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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## Visit to Côte d'Ivoire

### **Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata\***

#### *Summary*

The present report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata, is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 51/15.

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, visited Côte d'Ivoire from 6 to 17 November 2023. Following an analysis of the normative framework and the existing institutional architecture to combat contemporary forms of slavery, the Special Rapporteur examined instances of labour exploitation that may amount to forced or bonded labour in various sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, including the cocoa sector, artisanal mining and domestic work. The Special Rapporteur also assessed to what extent child labour is prevalent in the country and what steps have been taken by the Government, businesses and other stakeholders to eliminate those practices. The Special Rapporteur acknowledges the progress achieved, for example, in preventing and addressing child labour in the cocoa sector, while highlighting persisting challenges in eliminating all contemporary forms of slavery in the country. The report concludes with recommendations to assist the Government and other stakeholders in addressing remaining gaps identified.

\* The summary of the report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is being circulated in the language of submission and French only.



## **Annex**

### **Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata, on his visit to Côte d'Ivoire**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata, visited Côte d'Ivoire from 6 to 17 November 2023. The main objective of his visit was to examine instances of labour exploitation that may amount to forced or bonded labour in various sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, including the cocoa sector, artisanal mining and domestic work. The Special Rapporteur also assessed to what extent child labour is prevalent in the country and what steps have been taken by the Government and businesses to eliminate those practices, in line with its commitments as a pathfinder country under the Alliance 8.7 Accountability Framework.<sup>1</sup>

2. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur met with a wide variety of stakeholders, including the: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Justice and Human Rights; Ministry of the Interior and Security; Ministry of Petroleum, Mines and Renewable Energies; Ministry of Planning and Development; Ministry of National Education and Literacy; Ministry of Youth Promotion, Professional Integration and Civic Service; Ministry of Solidarity, Social Cohesion and Poverty Reduction; Ministry of Women, the Family and Children; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, including the Labour Inspectorate; Coffee and Cocoa Council; National Committee for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons; National Monitoring Committee for Action to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour; Interministerial Committee to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour; Prefect of San Pedro; civil society organizations, trade unions, human rights defenders and researchers; legal professionals, victims of labour and sexual exploitation, including children; workers; employers and businesses; members of the diplomatic community; United Nations agencies, including the Resident Coordinator; and other international organizations, including the African Development Bank. During the course of his visit, the Special Rapporteur travelled to Abidjan, Grand-Bassam, San Pédro, Méagui, Soubre and Sokoura.

3. The present report was shared with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire before its publication; the Government provided detailed observations on the report.

4. The Special Rapporteur extends his appreciation to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for the invitation to visit the country and to officials from multiple State entities for engaging in a fruitful and meaningful dialogue. He also expresses his sincere gratitude to all stakeholders who took the time to meet with him.

#### **II. Legal framework**

##### **A. International human rights law and international labour law**

5. Côte d'Ivoire has ratified the following key human rights instruments: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.alliance87.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Alliance%208.7%20Pathfinder%20Country%20Accountability%20Framework%20EN.pdf>.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities and, recently, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

6. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire is a party to a number of International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, including: the Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11), the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135) the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), as well as the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). In addition, Côte d'Ivoire is a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000, as well as the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956.

## **B. National legal, policy and institutional framework**

7. 45 of the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, adopted in 2016, prohibits slavery, human trafficking and forced labour. That prohibition was strengthened by Law No. 2019-574 of 26 June 2019 on the Penal Code, amended by Law No. 2021-893 of 21 December 2021, which covers a range of offences, such as forced/child marriage and enslavement. Law No. 2016-1111 of 8 December 2016 criminalizes trafficking for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation and prescribes penalties of five to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of 5 million to 10 million CFA francs for adult trafficking and 20 to 30 years in prison and a fine of 10 million to 50 million CFA francs for child trafficking. Aside from criminal law provisions, Law No. 2019-570 of 26 June 2019 on marriage designates the age of consent for marriage as 18 for women and men in order to prevent early or child marriage in the country.

