



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

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

**Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under
article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Acronyms and abbreviations

ARCT	<i>Association Rwandaise des Conseillers en Traumatisme</i>
ASM	<i>Assistante Maternelle de Santé</i>
BDF	Business Development Fund
BDfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CBC	Competence-Based Curriculum
CCBI	Civil Code Book One
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHUB	<i>Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Butare</i>
CHUK	<i>Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kigali</i>
CHWs	Community Health Workers
NCPD	National Council of Persons with Disabilities
NWC	National Women Council
NYC	National Youth Council
Cpw	Classic Public Work
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CWDs	Children with Disability
DGIE	Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DS	Direct Support
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ePW	Expanded Public Work
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GBVMIS	Gender Based Violence Management Information System
GEPM	Gender Economic Policy Management
GMIS	Gender Management Information System
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HCs	Health Centres
HHs	Households
HMP	The Historically Marginalized People
HPs	Health Posts
HSSP	Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan

INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IOSC	<i>Isange</i> One Stop Centres
IZU	<i>Inshuti z'Umuryango</i>
JLROS	Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sector
LAF	Legal Aid Forum
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAJ	<i>Maison d'Accès à la Justice</i>
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MINISANTE	Ministry of Health
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
NAR	Never Again Rwanda
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NFIS	National Inclusion Financial Strategy
NGFC	National Gender and Family Cluster
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNGOs	National Non-Governmental Organizations
NPPA	National Public Prosecution Authority
NSDS	Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support
NST	National Strategy for Transformation
NWC	National Women's Council
PFTH	<i>Profemmes Twese Hamwe</i>
PSF	Private Sector Federation
RBOs	Religious Based Organizations
RDF	Rwanda Defence Force
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RIB	Rwanda Investigation Bureau
RNP	Rwanda National Police
RWAMREC	Rwanda Men's Resource Centre
SACCO	Savings and Credit Co-operatives
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNE	Special Needs Education

SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TTCs	Teacher Training Centres
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UR	University of Rwanda
VAT	Value added taxes
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WGF	Women's Guarantee Fund
WICBT	Women in Informal Small-scale Cross Border Trade

Introduction

1. This is Rwanda's 10th Periodic Report on the Implementation of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The submission of the 10th periodic report coincides with the 40th anniversary of Rwanda becoming a state party to the Convention. The Convention has been key in improving women's rights in Rwanda particularly during the period post 1994 with the Genocide against the Tutsi. For the period between March 2017 and March 2021 Rwanda has continued to implement its commitments under the Convention since the presentation of its combined 7th to 9th periodic reports in 2017.
2. The recommendations of the Committee have contributed in informing policy formulation, adoption or revision of legislation and other strategies that contribute towards improving women rights in the Country. The Government of Rwanda is therefore pleased to present Rwanda's 10th report under article 18 of the Covenant.
3. This 10th periodic report has been prepared in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties.
4. Rwanda last appeared before the Committee in March 2017. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Committee) issued its concluding observations on Rwanda's combined 7th to 9th periodic reports on 9th March 2017. This report directly responds to the issues raised by the Committee in its 2017 concluding observations to the Government of Rwanda (GoR). It also provides information on those areas where there have been significant new developments and where information has not already been provided within reports under this Convention or other treaties to which Rwanda is a party.
5. The Committee is referred to other State's reports submitted to other treaty bodies of the UN human rights system, particularly those submitted post 2017. Further, this report should be read in conjunction with Rwanda's Common Core Document of 2015.

Preparation and structure of the report

6. The preparation of this report was coordinated by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST). Government institutions and non-governmental organizations making the Treaty Body Reporting Task Force have been consulted throughout the process and played a direct role. The report was subjected to stakeholders' validation meeting before it was tabled for approval by the Cabinet meeting. The preparation of the report thus followed a participatory approach through wide stakeholder's consultations.
7. Regarding the structure of the report, it is presented as follows: (i) Introduction (ii) Preparation of the report; (iii) Status of the Convention; Part I: Articles 1–6; Part II: Articles 7–9; Part III: Articles 10–14; Part IV: Article 15–16 and Part V: other matters for consideration. The report ends with information on other general matters raised by the Commission.

Legal status of the Convention

Reply to paragraph 9 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda (CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9)

8. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 in its article 95, international treaties and agreements (including CEDAW) ratified by Rwanda, occupy the third ranking after the Constitution and organic laws.

9. However, the supremacy of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 (the Constitution) and organic laws over international treaties as stipulated in Article 95 of the Constitution has not changed anything in particular regarding the provisions of the Covenant. The rationale of Article 95 is that the organic laws deal with constitutional matters. As it is not practicable for legislators to amend the Constitution every time an amendment or harmonization of a constitutional provision is needed, an organic law will be adopted to address constitutional matters. With the 2015 constitutional dispensation, organic laws are empowered by the Constitution to regulate other key matters in place of the Constitution, and therefore have supremacy over international conventions.

10. Moreover, the Constitution in its Article 170 removes the possibility of having conflicts between international treaties and agreements and national legislation. The provision makes it clear that where an international treaty or agreement contains provisions which are conflicting with the Constitution or an organic law, the power to ratify or approve that treaty or agreement cannot be exercised until the Constitution or the organic law is amended.

Part I (Articles 1–6)

Article 1: Definition of discrimination

11. During the period under consideration, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) continued to implement Article One of the Convention. With regard to the definition of discrimination, the Rwandan Constitution of 2003 revised in 2015 in its Article 16 paragraph 2 lists prohibited and punishable grounds of discrimination including discrimination based on sex.

12. In addition to the Constitution, the Law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general (2018 law on offences and penalties in general) provides for a comprehensive definition of discrimination.¹

Reply to paragraph 11 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

13. Besides the above-mentioned Constitutional provision and the 2018 law on offences and penalties in general, Rwanda has also revised other laws relevant to the creation of a comprehensive anti-discrimination environment for women.

14. Article 9 of Law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 governing labour in Rwanda prohibits discrimination at the workplace. Sex, is among the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

15. Further, the crime of discrimination is punishable under article 163 of the 2018 law on offences and penalties in general.

¹ Law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general, article 163.

16. During the period under consideration, the government continued to revise its laws with a view to eliminating all provisions that would jeopardize the equality between women and men. In this regard, it is worth noting that in 2016 Rwanda adopted the law N° 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family.

17. The 2016 law repealed Article 83 of the 1988 Civil Code Book One (CCBI) which obligated a woman to have as her domicile, the domicile of her husband. The law also repealed Article 119 of the CCBI which allowed only a father to register children. A mother would only be allowed to do so if the father is not available. Further, the 2016 law repealed Article 206 of the same Code which recognized only men as heads of households. Currently, the law recognizes joint management of households by both spouses.

18. Furthermore, Article 345 of the CCBI which gave preference to husbands in the matters of parental authority was repealed. Regarding the administration of the child's property, the 2016 law governing persons and family repealed Article 352 of the CCBI which gave preference to the father to represent and administer the child's property. The 2016 gives power to either of the parents or any other person with parental authority.

19. The law goes further to mention that when the marriage is no longer valid, the administration of child's property is provided by the parent in charge of the child's custody.

20. Lastly, regarding competent persons to apply for a minor's emancipation, the 2016 law repealed Article 427 of the CCBI which gave preference to fathers to apply for emancipation of their minor children. Unlike the CCBI, the 2016 brought new changes. In accordance with Article 114 of this law, both parents have rights to apply for emancipation of their children. In addition to this, adoptive parents, guardians, and children's rights organizations have the right to apply for emancipation of a minor child. The law also allows a minor having attained the age of sixteen (16) years to apply alone for his/her emancipation if he/she has neither parents nor a guardian.

21. The GoR has also enacted the law No 27/2016 of 08/July/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations, and succession. Article 75 gives the equal right to succession to the surviving spouse. This is a positive development since the old law (law No 22/99 of 12/11/1999 supplementing Civil Code Book I and instituting part five regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities, and successions) allowed the surviving female spouse to only administer the family property for children. Further, article 54 of this law emphasizes equal treatment of children in succession. Legitimate children of the *de cujus* succeed in equal portions without any discrimination between male and female children.

22. Rwandan women continue enjoying equal rights with men on property, including land, as provided by the 2016 inheritance law and the 2013 land law. They have also equal rights with men in the management of the household as stipulated by the Law governing persons and family of 2016 which was again revised in February 2020 to remove gender discriminatory provisions, among other objectives. Article 215 was amended, and widows are no longer required to wait for 300 days after divorce before entering into a new marriage. The same Law, Article 18 was amended and removed the automatic custody for children under 6 years that was previously granted to mothers.

23. Coming to article 5 and 19 of the law n°59/2008 of 10/09/2008 on prevention and punishment of gender-based violence which provide punishment for "conjugal rape" (imprisonment of six months to two years), and the punishment is lower than that of rape; the Law is under revision and the punishment shall be harmonized with

article 134 of the Law N° 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general.

24. With regard to capacity building, the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Justice and its partners, organize yearly capacity building sessions for all Abunzi committees across the country. The sessions focus on the laws that are commonly used by Abunzi, including the law on family and persons, land law, succession law and GBV law. These laws have a bearing on the advancement of women's rights in general and the principle of non-discrimination in particular. Further, the plans are underway to train Abunzi Committee members on gender sensitive techniques in mediation.

25. The capacity building sessions will continue to be organized to reach different groups of legal professionals as the needs will arise.

Article 2: Policy measures to be taken

26. During the period under review, Rwanda continued to adopt laws and regulations and implemented policies to eliminate discrimination against women. The information provided above under article 1 supplement the information under this article and relevant concluding observations.

Access to justice

Reply to paragraph 13 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

27. In order to ensure access justice, each district has 3 personnel responsible to facilitate access to justice services through the mechanism called 'Access to Justice Bureau (MAJ)'. MAJ provides legal aid services and disseminate laws to the population. Among the 3 personnel, one is in charge of GBV and child abuse which facilitates easy access to justice for victims.

28. During the fiscal year 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 at least 31,221 women received free legal aid services through MAJ, Ministry of Justice headquarters and Rwanda Bar Association through the legal aid agreement the latter has with the Ministry of Justice. Non state actors also greatly contribute in legal aid services provisions where women are also given due consideration.²

29. In addition, Non-State Legal Aid Providers also provide legal aid services to vulnerable people. The Legal Aid Forum (LAF)³ as of 2018/2020 provided the following services: 1,958 persons were represented by lawyers before the courts both in criminal and civil matters. In Civil matters among the 651 persons represented, women constitute 68 per cent, while in criminal matters, among 1,307 people represented, women constitute 13 per cent. With regard to legal assistance, 100,125 persons were assisted through legal advice received on their legal issues. A big number of the persons assisted were women because in additional to their legal cases, women stand for the rights of their children. The legal assistance is provided both physical and through ICT platform, where people are assisted by call centre lawyers via mobile phones for free and without traveling from their homes.

30. Message on labour law is also accessible through legal helpline (845) for free of charge. As result, 34,153⁴ people listened to messages related to labour law through

² Ministry of Justice Annual reports.

