect differences of access to positions of power, and these differences must be overcome if women, and men, are to be able to combat poverty and its consequences. The legal equality that women enjoy does not necessarily translate into factual equality. Social and cultural patterns of subordination persist outside the law. It is not surprising, then, that women are the victims of many forms of violence. Moreover, these unequal gender relationships can be found in all spheres of society. Women are underrepresented in positions of political and administrative power, and have little representation in the institutions of civil society. Efforts have certainly been made, and they are beginning to bear fruit, but unless those efforts are expanded in a targeted manner, women are likely to be left out of the participatory process. To address the situation will require real political will.

C. Economic questions

In the context of its policy of pursuing development with a human face, Guinea has since 1998 launched a number of initiatives, programmes, projects and approaches involving government, civil society, the private sector, the people themselves, and the country's development partners.

These initiatives have included sectoral policies, embodied in the following five framework programmes:

1. The Gender and Development Framework Programme (PCGeD).

2. The Private Sector Support and Development Framework Programme.
3. The Decentralization and Deconcentration Support Programme.
4. The Grass-roots Initiative Support Programme.
5. The Macroeconomic Management Support Programme.

An examination of the way these policies have been implemented shows that the gender component has been specifically taken into account both horizontally and by sector, in conformity with CEDAW principles.

Because the advancement of women is a socioeconomic reality, it embraces the sectoral policies of other ministerial departments, the objectives and programmes of which support and are consistent with the mission of the MASPFE.

II. Incentives

1. Government mechanisms

Between 1998 and 2002 the government allocated significant budgetary funds to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood (MASPFE) in support of its policy for the advancement of women.

These budgetary allocations rose sharply, by 33.08 per cent. Together with these government grants, development partners provided significant funding for departmental projects, and this contributed both directly and indirectly to the promotion of women in other areas (education, health, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, village water works).

2. Nongovernmental mechanisms

With the creation of thousands of NGOs, associations, cooperatives, women's groups, and institutions for the promotion of women's activities, the degree of women's organization has been reinforced and their capacities for coaching and support have been strengthened.

To speed the achievement of true equality between men and women, special temporary measures have been taken, such as the creation of funds to support women's economic activities and the inclusion of projects specifically targeted at the advancement of women in the investment programmes of various ministerial departments. These include:

1. Projects financed by MASPFE:
 - Women, population and development for an amount of 0.66 billion in 1998.
 - Support for blind young people in Kankan for 0.95 and 0.43 billion in 1998 and 2001.
 - Support for women's income generating activities, for 2.91 billion in 1998 and 2001.
 - Lobbying on behalf of girls, for 0.5 billion in 2001.
 - Gender and development programme, for 0.45 billion in 2001.
2. Projects financed by other departments:

- Education Project: 1998: 2.16 billion; 2001: 6.63 billion.
- Equity in the Schools Project: 1998: 1.1 billion.
- Reproductive Health Project: 2001: 6.83 billion.
- Health and nutrition: 1998: 7.20 billion; 2001: 3.80 billion.
- STD/HIV/AIDS campaign: 1998: 0.36 billion; 2001: 3.80 billion.
- Support for women's groups: 1998: 0.45 billion.
- Support for female fish smokers: 2001: 0.42 billion.

There has been significant progress in budgetary allocations for the advancement of women from 1998 to 2002, although much remains to be done

This has allowed Guinean women to exercise the rights enshrined in legislation and regulations governing their participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation.

III. Performance between 1998 and 2002 in applying the CEDAW with respect to the economic advancement of women

Article 6

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

Institutional and legislative provisions, in particular the Constitution and the various organic laws affirming the equal dignity and equal rights of men and women, have served to protect women from certain forms of abusive and degrading treatment.

A specialized police morality squad has launched a campaign to curb prostitution, especially in the major cities.

The importance that the law attaches to the elimination of this social scourge can be appreciated from the dissuasive and preventive measures contained in the Penal Code and the Code of Penal Procedure recently adopted by the National Assembly. For example, the following articles of the Criminal Code define the scope of anti-prostitution sanctions:

Article 328 "Procuring is the activity pursued by any man or woman who facilitates the prostitution of others by acting as an intermediary."

Article 329 "The following persons shall therefore be considered as procuring and shall face a penalty of six months to two years in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 400,000 Guinean francs, without prejudice to any higher penalties that may apply:

1. Any person who derives a share in any form whatsoever of the proceeds of the prostitution of others or receives payments from a person who habitually engages in prostitution;
2. Any person who, while knowingly living with another person, is unable to demonstrate that he or she has sufficient resources to pay for his or her own upkeep;

3. Any person who employs or maintains another person for the purpose of prostitution or for traffic in prostitution or debauchery, even if that other person consents thereto and has reached his or her majority;

4. Any person who acts as an intermediary in any capacity whatsoever between persons who engage in prostitution and debauchery and individuals who exploit or remunerate the prostitution or debauchery of others."

Prostitution encouraged by procuring is a social scourge that today afflicts persons of both sexes. Such behaviour is exacerbated by:

- Poverty.
- The economic crisis and its consequences.
- The collapse of moral values and the decline of the family unit.

Although it has spread in recent years, prostitution has not been legalized. While widely practised, it is an activity that is still rejected and condemned by Guinean society.

The 2001 epidemiological survey of HIV/AIDS in Guinea confirmed the risks of hidden prostitution, revealing a national prevalence rate of 2.8 per cent among the 87.8 per cent of the population that is sexually active (20 to 49 years); 42 per cent of those affected were prostitutes.

Given the severity of this alarming situation, Guinea intends to reinforce all the measures already taken to curb the spread of prostitution in all its forms, and to encourage greater public health prevention efforts.

With the support of NGOs, the National Programme for the Control of AIDS (PNLS) recently launched a multisectoral plan of action to combat STD/HIV/AIDS, spearheaded by the National Committee Against AIDS (CNLS), and awareness programmes and training for caregivers as well as programmes of economic support for prostitutes have been introduced in certain Guinean cities and in refugee reception centres.

Particular stress has been placed on identifying brothels, major transportation points, bars and hotels for taking a census of prostitutes.

Article 11

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;*
- (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;*
- (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;*

(d) *The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;*

(e) *The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;*

(f) *The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.*

2. *In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:*

(a) *To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;*

(b) *To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;*

(c) *To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;*

(d) *To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.*

3. *Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.*

1. Legal and institutional framework

Under article 18 of the Constitution, “the right to work is recognized for all. The State creates the necessary conditions for the exercise of this right. No one can be harassed at work on account of his or her sex, race, ethnicity or opinions.”

Having opted for a liberal economy, the Republic of Guinea has also adopted competence as a selection criterion for recruitment in the civil service and in the private sector. The General Statute of the Civil Service regulates all aspects of the civil service career (recruitment, promotion, training and retirement), without discrimination as to sex.

Similarly, in the private sector, the Labour Code calls for equal access to employment on the basis of qualifications, making women eligible for all positions in all sectors of the economy and the national administration, although in numbers and percentages women are far from achieving proportionate representation with men.

The obstacles facing women in reducing this gap are many and varied:

- Sociocultural factors in all their forms.
- Lack of hands-on management experience and professional qualifications.

- The strenuousness of women's work and its low productivity.

However, legal and institutional measures have been taken to establish equality between men and women in the labour market. The results of these measures are analyzed below:

1. Improving women's access to remunerative employment through:

- Diversifying the trades pursued by women.
- Promoting promising sectors initially reserved to men.

2. Strengthening the legal and institutional framework by creating public and private bodies to promote employment and to upgrade human resources. Some examples:

- Guinean Agency for Employment Promotion (AGUIPE).
- National Office for Vocational Education and Retraining (ONFPP).
- Centre for Administrative Retraining (CPA), which falls directly under the Civil Service and Employment Ministry.
- National Centre for Management Training.

When it comes to the right to equal remuneration, the Labour Code (article 206 (1)) stipulates that every employer is required to guarantee equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value, regardless of the employee's origin, gender or age.