8. Another important piece of legislation is Law No. 2015-532 of 20 July 2015 on the Labour Code, amended by Ordinance No. 2021-902 of 22 December 2021, which is designed to protect the rights of workers. There are over 60 decrees and regulations that elaborate various aspects of the Labour Code. Article 23.2 sets the general minimum age for work as 16, although light work can be performed by children between ages 13 and 16 (Order No. 2017-016 MEPS/CAB). The Government has also created a list of hazardous activities that are prohibited for children under the age of 18 (Order No. 2017-017 MEPS/CAB of 2 June 2017, determining the list of hazardous activities prohibited for children) in the areas of agriculture and forestry, farming, mining, fisheries, commerce and services, crafts and industry. The list was developed in 2016 through a solid consultative process involving all sectoral ministries concerned, social partners, organizational health and safety and other specialists, labour law specialists and civil society organizations.

9. Regarding the eradication of child labor, Côte d'Ivoire has a strong legal framework. In addition to the criminalization of child labor under article 439-3 of the Penal Code, Law No. 2010-272 of 30 September 2010 prohibits trafficking and the worst forms of child labour. This covers child trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom and forced labour and the use of children in armed conflict and in illegal activities such as drug trafficking. The law is therefore in line with the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). In addition, Law No. 2015-635 of 17 September 2015, amending Law No. 95-696 of 7 September 1995, provides, among other things, that education is compulsory and free for all children between ages 6 and 16. If implemented effectively, the law would further contribute to the reduction of child labour in the country.

10. Côte d'Ivoire has also been enhancing its institutional frameworks to identify and address instances of child labour. In this regard, the Government has established the Interministerial Committee for the Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour, which develops guidelines and policies on child trafficking and labour and coordinates the

Government's actions against those practices through the use of proactive monitoring. The Committee also adopted a road map on ending child labour and trafficking in persons under the Alliance 8.7 Accountability Framework in 2021.

11. Under the leadership of the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire, the National Oversight Committee to Monitor Actions to Combat Child Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour was established 2011. The Committee consists of various entities, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), ILO, civil society organizations, the business sector, the Coffee and Cocoa Council and trade unions. The Special Rapporteur welcomes this multistakeholder approach as it brings together the experience and expertise of various entities to strengthen actions against child labour, including the protection and reintegration of child victims, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the actions of the Government. In addition, in 2013, the Government launched the National Child Labour Monitoring System, which provides early warning and monitoring on child labour practices in various parts of the country.

12. In 2016, the National Committee for the Fight Against Human Trafficking was established. The Committee, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, covers human trafficking generally and works with non-governmental stakeholders to address trafficking in persons. It has regional cells across the country and the Special Rapporteur had a chance to meet with members of such a regional cell in San Pédro. While the National Committee for the Fight Against Human Trafficking and the National Oversight Committee to Monitor Actions to Combat Child Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour may seem to overlap with regard to their mandates, the Special Rapporteur was assured that this was not the case in practice as the bodies communicate and coordinate closely with each other in order to avoid duplication of work. Côte d'Ivoire also has a National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking 2022–2025.

13. Côte d'Ivoire has adopted a framework for action for all stakeholders in the cacao sector, known as the National Sustainable Cocoa Strategy. Signed on 30 March 2022, it sets out an action plan to address issues linked to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of cocoa farming by 2030. Of particular importance is the plan of the Government to: (a) improve cocoa farmers' incomes; (b) reverse deforestation by 20 per cent by 2030, and (c) eliminate child labour, in particular its worst forms, by 2025. To create a framework for participatory support, a National Committee for Sustainable Cocoa was created by Prime Ministerial Order No. 0379, dated 30 March 2022, establishing the powers, organization and operation of a national committee for the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Cocoa Farming, with a budget of around 2,000 billion CFA francs, out of which 500 billion is earmarked for efforts to end child labour.