³ The Legal Aid Forum is a membership based network of 38 National and International NGOs, Professional Bodies, Universities Legal Aid Clinics, Faith Based Organizations and Trade Unions that provide or support legal aid services to the indigent Rwandan Population or vulnerable groups.

⁴ Legal Aid Forum Administrative data 2020.

interactive voice response and 8,762 people read the messages through Unstructured Supplementary Service Data.

Reply to paragraph 13 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

31. In collaboration with Pro Femmes Twese Hamwe among other stakeholders, different outreach activities were organized on GBV prevention, response and access to justice where approximately 17,228⁵ people were reached; equipped women with knowledge and information on GBV policy, GBV law, GBV referral mechanisms. Developed and disseminated simplified legal guide booklets on newly amended law such as land law, family law, succession law, child rights' law, and the GBV law.

32. The Legal Aid Forum organized legal education sessions physically through awareness campaigns and also through ICT platforms. Approximately 2,281,905⁶ were educated on the most useful laws in Rwanda including the GBV laws, child's rights law, procedural laws, laws related to enforcement of judgment, succession law, family law, land & expropriation law, etc.

33. In addition, JLROS committees at district and MAJ staff conduct regular community dialogues through which key messages on human rights including women's rights to access to justice are shared to the members of the community. These meetings have also been an important forum to raise awareness of citizens at the grass-root level about the existence of MAJ and its services.

National machinery for the advancement of women

Reply to paragraph 15 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

34. The National Gender Machinery has been put in place and strengthened to speed up the promotion of Gender equality and empowerment of women. They include:

- The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, which is mandated to ensure strategic coordination of policy implementation around gender, family, women's empowerment, and children issues;
- The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) which is specifically in charge of monitoring gender mainstreaming and the fight against GBV in public, private, civil society and religious institutions to achieve gender equality in Rwanda;
- The National Women's Council is mandated to build women's capacity and ensure their participation in the national development through advocacy and social mobilization;
- The Forum of Women Parliamentarians whose core objective is to contribute and strengthen the capacities of Rwandan female Parliamentarians in their role as defenders of gender as well as fulfilling the Parliament's mission in applying their strategic interventions.

35. The country has deployed tremendous efforts to ensure equitable and gender responsive development. Mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women and girls have since been part of strategic priorities in the different development frameworks, whose stand is maintained in the new National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1) to guide the government of Rwanda's commitments for national transformation that leaves no one behind.

⁵ Pro Femmes Twese Hamwe Administrative data 2020.

⁶ Legal Aid Forum Administrative data 2020.

36. The Gender Machinery Institutions have been strengthened throughout the process of planning and budgeting, whereas Gender and family have been taken as cross cutting in all sectors.

37. In addition, through the coordination mechanisms already in place, like National Gender and Family Cluster (NGFC) revived and officially instituted in 2017 as a new coordination mechanism that brings together all stakeholders intervening in promoting Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, Family Promotion, Child Rights Promotion, Protection and Development that serves to improve interventions, avoid duplication but also enhance information and experiences sharing in different corners of the country.

38. More specifically a Gender Equality and Women 's Empowerment sub-cluster was established to strengthen coordination and information sharing among stakeholders who intervened in Gender and Women empowerment. They meet on a quarterly basis to share sector priorities and plan together to address gender related issues in Rwanda.

39. Financially, Gender Machinery Institutions also receive budget from the Government to deliver to their respective mandates and ensure Gender Equality promotion in Rwanda. This is supported by Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) program which has been institutionalized through Organic Law N° 12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State Finances and Property to ensure national budget allocation in addressing gender related issues. This has enabled actors specifically public institutions to use public resources in a manner that benefits both men and women and boys and girls and that addresses persisting issues including GBV and peace and security agenda.

40. In the fiscal years 2017/2020,⁷ gender mainstreaming in the National Budget through the Gender Budget Statement has increased from 14 per cent, 21 per cent and 18 per cent respectively.

41. Furthermore, Gender machinery senior and middle managers have received training on transformational leadership to increase their skills in leadership.

42. Gender Economic Policy Management (GEPM) course is also provided especially for Gender Machinery institutions among others to increase gender analysis and mainstreaming skills in the planning and budgeting process.

43. In addition, every year, National Gender Machinery leadership retreat is organized to share experiences, discuss the strategies, tools, mechanisms as well as innovative interventions that need to be implemented for addressing the issues/ challenges in the gender sector in order to achieve the Gender machinery institutions' mandate.

Non-governmental organizations

Reply to paragraph 17 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

44. The GoR does not interfere in any way with internal functioning of NGOs. The GoR, instead takes the NGOs as important partners, and its relationships with them are based on mutual respect, meaningful collaboration and open dialogue. The laws are in place to regulate the functioning of NGOs.

45. The increase in the number of NNGOs from 454 in 2012 to 1881 in 2020; FBOs 329 in 2013 to 771 in 2020 and INGOs from 180 in 2017 to 197 in 2020, also, in 2020 several International Non-Government Organisations relocated their international or

⁷ MINECOFIN, 2017–2020.

regional headquarters to Rwanda. Such developments affirm that the legal and operating environment of CSOs is significantly conducive.

46. Currently, the review of existing laws governing National and International NGOs is on-going and all stakeholders including CSOs have been brought on Board throughout the process. The Review of the laws envisages reforms in the registration process of NGOs to make it more efficient.

47. The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) is also at the final stage of developing a robust registration and CSOs management system which is expected to make the registration process smoother and more efficient.

Article 3: Equality

48. Rwanda continues to ensure that women are fundamentally equal with men in all spheres of life. Steps continue to be taken to ensure women enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms as their counterpart's men.

49. The principle of equality between men and women is anchored in the Rwandan Constitution. Right from the beginning, the Constitution in the preamble states the commitment of the People of Rwanda to building a State governed by the rule of law, based on the respect for human rights, freedom and on the principle of equality of all Rwandans before the law as well as equality between men and women.

50. Article 2 of the Constitution recognizes equal rights to vote and to be voted for both women and men. Article 16 stipulated that all Rwandans are born and remain equal in rights and freedoms. In light of article 27 all Rwandans have the right to participate in the Government of the country, and they have the right of equal access to the public service in accordance with their competence and abilities. Article 30 recognized equality of every Rwandan to the right to equal pay for equal work. Article 56 obligates political organizations to always reflect the unity of Rwandans as well as equality and complementarity of men and women in the recruitment of members, in establishing their leadership organs, and in their functioning and activities. Article 80 stipulates that the organs responsible for the nomination of Senators take into account national unity and the principle of gender equality.

51. Besides these key constitutional provisions affirming equality between women and men, presented under this section, the report has alluded to other legal provisions from other laws (refer to article 1 above). It is worth noting that efforts continue to be made to ensure that this theoretical equality is also respected in practice.

Article 4: Temporary special measures

Reply to paragraph 19 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

52. In Rwanda, discrimination of any kind is prohibited. Women are represented in Trade unions, in Agriculture, horticulture industry, fisheries and cross border Trade. However, the number of women needs to be increased depending on the gender status of each sector. Concerning Cross Border Trade, Gender Statistics 2019 shows that there has been a significant increase in the number of women in informal cross border export trade in the last four years, from 546,520 in 2014 to 752,679 in 2018.

53. In Agriculture, the same report shows that among households who receive agricultural extension services, female headed households in crop production extension services are slightly higher than the male headed households (90.7 per cent compared to 88.4 per cent respectively).

54. In terms of gender parity system concerning the recruitment of women, the GoR provides equal rights without gender-based discrimination while recruiting suitable

candidates for available public work positions. This is applied to all sectors of economy. Also, during recruitment processes, the priority goes to women in a situation where male and female candidates get the same score.

55. The special measures have been put in place starting from the Constitution of Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 enshrines the principle of Gender equality and women's rights and provide the minimum 30 per cent quota for women in all decision-making positions.

56. In addition, Organic Law N° 001/2019.O.L of 29/07/2019 governing elections was enacted as an additional legislation promoting gender parity in decision making structures of the government. Article 91 of this law relates to the composition of the chamber of deputies and provides for 24 seats reserved for women (this is the equivalent of 30 per cent).

57. Further, Article 106 on composition of the Senate, of the same law provides that the organs responsible for the nomination of Senators take into account national unity and gender. Article 143 provides that at every Sector, one member of Council and one female member of the District Council are elected while Article 144 provides that female members constitute at least 30 per cent of all District Council members elected through indirect and secret ballot. According to Article 148, there must be 30 per cent of women among the members of the Executive Committee members of the District and the City of Kigali. Article 161 provides that at least 30 per cent of Executive Committee members of National Councils must be females.

58. At the reporting time, Rwanda is a globally leading in women participation in decision making positions with 61.3 per cent female members of Parliament and ranked 9th globally (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020) in closing gender gaps. In addition, women are also represented in Judiciary with 51⁸ per cent and 53.3 per cent female as cabinet members.

59. At decentralized level women are well represented as illustrated by the following figures for the key administrative structures: women represent 41 per cent in the Bureau of the Districts Councils; 45.2 per cent as members of Districts Councils; 42.7 per cent in the Sector Councils and 34.5 per cent women members of Cells Councils, Female District Mayors (33.3 per cent).

60. At the reporting time, 122,059⁹ females are members of the National Women Council Committees as structured from decentralized level up to National level in order to reinforce the representation of Women in leadership positions, strengthen the framework for women empowerment, advocacy, social mobilization and capacity building.

61. Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe identified potential women mentors for the grassroots women to join leadership positions. Women mainly in southern provinces were trained on public speaking, leadership skills and representation. 685 women and girls were capacitated on public speaking, leadership and mobilized to join leadership positions or and aspire for higher positions.

Article 5: Sex role and stereotypes

Reply to paragraph 21 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

62. The Government of Rwanda has continued to challenge negative cultural norms and patriarchal attitudes that hamper women and girls' full involvement in

⁸ Judicial Annual Report 2019–2020.

⁹ National Women's Council Administrative data 2017/2018.

development initiatives at different levels by ensuring gender equality awareness in the community.

63. Since 2017, Gender Accountability Days are conducted in different districts to strengthen community dialogues, discussions and engagements with the population at the grassroots level and local leaders, contributed to increase local authorities' sense of responsibility and accountability for improved gender equality and enhanced service delivery to victims of GBV, human trafficking and teenage pregnancy.

64. Every year, since November 2019, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) in collaboration with different stakeholders organize a National Dialogue specifically focusing on the role of men in promoting gender relations and empowerment of women and girls in the community.

65. In addition, through International women's days (International Women's day, Rural women's day, 16 days of activism among other events, awareness raising is conducted in community and different channels are being used like Evening Forum of Families, TV and radio talk shows to ensure that gender equality between men and women, boys and girls in community.

66. More specifically, in July 2018, a new serial drama was introduced on radio ('Umurunga') to challenge negative mind-set on gender equality and prevent GBV in families.