The Republic of Guinea's Social Security Code is designed to protect employees and their families against any economic and social deprivation resulting from the loss or abrupt collapse of their income.

In order to guarantee the stability of women's employment, legislation makes maternity one of the grounds for suspension of an employment contract. The Labour Code contains a number of provisions to protect maternity, so that women workers can fulfil their dual roles as mothers and professionals without thereby impairing the principle of equality.

This concern is enshrined in articles 59, 160, 162, 164, 165 and 169 of the Labour Code, and in articles 99 (4) and 105 of the Social Security Code. Despite these achievements, and all the government's efforts, there are still some major weaknesses:

- The low level of qualifications among women, which has led to a high female unemployment rate, following civil service staffing cutbacks.
- The tacit reluctance of men to support women's self-fulfillment, as a direct result of persistent sociocultural attitudes.

A proper database is needed to support research on the status of women in employment. This was one of the tasks assigned to the execution unit for the Support Project for Women's Economic Activities, financed by the government and the African Development Bank (ADB). It was conducted as part of the Capacity Building Component of the National Directorate for the Promotion of Women (DNPF).

The overall objective of the ADB and the government here is to monitor the evolution of the situation of Guinean women. As a result, the DNPf has been able to:

- Save time and resources in seeking statistical data.
- Make more efficient and knowledgeable choices as to investment priorities.
- React more promptly to requests for the preparation of national and international monitoring reports.
- Prepare effective advocacy strategies.
- Make use of a base of indicators for tracking the success of programmes and projects to reduce gender disparities.
- Improve and expand the flow of communication between the MASPFE and the technical departments, civil society, development partners, universities and research centres.

Establishing a statistical database has required the constitution and training of teams to collect and classify information on the components of the Gender and Development Framework Programme adopted by the government as part of its National Programme for the Promotion of Women and the National Programme for Sustainable Human Development (PNDH).

II. Statistical data: gender and economy component

Women participate in economic life through a broad range of formal and informal activities in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. Women are particularly active in the informal sector, where they pursue traditional economic activities (dyeing, dressmaking, hairdressing), as well as commercial, agroindustrial and modern activities (pharmacies, hotels, printing, private schools). In the countryside, women play a key role in agriculture, livestock, forestry, handicrafts and mining. In urban areas, they are mainly engaged in the tertiary sector (commerce, catering, specialized services).

An analysis of the female employment situation produces the following statistical tables:

- (a) All sectors

Table 1
Distribution of the female work force, ages 10 to 69, by profession

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Numbers employed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Farming	102,818	71.1
Sales personnel	162,258	11.5
Mining/Quarrying	5,335	0.4
Elementary school teachers	4,139	0.3
Secretaries/typists	3,390	0.2
Restaurant personnel	2,976	0.2
Personal services	2,962	0.2
Nurses/midwives	1,487	0.1

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Numbers employed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Cleaning/laundry	3,324	0.2
Funeral services	2,165	0.2
Secondary school teachers	161	0.1
Livestock raising	9,909	0.7
Farm labour	128,435	9.1
Artisans/labourers	44,613	3.2
Street vendors	15,063	1.1

Source: Economic Activities of Women in Guinea, August 2000 (MASPFE).

Table 2
Distribution of the female work force, ages 10 to 69, by activity

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Numbers employed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agriculture	1,130,202	12.6
Retailing	177,461	3.2
Other services	45,359	0.8
General administration	10,647	0.7
Livestock	95,899	0.3
Gold-mining	4,061	0.3
Education	3,530	0.3
Domestic service	4,075	0.2
Health and social work	3,222	0.1
Restaurant/bars/canteens	2,060	0.1
International organizations	981	0.1
Undesignated activities	910	0.1
Diamond mining	1,368	0.1
Other mining	963	0.1

Source: Economic Activities of Women in Guinea, August 2000 (MASPFE).

Table 3
Distribution of the urban female work force, ages 10 to 69, by profession

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Numbers employed</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sales personnel	117,222	52.9
Artisans and labourers	37,976	17.1
Farming	21,809	9.8
Street vendors	8,858	4.0
Secretaries/typists	3,243	1.5
Elementary school teachers	3,370	1.5
Other personal services	2,803	1.3
Managers	2,105	1.0
Restaurant personnel	2,160	1.0
Cleaning/laundry	1,734	0.8
Secondary school teachers	1,072	0.5

Source: Economic Activities of Women in Guinea, August 2000 (MASPFE).

Table 4
Female heads of households, by region

<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Basse Guinée	12.2%
Moyenne Guinée	25.7%
Haute Guinée	6.9%
Guinée Forestière	15.6%
Conakry	11.2%
Overall average female heads of household	15.5%

Source: Economic Activities of Women in Guinea, August 2000 (MASPFE).

Table 5
Employment rate for women ages 10 to 69, by place of residence and region

<i>Place of residence</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Total	62.8
Urban	34.4
Rural	74.7
Regions	
Basse Guinée	64.6
Moyenne Guinée	68.7
Haute Guinée	64.4
Guinée Forestière	72.5
Conakry	34.3

Source: Economic Activities of Women in Guinea, August 2000 (MASPFE).

(b) The specific case of the civil service

In the civil service, women represent about 23 per cent of the total payroll. In terms of distribution by gender and by rank in normal activities, men account for the overwhelming proportion of senior positions (HA), which cover executive, policymaking, advisory and oversight positions. The situation as of December 2001 stood as follows.

1. By category (rank)
 - H/A: 14 per cent women versus 86 per cent men.
 - H/B: 24 per cent women versus 76 per cent men.
 - H/C : 37 per cent women versus 62 per cent men.
2. By numbers and salaries

Female civil servants: numbers and salaries, 1999-2001

<i>Year</i>	<i>1999</i>		<i>2000</i>		<i>2001</i>	
	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Salaries</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Salaries</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Salaries</i>
Total M & W	50,531	9,556,650,764	49,341	9,593,567,972	49,006	9,588,349,180

Year Designation	1999		2000		2001	
	Numbers	Salaries	Numbers	Salaries	Numbers	Salaries
W	11,520	1,900,383,911	11,359	1,900,941,726	11,201	1,383,393,526
Percentage W	22.79		23.02		22.85	

3. Percentage of female employees in ministerial departments (December 2001)

No.	Ministry	Female employment rate
1.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women and Childhood	59%
2.	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization	17%
3.	Ministry of Justice	35%
4.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	32%
5.	Office of the President	28%
6.	Ministry of Public Health	54%
7.	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture	17%
8.	Ministry of Trade, Industry and SMEs	20%
9.	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	8%
10.	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	22%
11.	Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts	32%
12.	Ministry of Mining, Geology and Environment	19%
13.	Ministry of Water and Energy	11%
14.	Ministry of Communications	39%
15.	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	24%
16.	Ministry of Pre-university and Civic Education	21%
17.	Ministry of Employment and the Civil Service	33%
18.	Secretariat of State for Security	9%
19.	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing	17%

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) *The right to family benefits;*
- (b) *The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;*
- (c) *The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.*

The government has established the National Social Security Insurance Fund to provide social assistance for employees in the private sector and elsewhere. Since 1984, Guinea has had an integrated and efficient social insurance system covering all workers in the country, without distinction on grounds of sex or job category.

The social security system consists of the following branches:

- Old age, disability and survivors' pensions;

- Occupational risks;
- Family allowances;
- Sickness insurance;
- Health care and social assistance.

It should be pointed out, however, that women do not receive family allowances, because current legislation awards such payments to the husband as the head of household.

A similar problem exists with survivor benefits associated with the pension of a retired working woman, in relation to their transfer to her widower or orphaned children.

2. The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit

While current legislation in Guinea does not discriminate against women in any way, there are several factors that in practice deny most women access to formal credit.

2.1. Overview

The banking sector provides little in the way of financing for women's enterprises and, when it does so, funding is generally advanced through a domiciliary line of credit.

Women's limited access to these institutions can be explained by the following factors:

- The difficulty of coming up with the collateral required for credit;
- Ignorance of banking procedures and loan conditions;
- The size and informal structure of women's enterprises;
- Stiff eligibility and repayment conditions.