14. Furthermore, the "Alliance on Sustainable Cocoa", a road map to improve the economic, social and environmental sustainability of cocoa production and trade, was established by Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and the European Union in June 2022. In that context, a set of concrete time-bound actions to improve the sustainability of the cocoa supply chain in West Africa was agreed on, aiming to end deforestation and child labour and improve the living income for farmers.<sup>2</sup> The road map includes actions related to price and market mechanisms, standards and traceability, as well as accountability and ending child labour, regulations and due diligence, sustainable cocoa production, development cooperation and finance and a focus on consumers.<sup>3</sup>

15. The above initiatives are broadly in line with the National Development Plan 2021–2025,<sup>4</sup> which emphasizes six key pillars: (a) acceleration of the structural transformation of the economy through industrialization and the development of clusters; (b) the development of human capital and the promotion of employment; (c) private sector development and investment; (d) strengthening inclusion, national solidarity and social action; (e) balanced regional development, protection of the environment and the fight

<sup>2</sup> See [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-cote-divoire-ghana-and-cocoa-sector-endorse-alliance-sustainable-cocoa-2022-06-28\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-cote-divoire-ghana-and-cocoa-sector-endorse-alliance-sustainable-cocoa-2022-06-28_en).

<sup>3</sup> See <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8a31feb6-d901-421f-a607-ebbdd7d59ca0/library/6aca5c6a-ee26-426a-b9f5-8aacd19e4679/details>.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.gcpnd.gouv.ci/documentation/index/fr>.

against global warming; and (f) strengthening of governance, modernization of the State and cultural transformation. The establishment of the Government's Youth Programme 2023–2025 initiative, estimated to cost 1,118 billion CFA francs, should also be noted. The programme is designed to support the needs of 1.5 million young people. By 2023, 512,913 individuals had reportedly benefited from training, professional integration and the promotion of youth entrepreneurship. According to the Government, over 200,000 individuals have been integrated into the professional world, and over 136,000 have benefited from scholarships and financial assistance in and outside Côte d'Ivoire. Others have had access to entrepreneurship programmes and projects, and some 74,000 young people were able to access the Government's "Second chance schools" (Écoles de la deuxième chance) scheme.

16. The Government has taken steps to combat illicit artisanal gold panning. Small-scale operators need to obtain an operating permit based on article 65 of Law No. 2014-138 of 24 March 2014 on the Mining Code, which states that artisanal mining authorizations are granted by order of the Minister in charge of mines, after consultation with the competent administrative authorities and the urban communes or rural communities concerned, to natural persons of Ivorian nationality and cooperative companies with majority Ivorian participation. The conditions for granting artisanal mining authorization are determined by decree.<sup>5</sup> Artisanal gold mining without authorization is considered illicit. To ensure the enforcement of existing legislation, the Government has set up programmes to regulate gold panning and has deployed law enforcement units to curb illicit activities in the area. With the same objective, the Government created a special group to combat illegal gold panning (Groupement spécial de lutte contre l'orpaillage illégal) in July 2021, supplementing the existing brigade to punish violations of the Mining Code (Brigade de répression des infractions au code minier). Subsequently, the President issued Ordinance No. 2022-239 of 30 March 2022, amending various articles of the law mentioned above.<sup>6</sup> The ordinance aims to strengthen the system for punishing violations of the Mining Code.

17. In the area of human rights more broadly, the Government adopted the first national action plan on human rights in February 2022 in response to recommendations received from international human rights mechanisms. The plan contains over 350 activities grouped into eight main chapters, covering the full spectrum of human rights. The action plan refers to several universal periodic review recommendations on trafficking in persons, which are to be implemented by 2025. One recommendation refers to the elimination of the economic exploitation of children, including the worst forms of child labour, in particular the exploitation of girls in domestic service, *talibé* children, children working in the mining and agricultural sectors and children begging in the street.