67. Through the Indashyikirwa Program, 640 couples have been trained as agents of change in the framework of empowering women & men towards the prevention of GBV in communities.

68. November–December 2020, a total of 2,122¹⁰ (male: 1,277 and female: 845) youth council members from National to at sector level have been trained and equipped with skills and knowledge on gender equality principles and serve as gender agents of change in their respective forums/fora and their community in general.

69. Following the launch of HeForShe campaign in Rwanda, September 2015, efforts were put in raising awareness and encourage men and boys, women and girls to join and signing up for HeForShe commitments and as of today 05th November, 2020, Rwanda is ranked the second globally on the HeForShe online portal, with 206,623 signups. In November 2020, MIGEPROF developed a Gender Equality friendly manual in Kinyarwanda and English which is at the final stage of approval. It will therefore contribute to address persistent negative cultural norms/mind-set, stereotypes and practices affecting the principles of gender equality and equity. It caters for the role of men and boys in gender equality promotion.

70. In collaboration with different stakeholders in Public and Private Institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Religious Based Organizations and Media among others contribute so much to increase women's participation in political processes. For example, Profemmes Twese Hamwe (PFTH), an umbrella of 53 women associations plays a big role to mobilize women by strengthening the women's capacities through networking, training and advocacy which results to fully participate in election processes. Furthermore, the Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), an NGO, helps to coordinate the growing engagement of men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending violence against women and girls by changing the patriarchal mind set in the community.

¹⁰ MIGEPROF administrative data 2021.

Reply to paragraph 21 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

71. During the period under consideration, efforts were made to ensure that the prerequisites for the media campaign are in place to ensure that the campaigns are successful when they are launched. In this regard for example, a manual has been developed and disseminated enhancing the understanding and view of gender equality and equity among men and women, boys and girls, the manual does not only tackle gender in a human right approach but also in a developmental approach that guarantees national inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic transformation and governance spheres.

72. In 2017/2018 and 2020/2021, chief editors and media practitioners from 50 media houses (Radios, Televisions, Online Media and Newspapers) and 45 media practitioners have been trained on gender equality and learnt how to report gender sensitive news. This training is provided in the framework of the implementation of Gender mainstreaming strategy in the media sector.

73. In 2018–2019, mass community awareness was conducted in more than 1,291 secondary schools and 38 High Learning Institutions in Rwanda and the dialogues held on gender equality and Gender Based Violence prevention.

Reply to paragraph 21 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

74. As far as evidenced based planning, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, communication and dissemination of data are concerned, a user-friendly and robust web-based GBV Management Information System (GBV-MIS) was developed and will facilitate GBV data collection across all Isange One Stop Centres (IOSCs).

75. The newly developed gender management information system (GMIS) launched in March 2019 by the Gender Monitoring Office is expected to play a major role in gathering, storing and disseminating gender related data on a regular basis from all the sectors, for informed decisions.

76. The State of Gender Equality report conducted in 2019 by GMO among others served as baselines to speed up gender agenda in the National Revised Gender Policy approved in February 2021 among others indicators as revealed in the mentioned above report.

77. The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in collaboration with other partners regularly generates gender statistics as part of its 3-year regular household and living conditions census (EICV) which is now in its 5th generation. This EICV has a specific Gender Thematic Reporting on relevant gender statistics. In addition, based on specific demand by development partners, other gender statistics are also collected under a comprehensive gender statistics framework.

78. Gender Sector Profiles. The Gender Monitoring Office Conducts regular sector level gender profiles to assess the performance of each sector in mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment of women. The established baseline guide decision makers for effective gender mainstreaming in policies, programs and projects.

Gender-based violence against women

Reply to paragraphs 23 (a) and (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

79. The Government of Rwanda has been and remains determined to fight gender-based violence in all its forms. Strong legislation was adopted and institutions have been put in place and adequately staffed to eradicate the problem. The efforts to fight GBV have been intensified and coordinated among all stakeholders with the view of bringing durable solutions to GBV related issues.

80. Policies including National Policy against Gender-Based Violence of 2011 and the National Gender Policy of 2010 were revised to strengthen and enhance gender parity in all sectors at all levels but also to engage men/boys in promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

81. Currently, 44 IOSC countrywide are operational and they provide free and comprehensive services to GBV and child abuse victims 24/7 under one roof. These services include medical care, psychosocial support, legal services, relief and reintegration. In a bid to extend the IOSCs services to more decentralized levels closer to all Rwandans.

82. In addition to 44 IOSC, 4 temporary shelters were set up in districts of Kayanza, Gatsibo, Gisagara and Rusizi districts to accommodate some victims who may need length protection from suffering further violence or continuous services and follow-up over a longer period of time.

83. Furthermore, the use of other facilities such as the use of Isange Mobile Van and distribution of Motorcycles to RIB Staff has enabled access to justice at more decentralized and remote areas. The IOSC five-year strategic plan was developed to guide program implementation.

84. IOSC standard operating procedures were initiated to guide and harmonize operations. The IOSC coordination framework was developed and approved to guide the IOSC coordination at both central and decentralized levels.

85. Regarding institutional framework, Rwanda Investigation Bureau was established to effectively respond to modern and emerging crimes including violence against women and girls.

86. The National Forensic Laboratory capacity was strengthened in 2017 to enable immediate and effective collection of evidence needed in courts, including provision of DNA testing services which is key in prosecution and trials of GBV related cases.

87. Further initiatives bringing together men and women to discuss issues of interest, including SGBV, and the protection of women and children's rights are in place at the community level. *Umugoroba w'Imiryango* (Families Evening Forum) in national language, and *Inshuti z'Umuryango* (IZU) or friends of family, are becoming a prominent mechanism at the decentralized levels and raise awareness to prevent violent family conflicts, including those related to SGBV, protect children and report abuses and discuss ways to handle them.

88. Regular campaigns including Radio and TV talk shows are conducted to raise awareness on GBV. In this regard, as an example, from 2017–2018, 94 radio talk shows, 94 TV talk shows and 54 episodes of a serial drama have been conducted by the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion.

89. The Kigali International Conference Declaration and annual general meetings since 2010 aims at reaffirming the role and responsibilities of security organs in ending violence against women and girls on the African continent. Mobilize,

empower women through awareness rising and strengthen synergy within African security organs to end violence against women and girls.

90. As result, a Regional Centre of Excellence on Gender Based Violence and Child abuse was established in 2016 to take stock of Rwanda's experience in fighting gender-based violence, improve research, networking and regional knowledge sharing and capacity building. The Centre continues to provide high quality research and statistics related to SGBV, child abuse and other forms of violence to the public, policy makers, law enforcement personnel and other SGBV practitioners in the region.

Reply to paragraph 23 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

91. Systematic campaigns countrywide and mass mobilization interventions, targeting communities, schools, local administrative leaders, heads of health facilities, community health workers as well as convicts of child defilement in prison centres have been undertaken. The campaigns aimed at enhancing the role of each of the target groups in prevention and response to GBV and Child abuse.

Reply to paragraph 23 (d) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

92. Since the year 2014, Isange One Stop Centres have increased from 9 to 44 IOSC to date across the country offering free and timely comprehensive services support to victims of GBV and those of child abuse including medical treatment, legal aid, counselling, investigations, accommodation among others.

93. The IOSC services are being decentralized where some health centres can offer basic services like early morning pill in cases of sexual violence. Additionally, health centres are being sensitized to conduct a referral where victims can be referred to the nearest IOSC.

Reply to paragraph 23 (e) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

94. From July 2018 to June 2019, total cases sent to prosecution were 9,063 and 2019–2020 were 10,842. While July 2019 to June 2020, 12,029 cases were prosecuted. The numbers of female victims registered were 9,994 and 871 males while suspects were 1813 females and 10216 Males. Sex offenders Registry system of NPPA has been already finalized awaiting its official launch.

95. Apart from free services received in Isange One Stop Centres, the GBV victims also benefit from the Government annual earmarked funds. For example, a total budget of 453,973,774 Rwf was earmarked by the Government to support districts in addressing GBV related issues.

96. In addition, the Government through MIGEPROF has planned the amount of 233,418,758 Frw and 206,418,759 Frw in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 fiscal years respectively to assist and protect victims of human trafficking, GBV, and Child abuse.

97. The Government of Rwanda also secured 14.95 Million USD from the World Bank through the Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Women Health Project, to establish a robust GBV Management Information System. The system is hosted by the Regional Centre of Excellence of GBV and child abuse under the coordination of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF). It is meant to enhance data management especially those collected one stop centres. This will address the challenge of lack of harmonized reporting mechanisms in all IOSCs where for example GBV officers report to the Ministry of Health (MINISANTE)

and former Judicial Police Officers reported to Rwanda National Police, the situation which affected quick information sharing and timely interventions.

Reply to paragraph 23 (f) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

98. In 2018, the GoR adopted the law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general. It replaced the Organic Law N° 01/2012/OL of 02/05/2012 instituting the penal code. Unlike the 2012 penal code, the 2018 law determining offences and penalties in general does not provide for the crime of marital rape. It instead created a crime of sexual violence against a spouse. This crime carries a penalty of imprisonment ranging between three (3) years and five (5) years (Article 137). The penalty applies equally to the offender regardless of sex or gender.

Reply to paragraph 23 (g) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

99. Regarding victims' refusal to testify, Article 53 of the Law N° 027/2019 of 19/09/2019 relating to the criminal procedure allows victims to exercise their right to silence at all stages of proceedings. A witness can only be prosecuted for the failure to appear or refusal to testify when he/she was legally summoned but failed or refused to appear without justifiable reasons. The prosecution of such a witness is not done arbitrarily. This is instead a matter to be considered by a court of law.

Reply to paragraph 23 (h) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

100. In a bid to enhance planning, monitoring and evaluation and data management, a Gender Based Violence Management Information System (GBV MIS) was developed by RIB and its stakeholders. It is aimed at harmonizing GBV and child abuse data collection in order to provide adequate information on the occurrence of these crimes.

101. The newly developed gender management information system (GMIS) launched in March 2019 by GMO is expected to play a major role in gathering, storing and disseminating gender related data on a regular basis from all the sectors, for informed decisions.

Reply to paragraph 23 (i) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

102. Towards the end of 2020, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in collaboration with its stakeholders began the revision of the 2011 National Policy against Gender Based Violence and its strategic plan to align and harmonize its orientations, targets and interventions with the current developments at both national, regional and international levels, including Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) of 2017–2024. As of today, drafts of both the revised policy and its strategic plan are waiting to be approved by the Cabinet.

Gender-based violence against women in conflict situations

Reply to paragraphs 25 (a) and (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

103. While framing the two above recommendations, the Committee makes reference to the UN mapping report noting its concerns about the reports' allegations on severe human rights violations, including cases of gang rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, committed by members of the armed forces, as described in the report of the mapping exercise documenting the most serious violations of human

rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003 that the United Nations published in 2010.

104. Noting the above, the GoR wished to remind the Committee that it has categorically rejected the report and this remains the position.