Conventional credit institutions are not interested in farming and other types of women's income-generating activities such as small-scale livestock raising and the processing of agricultural products and harvests.

Local credit systems have been launched, but their impact is modest in comparison with the numbers of women who need credit. Women tend to make up for this lack of credit by using the tontine, the principal traditional source of credit: it is estimated that 41 per cent of tontine members are women.

2.2. Measures taken to support the economic advancement of women

In its poverty reduction strategy, the government, in cooperation with its development partners, has instituted programmes designed to improve women's living conditions.

In addition to the five framework programmes and various projects sponsored by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood (involving 5.4 billion Guinean francs between 1998 and 2001), other departments also have initiatives and programmes for women:

- Ministry of Pre-university Instruction, Literacy and Civic Education;

- Ministry of Agriculture;
- Ministry of Fisheries;
- Ministry of Water;
- Ministry of Trade, Industry and SMEs;
- Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment; etc..

2.2.1. At the central government level

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and SMEs has five sections devoted to gender issues:

(a) Integrated Enterprise Assistance Agency (AAAE)

With support from UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNICEF and the ILO, this agency has helped to create SMEs and microenterprises, and to strengthen the business and managerial capacities of female entrepreneurs. Between 1998 and 2001 it disbursed 918 million GF to 32 women's groups and 32 female entrepreneurs, thereby creating 300 jobs.

(b) Private Investment Promotion Office (OPIP)

This facilitates the steps involved in creating and developing an SME, and provides assistance and advice to entrepreneurs. From 1998 to 30 June 2001, OPIP financed 14 million GF in funding for 15 projects, generating 225 jobs.

As of June 2002, the number of jobs created, by type of activity, was as follows:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number of jobs</i>
1.	Services	61
2.	Retail and wholesale trade	89
3.	Hairdressing	10
4.	Construction	24
5.	Restaurants/catering	10
6.	Dressmaking	11
7.	Import/Export	118
	Total	323

(c) Framework Programme for Private Sector Support and Development (PCSD/SP)

The purpose of this programme is to remove the constraints holding back development of the private sector, with a view to creating enterprises and income-generating jobs. It is closely linked to the National Programme for Sustainable Human Development (PNDH), as a sectoral framework programme.

PCSD/SP has targeted eight activities for strengthening women's entrepreneurial capacities and promoting their economic activities:

- Training in production and sales management and organization.
- Schooling and functional literacy training for girls.

- Awareness campaigns for encouraging women to enter fields traditionally dominated by men.
- Strengthening the capacities of financial intermediaries.
- Facilitating access to credit from banks and financial institutions.
- Introducing flexibility to make it easier for women to post collateral for loans.
- Establishing databases on women's economic activities in order to organize appropriate technical and financial assistance.
- Institutional support to COFEG in favour of member NGOs working to promote women entrepreneurs.

(d) National Trade and Competition Directorate (DNCC)

This body promotes trade through the development of local products for export in accordance with prevailing international trade rules and provisions. It is developing a project to help female exporters of local products, with the support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts and development partners, the DNCC has sponsored 630 female entrepreneurs in the following activities:

1998-2000:

Import-export trade: 170

Retail trade: 353

Service providers: 107.

This programme has helped women participate in trade fairs, nationally and internationally, by negotiating more favourable conditions for the price of stands, freight and other costs.

(e) National Industrial Development Directorate (DNDD)

This institutions supports, encourages and organizes the establishment of manufacturing industries, agrifood and other kinds of SMEs. It has already secured the establishment of five female-owned industrial units, and several agrifood processing groups.

(f) Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Fishing is conducted along 300 km of shoreline, and women are heavily engaged in this activity, thanks to the combined efforts of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion Women and Childhood and the oversight department. In the Conakry region alone there are now 142 women's groups embracing 3000 fish wholesalers who, in addition to existing domestic groups, supply local and foreign markets with fresh and smoked fish. Women account for 5 per cent of fishing boat owners in the country, 10 per cent of fish wholesalers, and 80 per cent of persons engaged in conservation and processing of fresh fish and seafood.

(g) Ministry of Mining, Geology and Environment

Women have long been engaged in traditional gold panning and small-scale diamond mining. As part of its poverty reduction campaign, the department has

taken steps to make the work of women in the mines more visible and less constraining. “Women masters” associations have been created, in addition to the AFEME (Women, Mining and Environment): in total, there are now 40 local groups embracing 1600 women.

Women also work with clay to produce pottery, using improved and stabilized clay kilns, and they also use kaolin to make paint in rural areas. In the cities they work with sand, gravel and other aggregates that go into construction materials. At the same time, women are heavily involved in efforts at reforestation and environmental protection.

2.2.2. The contribution of development partners, NGOs and the private sector

The government has facilitated the establishment of institutions to support female entrepreneurship. This support is provided by bilateral and multilateral development assistance institutions, and takes several forms: technical, material and financial.

(a) Bilateral financing is granted to women's groups as subsidies to allow women to build up their working capital or to acquire capital goods. Bilateral donors also take account of projects established with the government and NGOs for promoting the private sector, and they help women arrange lines of credit with the banks.

(b) Multilateral agencies

The UNDP provides assistance to SMEs and supports grass-roots initiatives in all sectors of production and transformation, service provision, and trade. The African Development Bank has financed a project to support income-generating activities for women, covering four components:

- Identification of women's niches.
- Technical training in management, functional literacy.
- Strengthening the institutional framework.
- Monitoring, coordination and evaluation of the executing unit.

Women still have limited capacity to draw upon the resources offered by these institutions, because:

- They lack information on available resources and ways of accessing these funds.
- Financing conditions and procedures are not adapted to the needs and abilities of beneficiaries.
- Women are poorly organized.

(c) Foreign NGOs and intergovernmental agencies

These organizations are making a significant contribution to the economic advancement of women, because they work at the grassroots level to reduce social inequality and combat poverty. Some examples of institutions supporting the advancement of women are:

(a) Support Fund for Women's Economic Activities (FAAEF). A poverty reduction programme financed by the government and the African Development Fund, with a credit fund totalling 4 billion.

(b) PRIDE/Finance is a specialized for-profit NGO that provides microfinance. It seeks to help reduce poverty in Guinea by offering locally based financial and nonfinancial services to small and micro enterprises in the informal sector:

- Financial services: small loans to microentrepreneurs who have no access to conventional bank credit.
- Nonfinancial services: monitoring, counselling and training.

From 1 January 1992 to 30 June 2000, it granted 63,277 loans totalling 15,987,625,000 Guinean francs, as detailed in the following table.

<i>Periods/Type of loan</i>	<i>Since 1992</i>		<i>1 Jan to 30 Jun 2000</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Micro loan	57,324	12,987,125,000	4916	1,180,900,000
Medium-term loan	847	1,489,600,000	176	284,000,000
FICA*	8	25,000,000	6	21,000,000
Total	58,179	14,501,725,000	5098	1,485,900,000

* Foundation for Agricultural Investment and Commercialization.

African Development Bank (AGP):

This institution has financed 84 women's projects for a total value of 2,218,761,334.11 GF, as summarized below:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Type of activity</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Total amount</i>
1.	Traditional fishing	8	192,990,048.15
2.	Private schools	8	235,090,123.15
3.	Poultry farms	2	164,821,055.56
4.	Dyeing	14	596,436,495.90
5.	Housecleaning	4	558,876,978.60
6.	Sisal basket making	2	273,853,658.60
7.	Seamstress training	10	685,543,092.00
8.	Ice cream production	3	355,192,29.00
9.	Telecentre	1	10,000,000.00
10.	Cosmetic products	4	81,631,075.00
11.	Soap making	5	47,683,857.14
12.	Peanut butter	1	9,625,000.00
13.	Service provision	15	1,211,618,626.60
14.	Swine raising	1	13,513,250.00
15.	Food products	3	3,641,714.00
16.	Retail outlets	3	1,075,333.00
	Total	84	2,218,761,334.11

The “Yètè Mali” Savings Network or savings and loan cooperative.