18. Finally, the role of the National Human Rights Council (Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme) should be highlighted as it addresses contemporary forms of slavery through various lines of action. It engages in advocacy and awareness-raising on issues surrounding child labour and child marriage among the general public at the local, regional and national levels. Upon receipt of complaints with regard to contemporary forms of slavery, the National Human Rights Council can also investigate individual cases and refer them to appropriate authorities, such as police and social centres, for further legal action and victim assistance. According to the National Human Rights Council, a total of 88 complaints relating to child labour and to child, early and forced marriage were investigated between 2022 and 2023.

### III. Promising aspects

#### 1. Elimination of child labour

19. Ending child labour, a key priority for the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, has mainly been focused on the cocoa sector owing to its strategic importance in the economy. Along with private companies, the National Human Rights Council, non-governmental organizations, the international community and other stakeholders, significant steps have

<sup>5</sup> See <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ivc146577.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., arts. 183–189.

been taken in this regard. According to the Government, child labour has decreased by 19.7 per cent over the past 10 years; in the cocoa sector, child labour has been reduced by 32 per cent in communities where intensive remediation actions have been carried out.

20. The reduction in child labour has resulted, *inter alia*, from improvements in its identification. The above-mentioned National Child Labour Monitoring System, for example, which provides early warning and monitoring on child labour practices in various parts of the country. A multistakeholder approach has been adopted, with national authorities working closely with local village chiefs and authorities, including child protection committees and labour inspectorate, schools, cooperatives and civil society organizations such as the International Cocoa Initiative. The Special Rapporteur commends the Government for promoting an inclusive approach. By the time of his visit, 111 departmental committees, 42 sub-prefectural committees and 304 village child labour monitoring committees had been established under the National Child Labour Monitoring System.

21. The Special Rapporteur witnessed the progress achieved when he visited a cacao farm in Sokoura, where child labour has been reduced thanks to multistakeholder cooperation. Similarly, the efforts of non-governmental organizations in eradicating child labour have also been meaningful on various fronts. For instance, the Special Rapporteur had the opportunity to interact with representatives of the International Cocoa Initiative, a multistakeholder network consisting of companies, civil society organizations, the Rainforest Alliance and fairtrade and farmers' organizations during his field trips to Méagui and Sokoura. The initiative engages with representatives of national and local governments, leaders of village and farm communities, cooperatives, businesses and workers by awareness-raising, capacity-building through training, enhancing access to education for children and improving working conditions. The initiative has also introduced Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems, its own identification and monitoring mechanism, within the industry, which has been instrumental in identifying and recording instances of child labour and in implementing remediation measures in a timely and effective manner.

22. The Special Rapporteur was also encouraged to learn that Côte d'Ivoire has significantly increased access to education over the past years, in particular by building a number of primary and secondary schools – an important measure to reduce child labour in the country. The Government is intensifying its efforts to promote education among children, including the designation of 2023 as the “Year of Youth” by the President of Côte d'Ivoire. The Special Rapporteur was informed that private companies contribute to the establishment of schools through social and community development projects. Businesses have also implemented initiatives, such as making additional financial contributions and constructing canteens, to encourage parents to send their children to school. In addition, some businesses work with local authorities to issue birth certificates for children who are not properly registered so that they can go to school.

## **2. Other measures taken against contemporary forms of slavery and for the promotion of workers' rights**

23. In addition to the establishment of specialized committees to prevent and address child labour, there are dedicated units of law enforcement entities in the police and gendarmerie. The Special Rapporteur was informed that law enforcement officials regularly receive training with a view to enhancing their ability to investigate and prosecute cases of labour and sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the presence of labour inspectorate units in every region makes reporting of abuse or exploitation more accessible; proactive inspections have reportedly been increased in recent times. The Special Rapporteur was also encouraged to learn that there has been an improvement in the identification victims of contemporary forms of slavery. In this regard, the Government has set up reporting mechanisms, including two hotlines (numbers 1308 and 116) for victims of trafficking who wish to report to public authorities, such as the police and social centres. As required, the reporting mechanisms initiate investigations or protection needs assessments. The work of such mechanisms is regularly reviewed by the National Committee for the Fight Against Human Trafficking.