Article 6: Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

Reply to paragraphs 27 (a), (b) and (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

105. The Government of Rwanda continues to make efforts in fighting and preventing human trafficking. Strong legal, policy and institutional frameworks have been put in place to continue protecting the rights of children and ensuring that perpetrators of sexual violence and child trafficking are brought to justice and held accountable.

106. The Law No 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others was enacted and is in line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. Article 12 of the above stated law, specifically provides special assistance to the child victim.

107. In addition to a strong legal framework, a specific Directorate in charge of human trafficking was established within the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB). This Directorate is in charge of prevention, detection and investigation of human trafficking cases that are domestic and cross border.

108. Rwanda has improved its competency to adjudicate human trafficking cases by not only enacting the human trafficking law, but also through relevant training for members of the judicial system.

109. From 2018 and 2019, about 100 law enforcement officers: investigators, prosecutors, agents of immigration were trained on investigation and prosecution techniques of human trafficking, through the support of US State Department, with the expertise of UNODC and IOM.

110. The Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST) also developed and disseminated a training manual on human trafficking and experts from the Rwanda National Police, Rwanda Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration, and National Public Prosecution Authority including Witness/Victims Support Unit were trained to enhance the investigation and prosecution of Trafficking in Persons cases whilst simultaneously ensuring a victim-centred approach.

111. Institutions responsible to deal with human trafficking issues are fairly capacitated both financially, technically and in terms of staffing. The government works in close collaboration with non-state actors to close any gaps as the needs arise.

112. Anti-human trafficking campaigns were also conducted country wide using radios and TV talk shows. Additionally, during the RIB week conducted in April 2019, there was a specific target on human trafficking aimed at increasing awareness of the act on human tracking and enhancing the visibility of support mechanism available to respond to human trafficking.

113. In 2018, Never Again Rwanda (NAR) in collaboration with (the Ministry of Justice and with the support of International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a combined national research entitled “Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Cause, Effects and Impact”, and the research revealed that Rwanda was used as a transit and not as origin, and that most victims were youth, and women and girls.

114. The findings of the research informed the drafting of the National Action Plan on counter-Human trafficking which was approved in November 2020.

115. The above-mentioned mechanisms coupled with other efforts to implement the laws have resulted in increased reporting, investigations and prosecutions of SGBV and trafficking cases. In the period between 2017 and 2018, three hundred and eleven (311) cases were recorded by Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) indicating that in certain instances a single human trafficking case comprised more than one victim.

116. Within the same period, 85 cases of human trafficking were adjudicated. The conviction rates, based on the cases that went to trial, increased from 12.5 per cent in 2016 to 41.7 per cent in 2017 and to 53.3 per cent in 2018. In 2019/2020, the Prosecution recorded 29 cases of human trafficking among them 16 were lodged to the court. Worth to note that the acquittal rates declined. Increased conviction and cases identification rates could be a result of awareness in the community and of officials better handling human trafficking cases.

117. With regard to the protection and assistance of victims of human trafficking, the 2018 law on prevention of trafficking in person provides that protection and assistance should be provided without any discrimination. Further, the law caters for other important aspects such as the protection of the victim and the victim's accompanying dependents; protection of the identity of the victim during court proceedings; basic assistance services to the victim; special treatment granted to the victim; special assistance to the child victim; permission for a non-Rwandan victim to remain in Rwanda; repatriation of a foreign victim to his/her country; and return of the victim to Rwanda (articles 7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15).

118. Remaining on protection and assistance, it is important to mention that the law delegates the power to the relevant Ministry to provide for other particular means for support to the victims and services made available to them.

Reply to paragraph 29 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

119. The GoR is pleased to report to the Committee that law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general does not criminalize prostitution.

Reply to paragraph 29 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

120. Rwanda has established 44 Isange one Stop Centres in all Hospitals well-staffed and equipped with a full package of GBV cases management (medical, psychological and judiciary). The victims can get support from all other levels of care as well from the CHWs, HPs, HCs and all Hospitals.

Reply to paragraph 29 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

121. Recent legal reforms, particularly the adoption of the law n°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general and the law n° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others marks the shift in Rwanda's approach in addressing prostitution.

122. On one hand, it is worth noting that the 2018 law on offences and penalties decriminalized prostitution and related offences that were provided in the 2012 penal code. On the other hand, the first ever law relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others has provided for the

crime of sexual exploitation as the form of trafficking in persons. Particularly, Article 24 (2°) of this law criminalizes any person who pays for sexual intercourse on his/her own behalf or on behalf of another person. While this provision concerns both men and women, it is expected to dissuade men from demanding for prostitution since in practice men are the ones who are mostly demanding for prostitution. However, article 24 as a whole is expected to strengthen the protection of women and girls, especially those who engage in prostitution from multiple forms of sexual abuses they face in their lives.

123. The legislation above adds to the already existing public education efforts and measures to assist those engaged in prostitution to abandon the practice and at the same time discouraging those who demand for prostitution to also abandon the practice.

Part II (Articles 7–9)

Article 7: Participation in political and public life

Reply to paragraph 31 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

124. Pro-Femmes trained local authorities, civil society and umbrella organization members, and National Women's Council from sector to village level, on Inclusive Planning and Governance, Gender and GBV.

125. Pro-Femmes trained her 30 representatives in the 30 districts, on analysis and alleviation of issues affecting women and girls to inform advocacy at national. Training related to the various laws, in particular on the law governing Persons and the Family, the law governing matrimonial regimes, gifts, land Basics of gender-based violence and gender promotion have been conducted. Pro-Femmes trained grassroots women on GBV issues, women's rights and laws, access to information, service entitlements.

126. Empowering women and ensuring gender equality remains the country's priority. As a result, Rwanda continues to make great progress regarding gender equality in decision making structures.

127. In collaboration with PROFEMMES, campaigns have been organized with different structures at the grass root level (NWC, NYC, NCPD, IZU,) to promote gender equality and combating gender-based violence in the community while focusing on men engage.

128. In collaboration with the various partners (media, church representatives as well as men) PF/TH organized community campaigns to discuss strategies that can reduce the persisting negative social norms and limit women from having access to information and participate in the public meetings.

Reply to paragraph 31 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

129. In 2017/2018 50 Chief Editors from different media houses (Radios, Televisions, Online Media and Newspapers) in the country have been trained to contribute to GBV prevention and response as well as promotion of gender equality in the Media Sector.

130. On 3rd–5th December 2017, Ministry of Gender and Family promotion and UN-Women trained 31 Middle Managers from The National Gender Machinery Institutions. African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive leadership facilitated and delivered skills on transformative leadership for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

131. From 6th–8th December 2017, 34 executive managers from the National Gender Machinery institutions were trained on transformative leadership.

132. In addition, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in collaboration with MINECOFIN, UR and UNWOMEN, have conducted training on Gender Economic Policy Management (GEPM) Course from 05-17/03/2018 for all Directors of Planning in Districts and Ministries, Planning Officers and M&E officers, CSOs and RBOs representatives. The same training was conducted to all directors of Agriculture in districts from 29th November to 04th December 2020 to ensure women participation in all segments of agriculture value chains.

133. In March 2018, the Private Sector Federation in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion conducted a workshop on gender equality and it was attended by 356 (120 Women and 236 Men) top PSF leaders who represented other PSF members.

134. Rwanda has the highest representation of women in Parliament (Chamber of Deputies) with 61.3 per cent of the seats, Judiciary (49.7 per cent), ministerial positions (53.3 per cent). At decentralized level women are fairly represented as illustrated by the following figures for the key administrative structures: women represent 55.9 per cent in the Bureau of the Districts and City of Kigali Councils; 33.3 per cent District Mayors; 42.7 per cent in the Sector Councils and 34.5 per cent women members of Cells Councils.

135. About 122,059¹¹ females are members of the National Women Council Committees as structured from decentralized level up to National level in order to reinforce the representation of Women in leadership positions, strengthen the framework for women empowerment, advocacy, social mobilization and capacity-building.

136. The Global Gender Gap Report 2020 ranked Rwanda the 9th country worldwide and the first in Africa in terms of closing gender gaps.

Article 8: Participation at international level

137. In light of the provisions of Article 8 of the Convention, Rwandan women have the right to represent their country internationally and work with international organizations on an equal basis with men.

Article 9: Nationality

138. Matters relating to acquisition, changing, retaining nationality and equal rights with respect to the nationality of children are still regulated by the law no. 30/2008 of 25/07/2008 relating to Rwandan nationality and this was covered in the previous report and equally enjoyed by women as their counterparts men. The Committee is referred to the combined seventh to ninth periodic report of Rwanda (paragraph 52).

Part III (Articles 10–14)

Article 10: Equal rights in education

Reply to paragraph 33 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

139. The GoR takes very seriously the equality between girls and boys in all aspects of life. No discriminatory stereotype practice between children of both genders can be tolerated including that leading to girls performing more housework than boys.

¹¹ National Women's Council Administrative data 2017/2018.

The GoR has been and will continue to raise awareness of the public about the issue with the view to completely eradicate it.

Reply to paragraph 33 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

140. With a view to ensuring the girls in school do not miss or dropout school because of menstruation, the GoR continues to implement different initiatives. First, the government allocates a budget, at district level, to procure sanitary pads and distributes them in schools. The Government transferred 372,786,262 Frw in 2017/2018, 249,634,804 in 2018/2019 and 372,786,262 in 2019/2020 to equip girl's rooms with hygiene facilities.¹²

141. Second, a girls' room has been established in all secondary public and Government aided day schools to create a safe and comfortable place for girls when they are experiencing menstruation related issues at school. In 2019, the Ministry of Education developed and disseminated the guidelines on the girl's room.

142. Lastly, in 2019 the Government of Rwanda has exempted the Value added taxes (VAT) on sanitary pads to increase the affordability and accessibility to women and girls in the community.

Reply to paragraph 33 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

143. The pregnant girls are not subjected to any punishment including suspension from schools. When a girl student becomes pregnant, she is encouraged to continue studying until she is able to attend school and resume their studies after delivery. In addition, the current girls' education policy (under review) for the establishment of re-entry mechanisms for girls and boys who dropped out of school, including girls with unwanted pregnancies.

144. In 2016, the ECD policy was developed to strengthen Early Childhood Centres (ECDs) at the local level as childcare facilities. Parents are also encouraged to assist teen mothers in childcare so that they may return to school. Sexual and reproductive health issues have been included in the competence-based curriculum (CBC) in primary and secondary levels. Additionally, to the skills acquired through CBC, Sexual and reproductive health issues are discussed in school health clubs established in schools.

145. Sessions on psycho-trauma counselling services are organized for teen mothers by professional counsellors from ARCT-Ruhuka to assist them cope with the effects of violence, stigma and early Motherhood. In addition, counselling sessions were conducted with their families to ensure teen mothers reintegration and support.