This is a financial cooperative formed by people who decide to pool their savings and use them to extend credit. It offers two types of accounts:

Demand savings accounts:

- You can deposit or withdraw your money whenever you want, from Tuesday to Saturday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Closed Sunday and Monday.
- You can deposit or withdraw as much money as you want.
- You pay only a quarterly account holding fee of 1000 GNF.

Term savings accounts:

- You choose the amount you want to set aside.
- You decide how long you want to have it blocked.
- You earn interest.

This fund has allocated 149 million GF to 340 groups embracing 1,190 members, and to 189 female entrepreneurs, for a total of 1,379 women.

Pride:

Launched in 1991 as a project initiated by USAID, it is now an institution, the main funder of which is USAID, and other sources such as the French Development Agency (AFP) and the World Bank. The institution devotes its revenues to the following areas:

Small-scale business activities:

- Marketing of agrifood products.
- Small retail businesses.
- Restaurants and catering.
- Services.
- Domestic transportation

At 31 December 2001 the institution recorded 10,160 customers, of whom 74 per cent are women, and it has granted loans totalling 2,644 million, of which 65 per cent went to women. Since start-up, it has made 100,000 loans totalling more than 30 billion francs, and 70 per cent went to women. It has created 200 jobs, 20 per cent of them for women. Thanks to its capacity building programme, women are now running businesses in several pilot areas such as financial audit, IT services, and portfolio management.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, *inter alia*, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

(e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;

(f) To participate in all community activities;

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Agriculture employs a significant proportion of the working population, predominantly women. On average, there are 144 women for every 100 men working in the sector. Eighty per cent of the population depends on agriculture for a livelihood and it provides employment for 85 per cent of all working women.

Women play a key role in Guinea's food security. They represent 52 per cent of the rural population, and produce about 80 per cent of foodstuffs. At the same time they must manage their households: they devote up to 17 hours a day to domestic and occupational tasks, yet they are still living in precarious conditions.

1. Constraints

Women suffer from:

- Inadequate production credit, lack of access to extension services.
- Inadequate health care.
- Lack of information on market opportunities.
- Low levels of education.
- The isolation of certain production zones.
- Barriers to property ownership.
- They are overworked.
- Their work is hard and tedious.

The people who provide rural extension services to women generally have limited technical capacities, in comparison to the problems they are supposed to help resolve, such as:

- Raising agricultural productivity.
- Storage and conservation of harvests.
- Processing and marketing of agricultural products.

Successive economic crises, structural adjustment programmes, and other restrictive measures have increased the burden on the most vulnerable social groups, and have accelerated the collapse of living conditions for rural women in particular.

2. *Measures*

Poverty reduction programmes are now focusing on women's associations for promoting income-generating activities. The government and its partners are adopting a participatory approach that involves grassroots groups, including women's organizations, in local development programmes. Improving the situation of rural women through economic advancement is one of the fundamental objectives of the Agricultural Development Policy Letter (ADPL). A number of projects and programmes have been undertaken to this end:

- Increasing women's participation in the rational management of resources.
- Improving farm productivity.
- Reducing demographic pressure on forests.
- Improving water and land management
- Involving women in environmental protection (waste management, improved fireplaces, reforestation).

Through the rural development and extension services component of the National Agricultural Services Programme:

- A unit has been created to provide support for rural women at the national and regional levels.
- More female extension workers have been recruited to maintain better contact with women.
- Managers have been trained in social and gender analysis.
- The feasibility of potential income-generating activities has been tested.
- Women have been given training in management and leadership.

To help rural women pursue individual and collective initiatives on a more ambitious scale, the government has revised its agricultural development policy in light of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with development partners, is currently working to strengthen specific programmes in support of women's groups.

These programmes involve the provision of credit, the supply of inputs, technical training, functional literacy, training in gender issues, self-promotion,

management and nutrition, and the provision of appropriate equipment and technology.

3. *Status report on activities specific to rural women:*

The first activities began in 1997, and have involved training managers in the social aspects of gender and the establishment of women's groups, and training to enhance the professionalism of members of these groups.

Among the achievements to date:

- All SNPRV officers (1200) were given training in social and gender analysis, in collaboration with the World Bank in 1998.
- 18 women's groups have conducted study tours within the country and the region, in cooperation with the NGO Sassakawa Global 2000.
- Eight women's groups have received training in seed production.
- 130 women's groups have received training in manioc processing and conservation (attiéké or cassava couscous, gari, starch, kouya, hamburger, manioc chips, leaf drying).
- 75 women's groups have received training in fruit processing and conservation (juicing, drying, syrup, nectar, pickling, preserves).
- 78 women's groups have received training in vegetable processing and conservation (preserves, purees, pickling, drying).
- 78 women's groups have received training in cereals processing and conservation (fonio or hungry rice, pre-cooking, steaming, infant feed flours, enriched flours).

Introduction of protein-rich legumes:

- 282 women's groups have received training in the processing of mucuna soybeans and obatampa maize, and in palm and peanut oil extraction (soumbara, coffee, mustard, cheese, infant feed flour, bread, biscuits, stews, etc.).
- 28 women's groups have received training in functional literacy.
- 52 women's groups have received training in calculating revenues and profits, in self-promotion, and in stocks management.
- 17 women's groups have received training in nutritional health and food hygiene, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (raising village nutrition levels, providing safe drinking water in the village).
- Nine health centres have been created, and maize- and soy-enriched infant feed flour has been introduced in collaboration with the health centres and SG 2000.
- More than 75,000 households and schools have been equipped with improved fireplaces.
- 47 groups have been trained in solar salt extraction and brine production.

- 96 women's groups, with 1479 members, have been trained in livestock raising.
- Nine associations have been established for the raising of poultry and small ruminants.
- A milk retail outlet has been established at Koumbiaet, and its members trained.
- 17 henhouses have been constructed and their owners trained.
- 21 women have been trained as veterinary assistants.

Thanks to the activities described above, today many women are in a position to fend for themselves and to earn incomes.

- The percentage of women in the extension services rose from 2 per cent in 1997 to 40 per cent in 1999, following creation of the unit in June 1996.
- Training is being provided for 749 women's groups, embracing a total of 25,470 members, and 153,673 women have been trained in the contact groups.
- There are a number of umbrella organizations (unions and federations) run by women.
- There are women managers in various services and departments (division heads, section heads, regional directors, COA and TS positions, supervisors and extension workers).

When it comes to improving the situation of rural women, who now work 17 hours a day, some steps have been taken to lighten their tasks:

- Establishment of community childcare centres in rural areas.
- Improved access to drinking water, wells and pumps.
- Promotional campaign for improved fireplaces.
- The opening up of production zones through the improvement of rural roads.
- Access for rural women to improved production technologies (mills, oil presses, husking and threshing machinery).

3. Microcredit systems for rural women

There are many microcredit facilities, and they are available to all women. Rural women in particular also receive assistance from such organizations as Crédit Rural, CENAFOD, SASSAKAWA Global 2000 and PASAL (Food Security Programme) and SG 2000.

These facilities are available in various sectors of activity, and they operate differently from one sector to the next. Crédit Rural, for example, addresses five elements:

- Rural credit cooperatives: these are available for all rural activities, for groups of three to five persons of the same sex.
- Farm credit cooperatives: these cover rain-fed farming activities of mixed groups of five to 10 persons.
- Off-season farming credit: for market gardening and produce.

- Commercial credit: this institution has contracts with the PASAL development project, which has organized vendors into cooperatives, where members contribute guarantee funds that allow them to draw significant amounts.
- The Integrated Rural Development Programme (PDRI) covers land improvement and drainage activities and provides commercial credit.

CENAFOD (African Centre for Development Training) provides training and extends small credits on the basis of savings deposits made by rural women members of cooperatives established for this purpose.

4. Rural women's participation in preparing and implementing development plans at all levels can be seen in the following facts:

Generally speaking, rural women take an active part in all aspects of farm work (rice growing, market gardening, processing, marketing). They are also involved in gathering, processing and storing products of the land and fisheries.