24. There are also a number of encouraging initiatives regarding the promotion of fair trade and workers' rights, including the Ivorian Fair Trade Network,<sup>7</sup> an association of fairtrade cooperatives in Côte d'Ivoire established in 2009. The network aims to facilitate sustainable development in the agricultural sector through the protection of the rights of marginalized producers and workers, including by implementing awareness-raising about their rights and the launching of campaigns for positive change in international trade. Through the launch of a project for village savings and credit associations in October 2022, the network has also contributed to the economic empowerment of women in cocoa growing communities. Savings in such communities have been increased gradually, with some saving being invested in income generating activities. The Special Rapporteur heard reports of ongoing investments in pig farms as an example of such activities. In addition, women receive an allowance to cover school fees, enabling their children to go to school. The system seems to be effective in reducing the vulnerability of participants to labour exploitation, increasing women's economic empowerment and lowering the risk of child labour. Furthermore, various cooperatives assist workers in signing model contracts and in formalizing the relationship between producers and workers in order to prevent labour exploitation in the cocoa sector. The Special Rapporteur had an opportunity to meet with representatives of a cooperative in Méagui where such initiatives and other encouraging developments were shared.

25. Certain cooperatives and private chocolate manufacturing companies sourcing from Côte d'Ivoire only purchase cocoa certified by Fairtrade International or the Rainforest Alliance. If effective auditing and oversight is undertaken, the certification provides an added layer of protection of workers' rights, as producers need to promote fair working conditions for all workers and a minimum floor price is guaranteed to workers for the quantities sold in certified markets. Certified producers receive a premium bonus of about \$0.10 per kilo, which is paid to the cooperative to support collective services, such as input supply, agricultural extension or other cooperative activities. While audits of certification systems reportedly take place only once a year and there are questions about the effectiveness of the systems in upholding workers' rights and in identifying instances of abuse, encouraging initiatives have been rolled out in recent years.

26. In addition, chocolate manufacturing companies have made a number of investments in traceability as a result of public pressure to address deforestation in cocoa production.<sup>8</sup> In that regard, the Special Rapporteur met with farmers who expressed their concern over the deteriorating conditions of cocoa trees owing to deforestation, climate change and other factors. This is a vital issue as insufficient production will force farmers to find alternative means of survival, increasing the risk of their exploitation. Efforts to trace cocoa "from bean to bar" has become more urgent following the adoption of the 2022 directive on corporate sustainability due diligence by the European Union, which requires companies importing deforestation-risk products (such as cocoa or chocolate) to demonstrate that imports do not originate from recently deforested or degraded land.

27. Other promising developments are related to assistance provided to victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Based on Law No. 2018-570 of 13 June 2018 on the protection of witnesses, victims, whistleblowers, experts and other persons, protective measures were put in place with the aim of ensuring the safety and the physical and psychological well-being of such individuals and of guaranteeing their dignity and privacy. During criminal proceedings, for instance, protection is provided to victims who act as witnesses to shield them from intimidation by perpetrators. Protection measures are also accessible to migrants who have been exploited in the country, regardless of whether they wish to cooperate with law enforcement authorities. Immediate protection, such as shelter, food and medical assistance, are often provided by civil society organizations. The Special Rapporteur had the opportunity to visit the Abel Centre in Grand Bassam and the

<sup>7</sup> Réseau Ivoirien du Commerce Equitable, see <https://www.rice-ci.com>.

<sup>8</sup> The Cocoa & Forests Initiative, in particular, is a public-private partnership launched in 2017 by a consortium of 35 chocolate and cocoa companies, together with the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, aiming to contribute to ending deforestation and forest degradation in the cocoa supply chain. See Cécile Renier and others, "Transparency, traceability and deforestation in the Ivorian cocoa supply chain", *Environmental Research Letters*, vol. 18 (2023).



International Catholic Child Bureau in Abidjan, both of which provide safe houses, education and skills training for a limited number of children and adults who are victims of trafficking and labour/sexual exploitation, including from countries in the region such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria.