Reply to paragraph 33 (d) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

146. Rwanda's legal, policy and administrative frameworks focus on eradicating all forms of violence against the girl child among other issues. The law determining offenses and penalties criminalizes human trafficking and sale of children. Similarly, the law protecting the rights of the child provides that "a child with physical or mental disability shall be entitled to a special protection by the government and enjoy all rights recognized to the child without any discrimination related to their state or any other situation which would result from it". This constitutes a strong basis for GBV prevention and response.

¹² (MINECOFIN: Earmarked transfers guidelines to decentralised entities with legal personality).

147. The government of Rwanda has also continued to implement interventions protecting the girl child against any form of violence. These include: the scale-up of Isange One Stop Centres services to include medical care, psychosocial support, legal services, as well as relief and reintegration. A free hot-line on which to report incidents of child abuse is also in place. In addition, different awareness campaigns have been conducted in and out of schools to raise awareness among children on their rights, strategies to prevent GBV, and reporting channels.

148. A training manual on gender responsive pedagogy has been developed in 2018. Teachers were trained on Gender Responsive Pedagogy in secondary schools. Sexual violence and school harassment cases are reported as other cases to the competent authorities following existing legal structures for enforcement such as Police, Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) and National Public Prosecution (NPPA).

149. Other community-based initiatives such as Umugoroba w'Imiryango (Families' Evening Forum) currently revised to accommodate all members of family including youth and Inshuti z'Umuryango (Friends of Family) are being used as mechanisms to provide advisory services to families regarding prevention of family conflicts and serve as GBV reporting channels.

Reply to paragraph 33 (e) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

150. Every year, the Government of Rwanda allocates a budget to the education sector. The allocated budget includes school's construction to ensure that there are enough classrooms to cater for all children of school going age, reduce overcrowding and long distance. Constructed schools are meeting disability standards, Establishment of Special Needs Education (SNE) school at UR/college of Education, Including SNE curriculum in TTCs, Train in service teachers in SNE, buying special equipment for Children with disabilities (CWDs) and Supporting special schools. Children with special educational needs and disabilities either attend special schools or mainstream/regular schools. In Rwanda there are 10 special schools (both primary & secondary), of which 9 are government aided and all learners are boarders unless rare cases.

Table 1
Sex disaggregated data of enrolment in Primary, secondary and tertiary from 2015–2020¹³

Level	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary	1 213 966	1 236 739	1 271 170	1 275 093	1 272 842	1 267 532	1 259 344	1 244 361	1 268 996	1 243 469
Secondary	256 634	287 302	260 679	293 060	276 437	316 064	308 367	349 918	341 691	390 413
Tertiary	48 864	37 447	52 297	38 506	49 908	41 285	51 119	38 041	49 090	37 116
Total	1 519 464	1 561 488	1 584 146	1 606 659	1 599 187	1 624 881	1 618 830	1 632 320	1 659 777	1 670 998

151. A capitation grant is also provided to all public and governments aided schools to substitute school fees for all students in Primary and secondary schools. Special schools are given support to cater for children with disabilities and other learning difficulties. For those from poor families, there is a social protection scheme which is established at a decentralized level under the Ministry of local Governance whereby eligible children are given support and their parents or guardians are given job or financial support considering their Ubudehe Category.

¹³ Education statistical yearbook (2015–2019).

152. The government of Rwanda has developed the Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion (2019–2024) in response to its commitments towards refugees' inclusion during the Leaders' Summit for Refugees held in New York, on 20th September 2016. Thus; refugee students are enrolled in national schools and given same opportunities as national students.

Table 2

Data of School rooms established from 2015–2020 and teachers in primary and secondary schools

<i>Level/Number of classrooms</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Nursery	4 177	4 427	5 207	5 509
Primary	30 477	31 437	31 927	32 548
Secondary	16 408	16 797	17 081	17 972
	51 062	52 661	54 215	56 029

153. Every year, the Government constructs additional classrooms. Classrooms increased from 51,062 in 2015 to 56,029 in 2019. Increases of classrooms go together with increments of teachers including female teachers. The number of female teachers in primary rose from 21,698 in 2015 to 24,344 in 2019 while female teachers in secondary increased from 5818 in 2015 to 6,682 in 2019.

154. Regarding refugee children, the Government of Rwanda is committed to integrate refugee children into the national education system. The integration of refugees means attending along with Rwandan students, following the same national curriculum and taught by the same teachers.

Table 3

Enrolment of refugees in schools from 2018–2019

<i>Level</i>	<i>2018</i>		<i>2019</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>male</i>
Nursery	984 (49.6%)	998 (50.4%)	871 (50.3%)	859 (49.7%)
Primary	13 236 (48.8%)	13 883 (51.2%)	13 077 (49.3%)	13 437 (50.7%)
Secondary General education	4 529 (45.2%)	5 486 (54.8%)	5 473(47.4%)	6 078(53.6%)
TVET	202 (43.6%)	261 (56.4%)	151 (42.4%)	205 (57.6%)

Source: *Education statistical yearbook 2019*.

155. Learners with disability both Male and Female are enrolled in education system, and their representatives is slightly different (see table below).

Table 4
Learners with disabilities 2016–2019

Level	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Nursery	620 (40.1)	925 (59.9%)	533 (39.1%)	829 (60.9%)	510 (40.3%)	743 (59.3%)	854 (44.2%)	1 077 (55.8%)
Primary	8 479 (44.4%)	10 639 (55.6%)	11 663 (47%)	13 317 (53%)	7 464 (43.6%)	9 669 (56.4%)	7 068 (44.1%)	8 953 (55.9%)
Secondary education	2 669 (47.8%)	2 918 (52%)	2 304 (50.6%)	2 253 (49%)	2 240 (47.8%)	2 445 (52%)	2 215 (47.8%)	2 418 (52.2%)

Article 11: Employment

Reply to paragraph 35 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

156. Current legal and policy frameworks promote an environment whereby family and domestic responsibilities are equally shared between women and men. As has been already stated above in the report, the law N° 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family recognizes joint management of the household by both spouses. These developments reversed the situation under the previous law where only men were recognized heads of households. The legal reforms have been going hand in hand with public education on the importance of shared responsibilities between spouses in matters of household's management.

157. Regarding the recommendation to introduce compulsory paternity or shared parental leave following childbirth, the laws provide for types of leaves that allow a man to take care of his family following the delivery of his wife. The law N° 017/2020 of 07/10/2020 establishing the general statute governing public servants in its article 21 provides that an immediate supervisor grants incidental leave to a public servant in case of fortunate or unfortunate event that occurs in his or her family. In this regard, a public servant has the right to four (4) working days in case of delivery of his wife. The law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda in article 51 provides for circumstantial leave which is essentially the same as the incidental leave under the general statute governing public servants.

Reply to paragraph 5 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

158. Workplace learning policy was introduced in 2015 to equip Rwandans with practical skills needed on the labour market through a workplace learning support program.

159. About the regulatory framework for the informal sector, the Law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 Regulating Labour in Rwanda in its article 2, the point 6 highlights social benefits like occupational health and safety, right to salary, right to leave including maternity leave, social security among others as rights to an informal sector employee including women, and the labour inspectors are responsible for monitoring compliance with this Law as stated in its article 113.

160. Law No. 86/2013 of 11/09/2013 establishing the general statutes for public service and its application orders, provide for different measures to promote women's employment and to facilitate them at the workplace.

161. Fully paid maternity leave for the period of three months and the possibility of additional leave of one month in case of birth related complication, reference in the article 22 and 23 of the aforementioned general statute for public service and the

article 11 and 12 of the Law N°003/2016 of 30/03/2016 establishing and governing maternity leave benefits scheme.

162. The Presidential Order N°144/01 of 13/04/2017 Determining Modalities for Recruitment, Appointment and Nomination of Public Servants, its article 19 and 33 highlight the preference for woman in case of recruitment whereby two candidates have same score.

163. In Public Service, different measures have been taken to eliminate occupational segregation (between men and women). First, in the entry in Public Service, all Rwandans have equal right to join public service upon competition or nomination by the competent authority, which led to a ratio of 46 per cent women against 54 per cent.

164. Through the National Employment Program, women have been mobilized and facilitated to access the labour market by introducing specific interventions targeting women and encouraging them to work in non-traditional fields. In addition, a dual training was introduced, where women 737 out 1324 in total were trained in different job-rich trades including food processing, hairdressing, tailoring among others.

165. In close collaboration with Rwanda Polytechnic, 6,861 women were supported to acquire employability skills through Massive response training and 3,010 women in rapid response training where they have been linked with potential companies that trained them at the workplace and later employed them.

Reply to paragraph 35 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

166. With the view of achieving universal social security coverage, a ‘Long Term Saving Scheme (EJOHEZA)’ was established by the Government of Rwanda under the law No 29/2017 of 29th June 2017. The scheme was officially launched on 14th December 2018. It is a defined contribution scheme, established on a voluntary basis by opening a savings account with a scheme administrator, the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), and covers both salaried and non-salaried people.

167. Article 4 of the mentioned law provides for membership right to the long-term savings scheme. It stipulates that ‘any Rwandan and any other foreigners residing in Rwanda has the right to subscribe as a member to the long-term savings scheme.

168. Article 6 of the same law lists beneficiaries of the scheme, they include:

- Self-employed individuals working in the informal sector who wish to save for the long-term;
- A worker operating in the informal sector wishing to make long-term savings;
- A salaried person wishing to make long-term savings regardless of his/her status as a member of any other social security scheme;
- A person whose active membership has ceased in a social security scheme but still receiving an amount of money under the laws regulating that scheme, and transfers such money to a long-term savings account;
- A child below the age of sixteen (16) years who is a beneficiary of a long-term savings scheme account opened by his/her parent or guardian and;
- Any other person not falling into the categories referred to in the preceding items of article 6.

169. With regard to the amount of the member’s contribution, the law states that the member of the long-term savings scheme pays a contribution depending on his/her capacity (article 7). The law further provides under article 26 that the Government

may contribute to the promotion of the long-term savings scheme with a view to encourage the community to join the scheme.

170. EJOHEZA scheme comes to complement existing government initiatives namely Community Based Health Insurance (Mutuelle de Santé) which currently covers up to 80 per cent of Rwandans and Pension scheme which covers 8 per cent of the working population. The GoR through the Ministry of Local Governments also provides monthly direct support to older people (aged above 65). The scheme started in 2008 and for the fiscal year 2018/2019 it covered 85,542 families.

171. The law No 66/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda further caters for equal protection of informal sector workers on matters relating to social security protection, trade union organization and those relating to health and safety at the workplace.

Reply to paragraph 35 (d) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

172. Markets for women vendors were put in place by Local Government to facilitate them to run their small businesses in better and recognized working places. To incentivize these women, when they start operating in these markets, they are given a one-year grace period of taxes exemption.

173. Rwanda does not tolerate any form of violence and harassment against women in general and women street vendors in particular. These acts constitute criminal acts and are punishable by the law.