Their access to land is facilitated by their group membership.

Women have established a system of intra- and interregional trade based on the specific products of each region, such as:

- Basse Guinée: fish, cereals, fruits, vegetables, etc.
- Moyenne Guinée: dairy products and derivatives, poultry, handicrafts, vegetables, etc.
- Haute Guinée: tuberous crops, cereals, oil seeds and other processed products, etc.
- Guinée Forestière: cereals, tubers, oil seeds, molluscs, fruits, vegetables, etc.

Women have built partnerships with local road transport operators to facilitate movement of their products to markets in other regions and in Conakry. They visit various markets in their region and in other regions every week in order to sell their goods and obtain supplies. Transactions typically take at least three days. This allows women to assert themselves, to take their fate in their own hands, and to become competitive on domestic and external markets.

Nevertheless, beyond marketing, there is a need for conservation and processing of products in order to reduce wastage and provide food security during the period between harvests, particularly in the forest zone. The MASPFE therefore plans to take account of forest-dwelling women in its training programme for the conservation and processing of food products, as has been done with women in Basse and Haute Guinée.

D. Social questions

Article 4

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures

shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

Progress to date in improving family life

Given the scope and diversity of their domestic and economic concerns, Guinean women remain the driving force of the family and of society. It is they who have the final responsibility for running the home, and for the upbringing and health of their children. It is the women who must perform all the domestic chores, and a good deal of the productive activity in rural areas. In the traditional setting, women are responsible for the behaviour and education of their children.

1.1. Women are the cornerstone of family and social stability

Because women are the source of social welfare, their self-fulfillment can only have a positive influence on the family's well-being. To ensure this, they need to be properly equipped from a very early age. A woman who has received a proper formal education or who has assimilated a sound informal education will be able to:

- Pass on to her children a sound education, without distinction as to their sex.
- See that her children, and particularly her daughters, do well in school.

This is why, in its policy for promoting childhood, the MASPFE has established the objective of fighting for the survival, development and protection of young children who are handicapped, poor or in difficult situations. This involves, on one hand, protection against disease, malnutrition and mistreatment, and the assurance of appropriate care and, on the other hand, seeing to their psychomotor, mental, social and emotional development. The family, and in particular the mother, has an important role to play here.

Guinean women are making a remarkable contribution to the survival and development of society, and it is therefore appropriate to support the policy for promoting women and to establish a more egalitarian approach to family life, recognizing that the family, symbolized by marriage and the raising of children, is the core component of society and that it must be made compatible with full participation in working life.

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases;

Women in the Republic of Guinea have the same legal rights as men. There is no question that the laws and regulations in force go a long way towards affirming the dignity and social equality of women. It is in this spirit that Guinea has signed and ratified a number of international legal instruments advancing the rights of women.

When it comes to marriage and women's rights within the family, the Civil Code grants both spouses the same rights relating to the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment of property, and its disposal, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

It must be noted, however, that there is discrimination during marriage in the rights and duties of the spouses as they relate to paternal authority and guardianship responsibilities. There has been progress in reforming family law, particularly through the draft Code of Persons and the Family and the draft revisions to the Civil Code, which the government is now examining for early submission to the National Assembly.

When it comes to reproductive health, Law L/2000/010/AN of 10 July 2000 prohibits and severely punishes the practice of female genital mutilation. Yet despite these legal provisions, women and girls are still the victims of traditional practices harmful to their self-fulfillment. These include:

- Early and forced marriage.
- Physical, moral and psychological violence.
- Sexual abuse.
- Female genital mutilation.
- Obstacles to inheritance and succession.
- Traditional taboos.

What must be stressed is that women, including female heads of households, are becoming increasingly aware of the role they can play within the family unit.

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by

the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

With respect to education, Guinea renewed its commitment during the Forum on Education for All (EFA) held in Dakar in April 2001, to eliminate discrimination against women, as well as its commitment to objective V of the Dakar Framework of Action, to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015.

To this end, a number of steps have been taken:

- A national plan of action for EFA has been prepared.
- A 12-year programme has been prepared covering for mainstreaming the gender dimension.
- An EFA gender focal point has been appointed.

On the institutional front:

The capacities of equity mechanisms have been strengthened through training for their managers in gender issues, project management, strategic planning, new information and communication technologies, and mass mobilization.

The National EFA Coordinator and the EFA gender focal point have received training for mainstreaming gender in the preparation and implementation of action plans. Equity structures have also benefited from logistical support (computers, office facilities) and from technical assistance (National Equity Committee). These structures have been decentralized in order to empower grass-roots communities and involve them more effectively in promoting education for girls.

The capacities of NGOs devoted to girls' education (FEG/FAWE, SAGE, Plan Guinée, APAC/Guinée, etc) have been reinforced, and they are now actively participating in lobbying, awareness raising and promotion on behalf of education for girls. Several activities have been undertaken and pursued.

In order to meet the new challenges of achieving the objectives of the Dakar Framework of Action, Guinea's EFA Programme addresses the following key issues:

- Inequitable and low levels of access to education: low enrolment rates for girls, and persistent disparities between girls and boys.

- The mediocre quality of education, very high repetition and dropout rates, very low levels of learning retention, particularly in French and mathematics.
- Little enrolment by girls in technical and postsecondary education.

The following strategies have been adopted:

1. Public awareness campaigns.
2. The Three-year Women's Literacy Programme, which seeks to teach 300,000 women to read and write by 2005, working through more than 1000 young literacy volunteers. This activity will be conducted by MEPU-EC and MASPFE.
3. Constructing schools and equipping them with separate toilets and washrooms: the programme calls for 5800 classrooms at the primary and secondary level, of which 678 have already been built between 2000 and 2002.
4. Development of multigrade instruction in areas where this is necessary. The strategy makes it possible to accommodate girls without making them travel long distances: this will help secure a suitable environment for girls and reduce repetition and dropout rates.
5. Reducing school costs. The government's strategy with the EFA programme is to eliminate all school fees and to provide free textbooks and school supplies, as well as certain essential medications. The first phase of the EFA programme calls for a ratio of one book per pupil per year (a ratio that used to be one book for every two pupils). Science textbooks, multisubject workbooks, and supplies have been distributed free to girls (more than 10,000 girls benefited between 2000 and 2002).
6. Prizes are awarded to girls who excel in the examinations, and bursaries are also provided.
7. In terms of school health, 692,000 children (boys and girls) received essential drugs in the schools (micronutrients, vermifuges etc.).
8. The development of teaching programmes for girls: preparation of gender training modules for teachers, modules dealing with girl's rights and duties, and with reproductive health.
9. These modules are planned for integration into the initial teacher training curriculum.
10. Support programmes for girls students with learning difficulties. Girls who are at risk of dropping out can take remedial courses or special tutoring (some 4000 girls benefited between 2000 and 2002).
11. Identification of promising new areas of employment for the social and vocational integration of girls and women.
12. Female registration levels in university have improved. At the non-formal or "second chance" school level:
13. The number of "second chance schooling" centres (NAFA) rose from 110 to 140 between 2000 and 2002. The quality of instruction in the centres has been improved through the preparation of programme user guides and training modules for instructors and students in the three NAFA centres, dealing with income generating activities.

14. Occupational literacy centres increased in number between 2000 and 2002.

15. Partnership development: in all fields of activity, efforts have been made to coordinate the various players involved in girls' education so as to exchange experience and reinforce partnerships.

Roundtables and study sessions have been organized by the National Equity Committee to identify fields of intervention for various partners, and the major themes of partnership.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

The Republic of Guinea has adopted the global objective of “health for all by the year 2000”, so as to assure the majority of its population equitable access to essential health care at a reasonable and affordable cost. The National Health Policy is based on the Primary Health Care Strategy flowing from the Bamako initiative. It is focused on three essential points:

- Seamless integration of curative, preventive and promotional aspects.
- Promotion of individual, family and community health.
- Community participation in the design, financing and evaluation of health activities.