28. The Special Rapporteur was assured by the Government that the return of migrants to their countries of origin only takes place with their explicit consent and that those who want to remain in the country can do so without a time limit. Non-nationals are allowed to work in Côte d'Ivoire, which is commendable. In such cases, and to the extent possible, the Government, with the support of other stakeholders, provides additional support, such as access to public services and employment. The Special Rapporteur also met with representatives of the Association pour la réinsertion des migrants de retour en Côte d'Ivoire, which carries out important awareness-raising work about the risks of irregular migration and provides a variety of services for Ivorian nationals who have been trafficked and exploited abroad and returned to Côte d'Ivoire.

29. In addition, the role of trade unions and workers' associations in advocating for the rights of workers must be highlighted. The associations have a strong presence in the country and they continue to empower and support workers in claiming their labour rights. There are unions representing different sectors, such as agriculture and domestic work. Others represent the interests of migrant workers and other vulnerable populations. The Special Rapporteur met with a number of trade union representatives during his visit and was informed of recent positive contributions, notably in promoting an increase of the national minimum wage from 65,000 CFA francs to 75,000 CFA francs on 1 January 2023.

## IV. Remaining challenges

### 1. Child labour

30. While acknowledging the positive steps the Government has taken to reduce child labour in the country, the Special Rapporteur is concerned that child labour persists, in particular in artisanal gold mining, agriculture and domestic work, reportedly affecting children from the age of 6. During his visit he learned that many children continue to work during school hours and that some perform tasks that are physically and mentally detrimental to their well-being, which may amount to the worst forms of child labour contrary to ILO Convention No. 182. Most of the children working in the agricultural sector, including in cacao production, are based in small-scale family farming plantations. In addition to Ivorian children, foreign children who migrated with their families to Côte d'Ivoire, such as children from Burkina Faso, experience child labour because of their limited access to education and other support services. Furthermore, debt bondage increases the risk of child labour and the Special Rapporteur was informed that female-headed households are particularly vulnerable in this regard.

31. According to data gathered by Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems established under the International Cocoa Initiative,<sup>9</sup> child labour in cocoa production follows a seasonal pattern. It is usually highest in the months of July and November and lowest between February and April, reflecting varying labour needs at different times of the year and the availability of children's time during school holidays. Private sector companies are advised to take this seasonal pattern into consideration when engaging with the Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems and to conduct enhanced awareness-raising. The systems also consider the school calendar in organizing activities such as building new schools, distributing school kits and providing birth certificates.

32. There seems to be a gradual shift of child labour from cocoa production to illegal artisanal mining. The Special Rapporteur was informed by the Ministry of Petroleum, Mines and Renewable Energies that, in addition to 210 formal mining sites regulated by the Government, there are over 600 informal or illegal mining sites across the country. At those

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.cocoainitiative.org/our-work/operational-support/child-labour-monitoring-and-remediation-systems>.



sites, children – many of whom have been trafficked from neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali – reportedly engage in hazardous activities incentivized by regular and bonus payments. Toxic substances used in such work include mercury, which is extremely dangerous to the health of workers and the environment. The use of such substances is in direct conflict with Order No. 2017-017 MEPS/CAB of 2 June 2017, prohibiting children below the age of 18 from engaging in hazardous activities, including mining, as well as the ILO Convention No. 182. In addition, criminal or armed groups reportedly operate at many sites, where they lure children into criminal activities, such as drug and weapons trafficking, as well as sexual exploitation, which particularly affects women and girls, both from Côte d'Ivoire and countries in the region.

33. It is evident that the current situation must be rectified. The Special Rapporteur is concerned, however, that, despite the efforts being undertaken by the Government, there does not seem to be effective oversight in the artisanal mining sector. This applies particularly to the north of the country, in the Nawa region and in other geographically remote areas. The involvement of armed group presents a significant obstacle to progress in this sector. The groups can retaliate against any intervention and there are alleged instances of collusion and corruption. It was reported that when law enforcement authorities identify and close illegal sites, new ones emerge soon afterwards, making identification and law enforcement more difficult and less effective. The Government should allocate sufficient resources to tackle labour and sexual exploitation in this sector. In addition, the supply chain needs to be assessed and made transparent in order to ensure accountability for illegally extracted resources, human rights abuses and environmental damages.