Reply to paragraph 35 (e) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

174. There has been progressive legal and policy improvement that represent a decisive step towards gender equality and creating a more conducive environment for preventing and responding to GBV. Specifically, GBV has been criminalized and is therefore punishable under Rwandan laws. Law no 69/2019 of 08/11/2019 amending the law no 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offenses and penalties in general prescribes heavy punishment for child defilement, marital rape, sexual violence and harassment of a spouse. Also, law N° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others, protects women and girls against human trafficking and article 24 specifically prohibits sexual exploitation.

175. The new law no 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda prohibits sexual harassment at the work place under article 8. The same law in its article 9 states that an employer is prohibited from discriminating employees on basis of ethnic origin, family or ancestry, clan, skin colour or race, sex, region, economic categories, religion or faith, opinion, fortune, cultural difference, language, physical or mental disability or any other form of discrimination. Every employer must pay employees equal salary for work of equal value without discrimination of any kind.

176. Specialized units have been established in the Anti-Gender Based Violence Division and two Directorates namely: Directorate of Family and Child Protection and Directorate of Isange One Stop Centre in Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB). These are in addition to the gender desks operational at Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) and National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) whose role is to address GBV issues in their respective mandates and contribute to GBV prevention and response.

177. The existence of free hot-lines in RNP, RDF, NPPA, Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) and GMO is also one of the measures put in place to quickly and appropriately deal with cases of GBV.

Female domestic workers

Reply to paragraph 37 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

178. As a signatory to the International Labour Convention n° 138 of June 26, 1973 concerning the Minimum Age for admission to Employment; and the International Labour Convention n° 182 of June 17, 1999 concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Government of Rwanda is committed to the elimination of child labour, particularly in its worst forms.

179. The established National Policy on Elimination of Child Labour and its implementation plan has considerably been a priority in terms of combatting child labour in a sustainable manner.

180. Therefore, all Labour Inspectors were trained on the Policy on Elimination of Child Labour and its implementation plan hence they are enforcers of laws prohibiting Child labour.

181. In order to build the capacity of actors in local level, at District and Sector level, all members of the steering committees on the prevention and elimination of child labour have been trained on policy and laws prohibiting all forms of child labour.

182. Furthermore, in 2018/2019, the steering committees were extended and established from Sectors to Village level. The Ministry of Public service and Labour has set Ministerial guidelines establishing those committees as well as their role and responsibilities towards the prevention and elimination of child labour.

183. Members of those Steering committees on child labour elimination established in local level were trained on law No 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda; and on the other provisions related to the prohibition of child labour.

184. By enforcing laws prohibiting child labour, since 2017, there have been administrative sanctions put place in the new Ministerial Instructions No 01/2017 of 17/11/17 on the prevention and fight against child labour which was applied up to end of August 2018.

185. During the period of between November 2015 and 2018 around 494 employers including individual persons were sanctioned for engaging children in child labour while 10,532 children were removed from child labour and reintegrated in their families and in schools.

186. From August 2018 to September 2020, around 886 inspections on child labour preventions were conducted countrywide and 38 cases were reported to RIB for further investigations.

187. Furthermore, in line with promoting the rights of the child in general and combatting child labour in particular, the GoR through the Ministry Public Service and Labour in close partnership with Districts organised eventual awareness campaigns towards the prevention and elimination of Child Labour. From 2017 to September 2020 there have been 793 awareness campaigns (TV/radio talks, community sensitisation outreach sessions, etc) were organized to sensitize the community on the prevention and fighting child labour.

188. In addition, since 2017, there have been joint Governance and Family awareness campaigns which involved all social clusters Ministries and their social Partners toward the promotion and protection of child rights and their welfare as well as family cohesion promotions. Those campaigns are organised every year as recommended by Government decisions.

189. Rwanda has made efforts to lift its people from extreme poverty with special attention to women who constitute the majority of the population. Families living in extreme poverty and poverty include households headed by women were supported adequately with social protection and livelihood programs. These were mainly achieved through the social protection programs particularly the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP), Integrated Local Development Program to accelerate poverty eradication and rural growth.

190. Under VUP program during the fiscal year 2019/20,¹⁴ 119,025 HHs that include 85,560 headed by females and 33,465 HHs headed by males benefited from VUP-Direct Support (DS) while in the FY 2018–2019 Direct support in form of unconditional cash transfer was provided to 108,496 HHs including 32,944 HHs and 75,552 HHs respectively headed by males and females.

191. Rwanda has made efforts to lift its people from extreme poverty with special attention to women who are the majority of the population. Families living in poverty including HHs headed by women were assisted with adequate social protection schemes and income generating opportunities. These were mainly achieved through the Vision Umurenge Program, an Integrated Local Development Program to Accelerate Poverty Eradication, Rural Growth, and Social Protection.

192. Under this program, 119,025 HHs that include 85,560 headed by females and 33,465 HHs headed by males benefited from DS in Financial year 2019–2020 while in the FY 2018–2019 Direct support in form of unconditional cash transfer was provided to 108,496 HHs including 32,944 HHs and 75,552 HHs respectively headed by males and females.

193. In FY 2017–2018, under the VUP Direct Support Component, the number of households benefiting from DS was 94,912 HHs including 29,531 HHs and 65,381 HHs respectively headed by males and females.

194. Furthermore, through Public Works, a scheme within the VUP safety net component providing short term, temporary employment on community infrastructure and agriculture projects with the intention to provide employment opportunities to extremely power households with labour capacity, and also women under extreme poverty were largely employed.

195. During the fiscal year 2019/20, 171,693 HHs that include 81,850 female-headed HHs and 89,843 male-headed HHs were employed in cPW. In the same fiscal year, while expanded public works (Epw) employed 42,052 eligible households that include 31,402 HHs headed by females & 10,650 HHs headed by males.

196. In addition, during the FY 2018–2019, 142,851 eligible HHs headed by 70,652 females and 72,199 Males were employed in classic public works while 29,768 HHs headed by 20,214 females & 9,554 males were employed in expanded public works. In the same fiscal year 134,993 HHs were employed cPW including 68,504 HHs are females headed HHs and 66,489 HHs are male headed HHs.

197. The government of Rwanda has assisted women under poverty by providing them with low interest investment loans that require no collateral security. Individual women, in groups and cooperatives accessed financial services to run small income generating projects.

198. In FY 2019–2020, the total of 84,964 beneficiaries including 44,704 females and 40,260 male benefited from the FS programs. The total of 39,791 beneficiaries (20,935 females and 18,856 males) benefited from VUP FS loans in FY 2017/2018.

¹⁴ MINALOC administrative data 2020.

199. In the framework of increasing the uptake of the financial services component of VUP as a key tool for social protection, the GoR reduced the interest rate charged to beneficiaries from 11 per cent to 2 per cent effective from September 2019 and repealed collateral security as loan qualification requirement.

200. In 2018, the Government of Rwanda launched the Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support (NSDS) program that supported pregnant women under poverty and their children from conception until 24 months. This program provides cash transfers to vulnerable mothers and babies in order to incentivize the use of health and nutrition services, strengthening their knowledge on better parenting child care and to have access to basic nutritious food with the cash transfers provided.

201. In FY 2019–2020, Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support (NSDS) transfers were made to poor women beneficiaries and the amount of 2,019,692,100Rwf was transferred to 73,139 eligible mothers and babies NSDS.

Reply to paragraph 37 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

202. The established National Policy on Elimination of Child labour and its implementation plan has considerably been a priority in terms of combatting child labour in a sustainable manner.

203. Therefore, all Labour Inspectors were trained on the Policy on Elimination and its five-year implementation plan hence they are enforcers of laws prohibiting Child labour.

204. In order to build the capacity of actors in local level, At District and Sector level, all members of the steering committees on the prevention and elimination of child labour were trained on policy and laws prohibiting all forms of child labour.

205. Furthermore, in 2018/2019, the steering committees were extended and established from Sectors to Village level. The Ministry of Public service and Labour had set Ministerial guidelines establishing those committees as well as their role and responsibilities towards the prevention and elimination of child labour.

206. Members of those Steering committees on child labour elimination established in local level were trained on law No66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda; and on the other provisions related to the prohibition of child labour.

207. By enforcing laws prohibiting child labour, since 2017, in the meantime, there was administrative sanctions in put place in the new Ministerial Instructions No 01/2017 of 17/11/17 on the prevention and fight against child labour which was applied up to end of August 2018.

208. During the period of November 2015–2018 around 494 employers including individual persons were sanctioned due to engage children in child labour while 10,532 children were removed from child labour and reintegrated in their families and in schools respectively. From August 2018–Sept 2020, around 886 inspections on child labour preventions were conducted countrywide and 38 cases were reported to RIB in terms of laws enforcement.

209. Furthermore, in line with promoting the rights of the child in general and combatting child labour in particular, the GoR through the Ministry of Public Service and Labour in close partnership with Districts organised eventual awareness campaigns towards the prevention and elimination of Child Labour. For instance, since 2017 to September 2020; there have been 793 awareness campaigns components (TV/radio talks, community sensitisation outreach sessions, etc) were organized to sensitize the community on the prevention and fighting child labour.

210. In addition, since 2017, there have been joint Governance and Family awareness campaigns which involve all social clusters Ministries and their social Partners toward the promotion and protection of child rights and their welfare as well as family cohesion promotions. Those campaigns are organised every year as recommended by Government decisions.

Reply to paragraph 37 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

211. Rwanda has a legal aid policy according to which every Rwandan who fulfils the prescribed conditions has access to free legal services. The government has deployed 3 lawyers at each district across the country to ensure access to justice at local level. These lawyers provide legal services free of charge for those meeting the requirements of the scheme.

Article 12: Healthcare and family planning

Reply to paragraph 39 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

212. In August 2018, Rwanda adopted the law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general. The law replaced the 2012 penal code and is progressive in matters of access to safe legal abortion, and has brought positive changes whereby child pregnancy was added on the grounds for accessing legal abortion.

213. Secondly, with a view to implementing the relevant provisions of the above stated law, the Ministry of Health adopted in April 2019, the Ministerial order n°002/MoH/2019 of 08/04/2019 determining conditions to be satisfied for a medical doctor to perform an abortion. This Ministerial Order is comprehensive, thus regarded as a key milestone in the GoR's commitment to ensure that women have access to good-quality post-abortion care services.

Reply to paragraph 35 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

214. The new dual clinical practice policy enabling medical practitioners to exchange expertise to enable community/citizens access to health services. The health sector in Rwanda has implemented interventions that improved health standards in general and that of women in particular. Improvement in women's health is seen not only as a social condition but also a human rights principle prescribed in the Constitution which guarantees good health and support to the population for its realization.

215. Laws, policies, institutions and strategies to improve and expand health services particularly to women and girls have continued to be put in place. These include: the national health sector policy (2015), the Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP IV) (2018–2024), Non-Communicable Disease Policy (2015), and the law N° 21/2016 of 20/05/2016 relating to Human Reproductive Health. Consequently, the status of sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and community access to health insurance as well as HIV related services has substantially improved.

216. Currently, there are over 58,000 CHWs in Rwanda (about 4 CHWs per village). One CHW, named Assistante Maternelle de Santé (ASM), is in charge of maternal and new-born health, one in charge of health promotion whereas the other two CHWs, known as Binôme (a pair of one male and one female), are multi-disciplinary health agents. The package of services offered by CHWs includes health promotion, prevention and curative services.