This policy is being implemented through the National Primary Health Care Programme (PEV/SSP/ME) and the Hospital Reform Programme. The goal of this health policy is to improve the state of public health, thereby reducing morbidity and mortality. The overall objective is to reduce the general mortality rate by 40 per cent by 2010, to 21 per thousand.

To improve the performance of the health system, the National Health Forum recommended in 1997 the preparation of the Strategic Plan for National Health Development. That strategic plan recognizes the strengths, weaknesses and existing opportunities of the Guinean health system, with the aim of achieving our goals for the year 2010. Its strategic themes are largely those resulting from the review of the health system conducted in Dalaba in February 2000.

The National Health Development Plan adopted at the programming workshop of 28 May to 1 June 2010 [sic] calls for establishing by 2010 an accessible health system capable of meeting the health needs of the population, and helping to reduce poverty.

It is built on the following five strategic themes:

- An integrated campaign against disease and against maternal and infant mortality.
- Institutional capacity building.
- Improving the supply and use of services.
- Developing human resources.
- Promoting health.

Progress achieved to date with the national health policy has gone a long way to improving the health of mothers and children, who are the most vulnerable groups of the population, and who have faced high mortality rates.

II. Objectives

General objective

- To improve the health status of the population as a whole, and specifically that of the vulnerable groups consisting of women and children.

Specific objectives

- To improve women's access to health care.
- To reduce the infant mortality rate from 132 per thousand to 70 per thousand by the year 2010.
- To reduce the maternal mortality rate from 6.6 per thousand to 3.5 per thousand by the year 2010.
- To combat malnutrition.
- To combat harmful traditional practices.
- To promote modern methods of family planning by increasing the use of contraceptives from 4 per cent to 16 per cent.
- To improve vaccination coverage, raising VAT (Vesicle amine transporters) coverage for pregnant women from 40 per cent to 95 per cent.
- To step up the campaign against STD/AIDS.
- To improve health coverage.

III. Actions and achievements

The reforms undertaken in the health sector were pursued and consolidated between 1999 and 2002, a period that saw:

- Adoption of the Strategic Health Development Plan
- Preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for the health sector.
- Preparation of the national strategic framework for multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS (2003/2007).
- Ongoing formulation of priority programmes for implementing the PNDS.
- Strengthening the Guinean Programme for Primary Health Care (PEV/SSP/ME) on the basis of the Bamako initiative.

In geographic terms, 1999 - 2002 health coverage improved from 93 per cent in 2001 with 376 health centres and 402 health posts.

Vaccination coverage rate in areas covered by the Primary Health Care Programme performed as follows, according to routine data for 1999:

- The complete vaccination rate for children to the age of 11 months rose from 55 per cent in 2000 to 62 per cent in 2001.
- Pregnancy monitoring through prenatal checkups rose from 57 per cent in 2000 to 65 per cent in 2001.
- The effective coverage rate for family planning stood at around 8 per cent in 2001, compared to 7 per cent in 2000.

Coverage rates still fall short of national objectives (80 per cent).

Implementation of the national health policy through the Primary Health Care Programme has produced improvements in:

- The vaccination coverage rate for mothers and children, the primary beneficiaries.
- The design and implementation of programmes and strategies for dealing with certain priority health problems.
- Reproductive health (maternal and child health, family planning, adolescent health, men's health, women's health, safe motherhood).
- A comprehensive campaign against the major diseases (STD/AIDS, leprosy, tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhoea, malnutrition).

Among these programmes we may cite:

- The programme against STD/AIDS.
- Programmes against leprosy, tuberculosis, river blindness (onchocerciasis), diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, malaria, Buruli ulcers.
- The programme against iodine deficiency disorders (IDD).
- The Guinea worm (Dracunculosis) eradication programme.
- The Safe Motherhood Programme.
- The Reproductive Health Project.
- The Rural Health Project.
- The Reproductive Health Project.
- The Cervical Cancer Screening and Treatment Project.
- The Comprehensive Childhood Disease Care Programme (PCIME).
- The Urban Health Programme (PASU) in the City of Conakry.

On the multisector front, the National Committee against STD/AIDS (CNLS) has been established with an executive secretariat to combat the AIDS pandemic in our country. The First Lady of the Republic, Her Excellency Madame Henriette Conte, is playing an active role in the Alliance of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS.

Reproductive health

The development policy for the health sector to the year 2010 established priorities in the field of reproductive health and safe motherhood, in particular.

The National Reproductive Health Programme: covering a 10-year period (2000/2010), with components targeted at various groups: wives and mothers, children, adolescents and young adults, and men. The nine components of the National Reproductive Health Programme are:

1. Promotion of safe motherhood.
2. Improving the accessibility and use of family planning services.
3. Developing health services for children.
4. Developing reproductive health services for teenagers and young adults.
5. Combating STD/AIDS.
6. Combating violence and traditional practices that are harmful to health.
7. Combating infertility and subfertility.
8. Preventing and providing care for genital cancer and reproductive health problems among the elderly.
9. Developing specific reproductive health services for men.

To reinforce health programmes for mothers and children, the Ministry of Public Health has instituted a National Safe Motherhood Programme, the general objective of which is to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates by 50 per cent by the year 2010. The results since 1999 have been encouraging. They reflect the efforts that have been made, and which must now be reinforced and continued:

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>2001</i>
Prenatal checkups	71%
Assisted childbirth	35%
Total fertility rate	5.5
Maternal mortality rate	528 per 100,000 live births
Neonatal mortality rate	48 per 1000 live births

Source: EDS I 1992 and EDS II 1999.

The National Safe Motherhood Programme focuses on the following strategic themes:

- Advocacy.
- Strengthening the health system.
- Community participation.
- Women's empowerment.

The implementation strategy involves three combined approaches:

- Dealing with obstetrical complications and neonatal emergencies.

- Introducing an operational system of referrals and counter referrals.
- Introducing community solidarity mechanisms for dealing with pregnancy and childbirth risks (MURIGA).

The National Safe Motherhood Programme is sponsoring the following activities:

- Communication for changing behaviour, with the necessity to implement the MURIGA.
- Promoting community mechanisms for handling obstetrical referrals, including the establishment of "Solidarity Funds" (MURIGA) and Referral Support Offices (BSR).
- Improving the communication and transport system between outlying areas and health care referral centres, in particular by equipping health facilities with radio communication, purchasing ambulances, and establishing contracts with transport operators.
- Improving health facilities and infrastructure: providing equipment/materials, buildings/renovations for health centres and operating rooms.

Combating female genital mutilation is an important aspect of reproductive health. Attention should be drawn here to the remarkable efforts of the CPTAFE, which is working tirelessly to combat female genital mutilation. Highlights of this campaign include:

- National surveys on female genital mutilation in Haute Guinée/Moyenne Guinée and in Guinée Forestière/Basse Guinée, which showed that 96.4 per cent of women surveyed had undergone excision.
- The average age of excision is 9.4 years. The most commonly employed form of excision is simple cutting (46.3 per cent), followed by the more severe form (24.4 per cent).
- The National Strategic Plan to Combat Female Genital Mutilation (MASPFE/CPTAFE) 2001-2010.
- The Operational Plan of Action against Female Genital Mutilation (MASPFE/CPTAFE) 2000/2002.
- The campaigns to have women and "excisors" turn in their ceremonial cutting knives, in Kouroussa (6 November 1999), Kérouané (2 June 2000), Conakry (10 May 2001) and Mamou (2002).
- Preparation of economic adjustment projects and training for women who have turned in their knives, with support of the World Bank.
- The law on reproductive health, which places particular stress on female genital mutilation, adopted by the National Assembly and promulgated by the President of the Republic on 10 July 2000. This law prohibits all forms of female genital mutilation.
- On Guinean Women's National Day (27 August 2000) CPTAFE solemnly deposited at the National Palace, in the presence of His Excellency the President of the Republic, the knives that excisors from Kouroussa and Kérouané had surrendered at the National Museum through the good offices of

the government (Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood).

- The continuation of awareness and training activities.