## **2. Domestic work**

34. Domestic work is another area of concern owing to the high risk of labour and sexual exploitation or harassment. The sector is highly gendered, as women and girls constitute the majority of workers. In particular, it was reported that families affected by poverty send their daughters to work in cities, especially when there is no school in their village. The Special Rapporteur was informed that instances of exploitation and/or abuse in domestic work are rarely reported owing to multiple challenges in accessing adequate avenues for complaint, particularly for children.

35. Domestic workers are protected by the interprofessional collective agreement signed in 1977 and the Labour Code, which require employers to declare their employees and to pay the guaranteed interprofessional minimum wage, which is currently 75,000 CFA francs a month. Furthermore, article 3 (a) of Decree No. 96-203 of 7 March 1996 stipulates that workers who are not employed in the agricultural sector, including domestic workers, should work a maximum of 44 hours per week. Further, domestic workers are supposed to be registered in the social security system in order to benefit from it. These protections are important safeguards against exploitation and abuse.

36. Nevertheless, the Special Rapporteur received first-hand information that many domestic workers are not declared, do not receive a written contract or are registered in the social security system in practice, increasing their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation by their employers. With regard to children in domestic work, many are said to perform physically demanding work for long hours without proper wages; as a result, they are not able to attend school. Instances of physical, including sexual abuse and other forms of violence, as well as trafficking of children from rural to urban areas for the purposes of exploitation in private households have been reported. Pregnancies as a result of rape are reported; in such cases, girls are sent back to their villages where they may be ostracized within their communities.

37. The Special Rapporteur was informed that labour and sexual exploitation behind closed doors is rarely identified. In accordance with article 91.8 of the Labour Code, labour inspections in private homes are permitted if the employee has a written or verbal contract. However, there is a shortage of proactive inspections and domestic workers seldom report instances of abuse or exploitation, in general because of a lack of awareness about existing reporting channels or a lack of access owing to limited freedom of movement or illiteracy. The Special Rapporteur noted that hazardous domestic tasks are not specifically mentioned in the list of hazardous work issued by the Government. Consequently, a revision of the list

of 2016, in line with the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), may be suitable, including a specific examination of the situation of children in domestic work. According to ILO, there are a number of hazards to which domestic workers, including children, are commonly exposed to, such as contact with toxic chemicals; carrying heavy loads; and handling dangerous items such as knives, axes and hot pans. Such risks are compounded when workers live in private households.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Forced labour among adults

38. Forced labour involving adults has received very little attention in Côte d'Ivoire. While it does not seem to be widespread practice, the Special Rapporteur learned that instances of forced labour may exist in some sectors of the economy, for example in artisanal mining, domestic work and agriculture and agro-industry. While forced labour is often hidden and can be difficult to identify in practice, stakeholders pointed to the incidence of: insufficient wages or the withholding of wages or of other benefits promised, long working hours, limited access to essential services and health care, debt bondage, threat of dismissal and substandard living conditions. Oftentimes workers carry out tasks that were not specified at the time of recruitment or that they are assigned tasks by other employers. A related key concern is the absence of written contracts, as job offers and working conditions have traditionally been communicated orally. The absence of written contracts leaves a protection gap as workers may not be able to enforce their rights and entitlements effectively. In contrast, the Special Rapporteur met workers who clearly stated that their working conditions had significantly improved with the introduction of written contracts.