217. The health system is built starting from the upper to the bottom of the health sector with Referral Hospitals, Provincial Hospitals, District Hospitals, Health Centres, and Health Posts across the country. The massive construction of Health Facilities has contributed to the reduction of the average time used by a Rwandan citizen to reach a health facility. Community Health Workers (CHWs) play an important role in delivering Primary Health Care services as they provide effective and inexpensive interventions at the community level.

218. These Health care services initiatives include the community/based health insurance scheme that contribute to women's access to affordable and quality health services, increased health infrastructure and medical practitioners, use of drone technologies for the emergency health supplies, community health workers, and use of rapid SMS to fast track and address high rate of maternal and child mortality.

219. In terms of maternal mortality ratio (MMR) declined from 210 deaths per 100,000 live in 2014/15 to 203 2019/2020.¹⁵ The percentage of pregnant women delivering in health facilities increased from 91 per cent to 93 per cent while delivery assistance by skilled providers improved from 91 per cent to 94 per cent during the same period.¹⁶ In addition, the percentage of women using contraceptive methods of family planning has increased from 53 per cent to 64 per cent during the same period.¹⁷

Reply to paragraph 39 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

220. In April 2019, His Excellency, President Paul Kagame exercising his prerogative of mercy pardoned 367 women and girls convicted and imprisoned for the offences of abortion, complicity in abortion and infanticide. In October 2019, 52 more women were pardoned. This brought a total of women pardoned and released from jail to 481.

Reply to paragraph 39 (d) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

221. The improvements in reproductive health are related to increased knowledge about fertility control acquired from various trainings on health issues as well as, on gender responsiveness training by health service providers and by education institutions from primary to university levels. This level of knowledge is nearly universal among women in Rwanda and remains an important determinant of access to and use of contraception methods.

222. Efforts were made to avail free modern FP methods from the CHWs to all HFs. For Faith based HFs, the Government established Health Posts across the country to make sure FP services are available and accessible. Sexual reproductive health is also integrated into educational curriculum from pre-primary to secondary schools.

223. In regard to sexual and reproductive health rights, law N° 21/2016 of 20/05/2016 relating to Human Reproductive Health provides that all persons have equal rights in relation to human reproductive health and that no person shall be denied such rights based on any form of discrimination. Furthermore, the law No 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offenses and penalties in general removed barriers hindering women and girls to legal and safe abortion. Similarly, there is a ministerial order to operationalize the provisions of penal law on abortion. Other policy supportive actions include the integration of Sexual Reproductive Health in the national education curriculum and

¹⁵ Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2019/2020.

¹⁶ Idem.

¹⁷ Idem.

development of a manual on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) to guide different actors in mobilizing youth including girls through use of youth friendly mobilization strategies such as drama, sports, street theatres, youth clubs and community campaigns.

224. As an approach, clubs have been established in some schools to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive knowledge among students. This helps students to think critically about informed choices and protect themselves. Comprehensive sexuality education is vital in combating cases of unwanted pregnancies and the spread of STDs because it equips young people with knowledge and competences that enable them to make safe and responsible choices.

Reply to paragraph 39 (e) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

225. Rwanda is one of the countries in Africa that have made strides in the fight against cervical cancer. The country achieved over 97 per cent coverage of vaccination against cervical cancer, and in 2019, it signed a deal aimed at rolling out new technologies to improve accessibility to screening and diagnosis of the disease in various parts of the country.

226. We are committed to keeping this coverage high as this is a strong pillar to achieve the elimination of cervical cancer. The government is currently mobilizing \$13 million (approximately Rwf12bn) to conduct screening sessions for women aged between 30 and 49 for cervical cancer during the next five years. These funds will not only be used to raise community awareness but also to screen 70 per cent of the 1.4 million women in all health facilities.

227. We are confident that with these new developments in improving cancer treatment capacity together with our strong health insurance schemes, we will be able to provide quality treatment to 90 per cent of women with invasive cervical cancer even before 2030.

228. With regards to mental health, Rwanda has taken steps to make the provision of mental health services a priority. A year after the genocide, the Rwandan government developed a mental health policy, making it among the first countries in sub-Saharan Africa to have one. And in 2018, Rwanda's updated strategic plan for its health sector set ambitious new targets for expanding mental health care services within the community, including through decentralization and integration into primary health care.

229. At all levels of the health systems, we have integrated mental health care, from community level to district level. The Ministry of Health through Rwanda Biomedical Centre has trained more than 15,000 community health workers who are attached to health centres. These health workers are not professionals but they are people selected from different communities with basic formal education who are trained on how to identify and deal with symptoms of mental illness in their areas. In addition, MoH has 7 psychiatrists in the country that operate in different referral hospitals like Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Butare (CHUB), Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kigali (CHUK), Ruhengeri and Ndera Hospital. However, the psychiatrists are rotated among the hospitals.

230. Furthermore, RBC currently employs 100 psychologists and 100 psychiatric nurses. Despite not having specialized mental health hospitals at district level, various district hospitals have mental divisions integrated in their health services.

231. The decentralization of mental health care improved the geographic accessibility and reduced transfers to mental health reference structures.

Article 13: Economic and social benefits**Economic empowerment of women**

Reply to paragraph 41 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

232. The Law N° 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing Matrimonial Regimes, donations and successions provides equal rights between men and women, boys and girls, in property ownership and inheritance and Law No. 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land in Rwanda and also the implementation of the National Inclusion Financial Strategy (NFIS) 2020–2024 to ensure financial inclusiveness have contributed tremendously to Women’s access to economic and productive resources through its specific pillar that strengthens women’s access to finance with specific focus to rural women.

233. The National Strategy for Transformation (2017–2024) has a key strategic intervention of under priority 5 to Bring financial services closer to people by increasing the percentage of adult Rwandans financially included at 100 per cent by 2024 (from 89 per cent in 2017).

234. Law on Finance property of 2013 implemented under Gender Responsive Budgeting Program to ensure that women and men are equally benefiting from the government budget.

235. There is a Government initiative to support women in cross border trade where they get 50 per cent of the loan from SACCO as a government grant. Further, the Business Development Fund (BDF) established and manages the Women’s Guarantee Fund (WGF) to facilitate women entrepreneurs and SMEs without collateral to obtain loans in commercial banks and micro-finance institutions at affordable terms and conditions. WGF provides up to 75 per cent of credit guarantee and a grant of 15 per cent of the total loan disbursed.

236. To enhance access to finance among rural households, the Government of the Republic of Rwanda introduced Umurenge SACCOs. In 2011, Umurenge SACCOs were officially launched in 30 districts of Rwanda. These have contributed to financial inclusion for people in rural areas.

237. The Government facilitates women’s access to financial credit, in particular for women who are not able to provide the necessary guarantees. For instance, the current “Unlocking Opportunities for Women in Informal Cross Border Trade” Project aims to improve the socioeconomic well-being of women involved in Informal Cross-Border Trade within the shared borders of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo.

238. The Government of Rwanda and partners through the National Women’s Council have organized Women Vendors in cooperatives and associations to promote their bargaining power, increase their economic capacity and ensure their security which worked very well with women cooperatives in different parts of the country. Selling points for women have been constructed across the country which resulted in many women moving from streets and starting stable businesses. Other initiatives were put in place by Financial Institutions to offer special products and packages designed for women (BK, Urwego, Duterimbere, etc). Female owners of SMSs were 44 per cent and received BDF funds/grants.

239. According to Finscope study reports, currently, women's access to financial services have tremendously improved and financial exclusion reduced. With respect to financial inclusion, the 2020 FinScope survey revealed that 92 per cent of women

are financially included compared to 93 per cent men which means that the gender gap is at 8 per cent as compared to 13 per cent in 2016.

Table 5
Banked population

<i>Description</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2020</i>
Total adults banked	23%	26%	36%
Men	27%	29%	39%
Women	20%	24%	34%

240. As per the table above, the percentage of banked women increased from 20 per cent in 2012 to 24 per cent in 2016 and 34 per cent in 2020. This is driven by a number of enabling factors that encouraged women to open bank account in their names in the past 8 years including awareness raising among women; women guarantee funds supported by the government; special women tailored products and easing the accessibility to financial institutions; the role of Umurenge SACCOs in rural areas (above 49 per cent of SACCO members are women); the role of Digital financial services; increased accessibility to mobile phones (e.g.: through Connect Rwanda Initiative) hence the number of women doing easy transactions through MoMo; collaborative efforts among stakeholders to enhance women financial literacy and legal frameworks that support women access to finance.

241. With regard to borrowing and credit, Finscope 2020 indicates that about 76 per cent (5.4 million) of adults in Rwanda borrow money, including all forms of borrowing. Slightly more females (77 per cent) have borrowed in the past 12 months (meaning from February 2019 to February 2020) prior to the finscope survey compared to their male counterparts (76 per cent).

242. Concerning Savings Groups (SGs) Statistics, the 2020 Finscope survey shows that about 5.6 million or 78 per cent adults use informal mechanisms to manage their finances (80 per cent of SG members are women).

243. The Government encourages the move from informal to formal savings by using the different policy Initiatives such the mapping of Village Saving Groups-SGs (80 per cent of members are women); digitization of saving groups; SGs linkages to formal financial service providers; creation of Savings Group Map; adoption an implementation of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy with a pillar for women (2020–2023) and financial literacy programs with a focus on women specifically in rural areas.

244. Furthermore, social protection programs e.g.: Vision Umurenge Program, the Government of Rwanda has assisted women under poverty by providing them with investment loans. Individual women, their groups and their cooperatives accessed financial services to run small income generating projects. In FY 2019–2020, the total of 84,964 beneficiaries including 44,704 females and 40,260 male benefited from the FS programs. The totals of 39,791 beneficiaries (20,935 females and 18,856 males) have benefited from FS loans in FY 2017/2018.

245. In the framework of increasing the uptake of the financial services component of VUP as a key tool for social protection, the GoR resolved to reduce the interest rate charged to beneficiaries from 11 per cent to 2 per cent effective from 2019.

246. Saving and Credit Cooperatives (Umurenge SACCOs) contribute to easy access to financial services for women including access to credit. Women constitute 41 per

cent of the members of these cooperatives. Also, 43 per cent of SMEs are currently owned by women.

Article 14: Rural women

Reply to paragraph 43 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

247. As stated above, Abunzi are regularly trained on human rights and women's rights. Awareness on women's rights in general and women's rights to land have been key components of community dialogue. Land law is among the most popularized laws in Rwanda. According to the State of Gender Equality report produced by the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), women lead in terms of land ownership. Land ownership stands at 24.63 per cent among women compared to 14.27 per cent among men. The big portion of land is owned by married couples (59.99 per cent). Land ownership has been very instrumental in contributing to women's access to finance. It contributed to 38 per cent of women's access to credit.