AGBEF (Guinean Association for Family Welfare) has set as its mission the provision of high-quality sexual and reproductive health services as a means of reducing maternal mortality, by controlling the spread of STD/HIV/AIDS and eliminating high-risk abortions and traditional practices that are harmful to health.

AGBEF seeks to create a society where individuals and families can effectively enjoy their rights to health, with full respect for relationships of equality and equity between the sexes. Accordingly, the association is focusing its current efforts on lobbying the government to approve the Family Code so that it can be disseminated as promptly as possible in support of the rights and responsibilities of women within an equitable society in Guinea.

To enhance the status of women, AGBEF has also launched a project on "Women, Islam and Family Planning".

The cervical cancer screening and treatment project began operations in health facilities in 2000. These have included:

- Training for personnel to perform the Lugol screening test.
- Instructions for follow-up in suspect cases.
- Supply of the necessary consumables and materials for conducting the test.
- Educational activities to promote behavioural change, targeted at women and health personnel.

The Nutritional Health Project

Following the Health Services Development Project (PDSS), the government requested IDA to help finance a second, 6-year project to carry the health system development strategy through to 2000.

The Nutritional Health Project (PSN) is designed to improve the coverage and quality of health services relating to nutrition and family planning, to strengthen the organization and management of the health sector, and to raise further funding.

The principal components of the project are:

1. Maternal and Child health, including family planning to the year 2001.
 - Prenatal coverage: 80 per cent.
 - Obstetrical coverage: 50 per cent.
 - Vaccination coverage: 80 per cent.
 - Regular checkups for children in their first 36 months.
 - Contraceptive use: 5 per cent
2. Combating nutritional and food deficiencies to the year 2001

- Improving the nutritional status of pregnant women by reducing the prevalence of anaemia by one-third and eliminating the manifestations of iodine deficiencies.

3. Combating disease to the year 2001

- Ensure that 60 per cent of pregnant women are effectively covered by anti-malaria prophylactic therapy.

4. Social mobilization

The total cost of the project is US\$27.3 million.

With the nursing mothers programme, there is a significant effort at education and awareness raising.

The Population and Reproductive Health Project

The 12-year Population and Reproductive Health Project (PPSG) was launched in February 1999, in cooperation with the World Bank, as part of the "Guinea Vision 2010" initiative. The project is intended to support the Guinean government's efforts to improve the welfare of its people.

Project objectives:

- To prevent reproductive health risks.
- To prevent and reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

The programme will cover 75 per cent of the national population, in 3 phases. The first phase, called PPSG, will run for four years and includes the components:

- Raising public awareness and promoting behaviour that does not endanger reproductive health.
- Improving the quality of priority reproductive health services.
- Enhancing institutional capacities to manage and coordinate population and reproductive health programmes.

The first phase of PPSG implementation has placed particular emphasis on women:

- 80 per cent of its subcomponents are devoted to women.
- Enhancing the status of women through the Population Support Fund (FAP).
- Support for vulnerable groups.

Example: establishment of women's health cooperatives such as the MURIGA (pregnancy and childbirth support cooperatives).

Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) is an approach adopted by WHO and UNICEF to reduce morbidity and mortality among children under five years of age in developing countries. It is targeted at five major diseases (acute respiratory infection, diarrhoea, malaria, measles, and malnutrition), which account for more than 70 per cent of deaths and medical consultations for children under five years.

To accelerate the process of implementing efforts to promote child survival in Guinea, USAID, through the Basics II Project, has established a national office to support the Ministry of Health in the areas of IMCI and EPI (Expanded Programme on Immunization).

UNICEF and the World Bank have also made provision in their programme for significant support to IMCI.

Integrated disease control

Integrated disease control has made it possible to create conditions for reducing morbidity, mortality and complications from priority diseases, by treating:

1. Infectious diseases

- Tetanus, measles, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, hepatitis B, yellow fever.
- Acute respiratory infections, shigellosis, diarrhoeal diseases.

Vaccination is recognized as the most cost-effective means of controlling diseases, with the exception of respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases.

For tuberculosis in particular, short-term chemotherapy is considered one of the best public health responses from a cost-effectiveness viewpoint.

Acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases will continue to be treated as current illnesses in the context of Primary Health Care.

2. STD/AIDS

In 2001, 1829 HIV/AIDS cases were reported at health facilities, and then analyzed at the coordination headquarters of the national AIDS campaign: 989, or 54 per cent, of these patients were women. The average age of a person with HIV is 34 plus or minus 22 years: 32 plus or minus 18 years for females, and 39 plus or minus 19 years for males. Of the 1829 HIV cases, 1027, or 56.20 per cent, were asymptomatic.

Taking all HIV cases together, the types of virus detected are distributed as follows:

HIV 1: 97 percent

HIV 2: 2 percent

HIV 1 + HIV 2: 1 percent

During 2001, of the 1824 infection cases notified, 802 met the expanded definition of AIDS. Of these:

- Women: 437 cases, or 54.30 per cent.
- Men: 365 cases, or 45.50 per cent.
- Children of both sexes: eight cases, or 1 per cent.

The average age of these asymptomatic cases is 35 years plus or minus 20 years. The age brackets most affected are:

- 20-24 years: 85 cases (10.40 per cent), of which 73 women (85 per cent).
- 25-29 years: 139 cases (17.2 per cent), of which 106 women (76 per cent).

- 30-34 years: 146 cases (18.30 per cent) of which 78 women (56 per cent).
- 30-35 years: 161 cases (20.20 per cent) of which 77 women (45 per cent).
- 40-44 years: 111 cases (13.90 per cent) of which 44 women (39.60 per cent).

<i>Age bracket</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
0-4 years	0	1	1
5-9 years	1	1	2
10-14 years	2	2	4
15-19 years	1	12	13
20-24 years	12	73	85
25-29 years	33	106	139
30-34 years	68	78	146
35-39 years	88	73	161
40-44 years	67	44	111
45-49 years	40	21	61
50-54 years	29	13	42
55-59 years	13	3	16
60 years and over	11	10	21
Total	365	437	802

It is now recognized that STDs are important factors for contracting HIV. The high prevalence of HIV in the subregion, the threat that it poses to Guinea, and its frequent association with tuberculosis all argue in favour of the high priority accorded to these diseases. The greatest challenge is to keep down the national HIV seroprevalence rate.

Sentinel surveillance data from the PNLIS show striking seroprevalence rates: from 1987 to 2001 there were 9279 AIDS cases reported, of which 54.3 per cent were men, 45.5 per cent were women, and 1 per cent were children.

The national survey of December 2001 estimated the national prevalence of the infection at 2.8 per cent, with variations ranging from 2.1 per cent in the urban areas of Haute Guinée to 7 per cent in the urban areas of Guinée Forestière. Nationwide, the prevalence rate nearly doubled in four years: it stood at 1.5 per cent in 1996. Yet while the average prevalence of HIV in the general population is 2.8 per cent, there are disparities between regions, and certain vulnerable groups, in particular, are very highly infected. Thus, the zero prevalence rate among “filles libres” (sex professionals or prostitutes) rose from 32 per cent in 1996 to 42 per cent in 2001; the rate for truck drivers was 7.3 per cent, among the military it was 6.7 per cent, and among minors 4.7 per cent.

The major cities have infection rates two to three times higher than the national average: 5 per cent in Conakry, 7 per cent in the urban areas of Guinée Forestière, and 3.9 per cent in urban Moyenne Guinée.

All age brackets are affected: those most seriously hit are women of 25-29 years, and men of 35-39 years.

The principal targets of the behavioural change campaign are filles libres, truck drivers, military personnel, young adults, opinion leaders, teachers at all levels, political leaders and population groups with a high concentration of refugees.

Given the strong relationship between STDs and AIDS, efforts will be made to improve the handling of STDs in private and public care health facilities.

The struggle against AIDS and other STDs will safeguard the nation's vital forces, without which development is impossible. Hence the creation of the National AIDS Committee, and committees at the regional, prefecture and subprefecture levels, in order to decentralize the campaign against STD/HIV/AIDS.

The objectives of this programme are:

- To reduce the spread of HIV infection.
- To provide care for persons living with HIV.
- To reduce the socioeconomic impact of HIV/AIDS.
- To promote research on HIV/AIDS.

Epidemiological surveillance data from the PNLS are shown in the attached table. The STD/AIDS campaign must therefore mobilize individuals, families and communities to develop effective multisectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation.

It is to this end that NGOs involved in the AIDS campaign are now directing their field activities primarily towards awareness raising, behavioural change, and caring for persons living with HIV. This is particularly the case with ASFEGMASSI, the Fondation Espoir Guinée, SIDALERTE and, since May 2001, the network of NGOs against AIDS (ROSIGUI).

These efforts, which extend across all levels of Guinean society, are bringing about a salutary change in behaviour that will help to reduce the number of AIDS cases in Guinea.

3. Malaria

Malaria is the primary cause of medical consultations (30 to 40 per cent), hospitalization, and hospital deaths, and it has a devastating effect on the health of mothers and pregnant women, and on newborns, by provoking low birth weight and anaemia.

The Ministry of Public Health has therefore instituted a national programme against malaria, consistent with the global strategy, and is integrating it into the National Primary Health Care Programme. The programme pays particular attention to women and children, focusing on:

- Providing treatment for malaria cases.
- Reducing the incidence of malaria among children and pregnant women, through preventive measures.
- Reducing the proportion of under-weight births.
- Encouraging personal protection, i.e. preventing contact between people and vectors, such as through the use of insecticide-treated mosquito netting by women's groups.

The Behavioural Change Campaign will work towards these objectives. A secondary focus will be on measures to control the vector, such as hygiene and environmental cleanup.

4. Nutritional deficiencies

To combat nutritional deficiencies, the government plans to pursue the following strategies.

- Food security, through the promotion of productive activities that will lead to implementation of intersectoral strategies, in particular for poverty reduction.
- Action at the community level to improve nutrition by making use of local foodstuffs, and promoting nutritional monitoring and prevention.
- The distribution of iron tablets to pregnant women, and iron and vitamin A tablets to children, including those in school.
- Encouraging universal consumption of iodized salt.

As part of the campaign against dental diseases, fluoridation of imported and locally produced salt will be required.

5. Sleeping sickness

This disease no longer poses a public health problem in Guinea. Efforts will focus on entomological and epidemiological surveillance and on prevention through the distribution of ivermectin at health centres and through community channels.

6. Chronic and hereditary diseases

Leprosy, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, sickle cell anaemia, cataracts, trachoma, dental caries, mental illnesses.

The following strategies will be pursued for eliminating leprosy by 2006:

- Case detection through cooperation between communities and health facilities.
- Polychemotherapy.
- Epidemiological surveillance.

Other diseases in this group will be studied to describe the epidemiological situation and define appropriate control strategies.

On the institutional front:

Health facilities

The health care pyramid consists of:

- Two national hospitals.
- Four regional hospitals.
- 29 prefecture hospitals.
- Six health centres.
- 376 health centres [sic].
- 402 operational health posts.

The private medical sector currently consists of 18 medical and surgical clinics, eight polyclinics, two company hospitals, 49 doctor's offices, 13 dentist's offices, and 16 midwifery offices. In the pharmaceutical and biomedical sector there are nine pharmaceutical wholesalers, 12 medical promotion agencies, 236 private offices (of which 70 per cent are in Conakry), 40 points of sale distributed among prefectures of the interior, and 10 biomedical analysis laboratories.

Human resources

The Ministry of Health employs a total of 6679 workers including care personnel (82.2 per cent) and support personnel (17.8 per cent).

Women account for 52.1 per cent (3481) of health workers, while men account for 47.9 per cent (3198). Women are particularly predominant in the city of Conakry, where the male/female ratio is 0.4, and in the administrative region of Kindia (0.7). Nationwide, the male/female ratio is 0.92.

The ratio of health workers to population is relatively favourable in Guinea, except for midwives, whose numbers are glaringly inadequate:

- One physician for every 3304 inhabitants.
- One midwife for every 20,535 inhabitants.
- One health assistant for every 5366 inhabitants.
- One health technician for every 2734 inhabitants.

Financial resources

There are four main sources of financing for the health sector: the national government, local governments (commune, prefecture, region), patients (through the cost recovery system), and donors.

The national government is the principal source of the health operations budget. The portion of the national budget devoted to health operations rose from 2.5 per cent in 1999 to 4 per cent in 2001, compared to the 10 per cent recommended by the World Health Organization.

The amount allocated to the health sector in 1999 was 24,245,450 GNF, or 2.5 per cent, while in 2001 it amounted to 27,345,940 GNF. An analysis of the Ministry of Health's operating budget (see Annex) shows that 71.2 per cent goes to payroll costs; 15.29 per cent to nonwage operating costs, and 13.51 per cent to operations and subsidies at health care facilities.

External financing is the main source of capital spending in the health sector. The budget execution rates are clearly higher than for the National Development Budget. External financing frequently accounts for more than 80 per cent of the total capital budget.

External financing also covers a good portion of operating expenses for health projects and programmes. Thus, in the 2000 budget, external financing provided about 22 per cent or nearly 7.8 billion GF out of a total of 35.5 billion GF.

Health and social affairs represent a priority sector among the social sectors in the public investment programme (PIP): their share (8.4 per cent in 1999) is much higher than the share of current spending in the national operating budget.

IV. Constraints

- Poor accessibility of health facilities and services.
- Low use of health services.
- Inadequate health care coverage.
- Poor distribution of personnel.
- Lack of recruitment and redeployment plans, career plans, and plans for improving staff living conditions.
- Facilities and equipment are not adapted to needs.
- The public system for procurement, distribution and management of pharmaceutical products is weak.
- Weak mobilization of internal resources.
- Weak development of internal resources.
- Weak development of mechanisms for sharing health risks.
- Weak community participation.
- Inadequate supply of care services.
- Poor hygiene conditions.
- Lack of coordination and cooperation among partners in the field.
- Family poverty.
- Inadequate efforts to change behaviour among the population.
- Persistence of harmful sociocultural factors (early marriage and pregnancy, female genital mutilation, nutritional taboos).

V. Outlook

The 1997-2001 sectoral health policy sets out the strategies for a number of priority programmes, taking into account their impact on the functioning of health services and on the improvement of people's health.

The programmes described below were selected mainly on the basis of their impact on the functioning of the health services and on improving people's health (see the combined initial, second and third reports):

- Institutional reinforcement.
- Human resource development.
- Provision of medicines and essential vaccines.
- Reproductive health
- Combating nutritional diseases and inefficiencies.

Challenges

The main challenges facing the health system over the next 10 years are:

1. Preserving achievements to date: this will require a renewed effort of commitment and responsibility on the part of health professionals, government, communities, and development partners. This commitment includes financing and decentralization of the system.
2. Equitable access to health care and services.
3. Improving the quality of health care and services.
4. Controlling malaria and emerging diseases, including STD/AIDS.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Public Health will need to build on achievements to date and extend the health care network, while ensuring the quality of services provided, in particular those for women and children, who are the most vulnerable groups.

The hospitals will be reactivated, with particular emphasis on referrals and counter referrals and support for primary health care services, as a means of putting the health system on a sustainable basis. The coordination of external efforts will serve to rationalize the use of resources and to mobilize greater material and financial resources for optimizing service delivery.

Community participation will be a key feature as part of the effort to have communities assert ownership over health development projects and programmes.

Institutional support will be indispensable for successful implementation of the national health policy, so as to reduce maternal and child mortality.

The decentralization policy will target the district (prefecture) to make it operational.

Intersectoral collaboration and development of the private sector will be encouraged as a complement to the cost-sharing strategy (national government, donors, community). The government will need to increase the health share of the budget, so that it can gradually take over financing of activities that are now supported by foreign assistance, and it will have to introduce a mechanism for mobilizing national resources for improving the health of the population, including women and children.

Finally, Guinea submits this report to the Committee in the hope that it will continue its important mission on behalf of human dignity, and Guinea is ready to respond to any questions concerning the contents of this report.