Reply to paragraph 43 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

248. In 2018, the Government of Rwanda launched the Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support (NSDS) program that supported pregnant women under poverty and their children aged 0–24 months. This program provided cash transfers to them in order to incentivize the use of health and nutrition services, strengthening their knowledge on better parenting and child care.

249. In FY 2019–2020, Nutrition Sensitive Direct Support (NSDS) transfers were made to poor women beneficiaries and the amount of 2,019,692,100Rwf was transferred to 73,139 NSDS eligible beneficiaries.

250. Regarding women employed in the formal sector, it is worth noting that they have access to social security benefits as per the law regulating labour in Rwanda without any form of discrimination including marital status.

Reply to paragraph 43 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

251. Law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 Regulating Labour in Rwanda in its article 2, the point 6 highlights social benefits like occupational health and safety, right to salary, right to leave including maternity leave, social security among others as rights to an informal sector employee including women, and the labour inspectors in all districts are daily responsible for monitoring compliance with this Law as stated in its article 113.

Reply to paragraph 43 (d) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

252. During the period under review, at least 25, 000 women have benefited from adult literacy programs. Women have been mobilized to join VSLA as means to eradicate poverty.

253. Fiscal year 2020/2021 a total of 2,155¹⁸ women involved in Informal Cross Border Trades in Rusizi and Rubavu districts were trained on Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship Skills and Cooperative Management. They have been also financially supported with start-ups capital to run their businesses.

¹⁸ NWC administrative data 2020.

254. A total of 18,000 educational books were produced and distributed, with other reader-friendly IEC materials for women in cross border trade (WICBT) regarding information on trade related regional and national laws, policies and available opportunities.

255. In the same period, 36 WICBTs cooperatives with 72 members were facilitated to participate in provincial, national and regional trade fairs aiming at eradicating poverty among women through trade. In addition, 394 women were given 70000frw each as direct support cash as capital or reinvestment into their business to mitigate poverty as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic.

256. Nineteen (19) cooperatives with 940 members (women in cross border trade) were given value addition machines and equipment to improve their business and eradicate poverty. WICBTs received training on business plans, value addition, and value-cost and supply chain analysis. 120 WIBCTs participated in 2 networking events, where cooperatives and medium-large processing industries/factories gained market information and exchanged ideas from fellow traders.

Batwa women

Reply to paragraph 45 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

257. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 prohibits any form of discrimination and emphasises the principle of equality and non-discrimination to all its citizens. All Rwandans are born and remain free and equal in rights and duties. Discrimination of whatever kind based on, inter alia, ethnic origin, tribe, clan, colour, sex, region, social origin, religion or faith, opinion, economic status, culture, language, social status, physical or mental disability or any other form of discrimination is prohibited and punishable by law.¹⁹

258. As it was explained in the common core document, since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda undertook the position to consolidate national unity. The Government adopted a policy according to which there is only one Rwandan community composed of all Rwandans (Banyarwanda). The former distinction of groups into Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa was largely seen to be divisive and unproductive to Rwandans. As a result of that policy, the Government of Rwanda does not consider any group of Rwandans as distinct from others (Refer to Paragraph 5 of the common core document).

259. Aside from the strong framework against discrimination indicated in the common core document in part IV, the GoR has put in place specific legislations, policies, independent institutions and programs to combat stereotypes, stigma, and all forms of discrimination.

260. The Historically Marginalized People (HMP) are integrated in Social-Economic programs like other vulnerable groups. Their rights are extended to every sector (political parties, freedom to choose religion, etc).

261. HMP Students have access to education from basic to higher learning institutions. The students who fail to get the required marks are facilitated to attend Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the Government provides toolkits once they graduate.

262. HMP that are in Ubudehe category one have access to social protection programs like VUP/Public work (eligible households for labour intensive work remunerated on bi-monthly basis), VUP/Financial Service (it is a livelihood

¹⁹ Article 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015.

programme to contribute to households graduation from poverty and paid back at minimal interest-2 per cent) and VUP/Direct Support (it is a grant amount provided as safely net in the form of direct income support which is provided on a monthly basis according to family size). The main objective of these social programmes is to guarantee minimum income and access to core public services by means of protecting them from poverty. They also have access to community health insurance (mutuelle de santé).

263. In line with the asset transfer program, one cow per poor family (GIRINKA program), is also eligible for HMP. Small livestock are also provided to eligible members of the HMP. From 2013 to 2017 a total of 94, 833 cows were distributed to poor families including members of the HMP. Since its inception in 2006 up to June 2018, Girinka programme has provided 331,295 cows to a cumulative number of 331,295 Rwandan poor families.

264. The Government of Rwanda does not and is not considering any specific ethnic group as distinct from other Rwandans and therefore there will be no specific interventions to be implemented based on that categorization.

265. However, all Rwandans including vulnerable people have equal access to basic services (education, health) and are assisted depending on their social economic status.

Women with disabilities

Reply to paragraph 47 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

266. The Constitution prohibits any form of discrimination and emphasizes the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

267. The Government of Rwanda continues to put in place mechanisms that ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to adequate social and health services, as well as accessibility to buildings and installations.

268. The 2018 law regulating labour in Rwanda, protects an employee against discrimination at the workplace. Article 9 of the law obligates every employer to pay employees equal salary for work of equal value without discrimination of any kind.

269. With regard to representation, article 75 of the Constitution states that one deputy is elected by the National Council of Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, women with disabilities are eligible candidates from their specific political parties and other leadership positions.

270. Based on the National Women's Council (NWC) mandate a memorandum of Understanding was signed with the National Electoral Commission (NEC) according to which the NWC was engaged in mobilizing all women across the country to participate and submit their candidacies in 2018 parliamentary elections, facilitating them with transport in every district to the campaigning site, and also preparing candidates by training them on Gender Equality Principles during campaigning processes of which women with disabilities were among the candidates 178 from (30 per cent), 298 from different political parties, 10 from youth, 2 from women with disabilities.

Refugee women and girls

Reply to paragraph 49 (a) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

271. The state ensures the security of citizens and their properties wherever they are within its territory. Police officers of both genders are deployed in sufficient numbers at each refugee camp. Should there be a need to reinforce security in terms of increasing the number of police officers, the police station at Sector level, which is close to the refugee camps, would be ready to intervene. With regard to lighting, the GoR is pleased to report that all refugee camps are connected to electricity and have sufficient lighting.

272. Concerning legal services, non-state actors have greatly contributed to the free legal aid services to refugees. Legal officers and lawyers are deployed in different camps with the mandate to provide legal support to refugees daily. This service includes legal advice, legal orientation and legal assistance before court of law and other administrative entities. As a result, lawyers have intervened in 154 cases, most of them being GBV related. Lawyers are requested to manage GBV cases in an ethical manner with confidentiality of the victim's identity.

273. Legal Aid Forum (LAF), one of the NGOs offering legal aid services in refugee camps has also empowered 121,974 people on how to manage GBV cases and conducted awareness campaigns within the camp on human trafficking.

274. The Government of Rwanda in collaboration with Partners provides women, girls and children shelter and food. The Government in collaboration with partners train refugees on SGBV and they are taught on early reporting and evidence for legal purposes against SGBV.

275. All refugee camps have access to Isange One Stop Centres available in the District hosting. Each camp has a health facility.

Reply to paragraph 49 (b) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

276. Concerning access to justice, refugees including women have the right to seek remedies from courts when their rights are at stake. They also have access to free legal services through different actors. For the period under consideration, between 2015 and 2020 a total of 77 asylum seekers gets free legal aid.²⁰ Among them 68 were male and 9 were female.

277. The law allows the court to move and conduct hearings on the ground where the crime has been committed. Further, the law allows for hearing in care and the National Public Prosecution Authority has a unity which deals with witness and victims protection.

Reply to paragraph 49 (c) of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

278. In addition to other existing measures to prevent trafficking in Rwanda, including the adoption of the law N° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others, to prevent human trafficking in refugee camps, the Government of Rwanda had enacted

²⁰ The Legal Aid Forum (LAF) is a membership-based network of 38 national and international NGOs, professional bodies, universities, legal aid clinics, faith-based organizations and trade unions that provide or support legal aid services to the indigent Rwandan population or vulnerable groups.

the Ministerial instructions n0 02/2016 of 1 June 2016 determining management of refugees and camp management which regulate access to the refugee camps. The Government of Rwanda deploys police officers in refugee camps in order to increase the security situation both within and around those camps.

Part IV. (Articles 15–16)

Article 15: Equality before the law

279. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015 recognizes the right to equality before the law. It provides in article 16 that all persons are equal before the law and that they are entitled to equal protection of the law. The laws to implement this constitutional provision have been adopted and there in consonance with the provisions of article 15 of the Convention as they recognize women's legal right to enter contracts, own property and to choose where to live.

Article 16: Marriage and family relations

Reply to paragraph 51 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

280. The Constitution guarantees the right to marry and start a family. A civil monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is the only recognised marital union. This implies that the practice of polygamy is not allowed. In light of the Constitution, spouses are entitled to equal rights and obligations at the time of marriage, during the marriage and at the time of divorce. Economic rights of women in non-formal unions are also protected by the law²¹ and the Supreme Court has developed case law in this regard.

Part V. Other matters for consideration

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

Reply to paragraph 52 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

281. Consultations are on-going regarding the acceptance of the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention.

Beijing declaration and platform for action

Reply to paragraph 53 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

282. Rwanda committed to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDfA), just one year after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Since then, the Government of Rwanda has translated the Platform for Action commitments into concrete actions that have ushered improvements in the lives of women and girls.

283. The Government of Rwanda has deployed tremendous efforts and joined many others in the journey of ensuring equitable and gender responsive development.

284. In the spirit of being an accountable state, Rwanda reviews progress on implementation of the Beijing commitments every 5 years hence the Beijing+25 Country Report has also been submitted.

²¹ Law N°59/2008 of 10/09/2008 on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence.

2030 Agenda for sustainable development

Reply to paragraph 54 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

285. Since 2015, the Government of Rwanda has embarked on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its planning framework and tools, including those specific to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (SDG#5).

286. In 2019, Rwanda volunteered to conduct and present for the first time its Voluntary National Review (VNR) report on implementation of the SDGs at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This is in line with the country's global commitment to carry out regular, voluntary, and inclusive reviews of progress on the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

287. This report provides information on the progress and status of implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Rwanda. It describes the Government of Rwanda's efforts to mainstream SDGs into policy, strategies, and programs at national and sub-national levels.

Dissemination

Reply to paragraph 55 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

288. The concluding observations have been disseminated to the stakeholders under sub-cluster of Gender equality and women empowerment.

Technical assistance

Reply to paragraph 56 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

289. The women's agenda in general and states obligations under the Convention specifically are entirely integrated in Rwanda's development agenda and the GoR has worked and continues to work with its partners both at regional and international level in implementing the Convention.

Ratification of other treaties

Reply to paragraph 57 of the concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

290. Rwanda is a state party to eight (8) out of nine (9) core international human rights instruments. Regarding the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Rwanda is still evaluating the need for the ratification.