39. While commending the efforts of the Government to eradicate child labour, the Special Rapporteur considers that the Government should be more proactive in addressing labour exploitation among adults. As a starting point, it should regularly collect and analyse disaggregated data. There is scope to strengthen the institutional framework, in particular labour inspection and grievance mechanisms for victims of exploitation, since existing mechanisms on child labour are not always sufficiently well organized to address labour exploitation among adults. Further, the Government should support multistakeholder partnerships such as the International Cocoa Initiative, which cooperate closely with local authorities, community agents and committees to address forced labour. The Special Rapporteur was informed that, under the initiative, reporting systems are set up in workplaces and follow-up visits take place every three months to monitor workers' situations. Such initiatives are important and should be rolled out to other sectors where there is a high risk of labour exploitation.

### 4. Child, early and forced marriage and other manifestations of gender inequality

40. Despite the harmonization of the legal age of marriage for boys and girls to age 18, the Special Rapporteur was concerned to hear about instances of child, early and forced marriage in Côte d'Ivoire, affecting girls as young as age 13. According to the National Human Rights Council, 79 cases of child, early and forced marriage were reported between 2022 and 2023 alone, although it is estimated that the actual number is significantly higher owing to underreporting. According to a United Nations source, almost 23 per cent of women are said to have been married before age 18, and in some areas the incidence reaches 57 per cent. In the northern region, child marriage appears to be more prevalent and it is reported that some religious leaders play an important role in perpetuating the practice. A UNICEF report reports that 2.3 million women were married in Côte d'Ivoire before age 18, out of which 665,800 were married before age 15, meaning that one quarter of women were subjected to child marriage.<sup>11</sup>

41. While awareness-raising activities about the dangers of child, early and forced marriage has been intensified by the Government in recent times, the National Human Rights Council and civil society organizations pointed out that many traditional and religious leaders continue to support the marriage of girls at a young age owing to persistent discriminatory

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.ilo.org/ipe/areas/Childdomesticlabour/lang--en/index.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, *Le Mariage d'Enfants en Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale: Aperçu Statistique et Réflexion sur l'Élimination de cette Pratique* (New York, 2022), p. 32.

cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes. While the numbers are estimated to be lower, the Special Rapporteur also received information regarding the forced marriage of adult women. Promotion of meaningful and constructive dialogue with community leaders is essential in order to change the mindset of such traditional and religious leaders and to reverse current patterns. There are no reception or transit centres for women or girls affected by child, early or forced marriage in Côte d'Ivoire. This is an area in need of improvement that should be considered by the Government.

## **5. Trafficking in persons for purposes of labour and/or sexual exploitation**

42. Human trafficking of foreign nationals into Côte d'Ivoire, as well as of Ivorian nationals abroad, is a pressing problem with regional dimensions. Most foreign victims are reportedly trafficked into the country from member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for purposes of labour and/or sexual exploitation. When the Special Rapporteur visited a shelter housing trafficked individuals in Grand Bassam, he was informed that a large number of girls, beginning at age 9, as well as women are trafficked from Nigeria and forced into prostitution or domestic work, and that men and boys are also trafficked for labour exploitation in agriculture and mining. Many are deceived about the nature and the conditions of work, have to pay large sums to traffickers or smugglers for their travels and are thus often trapped in debt bondage.

43. Despite governmental efforts, such as "Second chance schools", which give young Ivorians the opportunity to acquire professional skills and generate income, their access to decent work remains insufficient as the country is facing challenges in absorbing the large workforce. As a result, some Ivorian nationals seek employment abroad and risk falling prey to traffickers. The Special Rapporteur was informed that many Ivorian nationals would like to migrate to Europe or to the Middle East but that they are often deceived and subjected to labour exploitation, particularly in agriculture, construction (for men) and domestic work (for women). Ivorian women and girls with albinism may also be trafficked internally for sexual exploitation. Victims of trafficking in persons or of other forms of exploitation do not always consider themselves to be victims, or are afraid to report their situation to the authorities owing to a fear of reprisal, including by traffickers. The role of civil society organizations and community leaders in Côte d'Ivoire is extremely important in this context, as they have been instrumental in identifying victims and providing much needed protection and assistance. The Special Rapporteur commends them for their work.

44. While the identification and protection of trafficked victims should be implemented by the Government, a number of gaps remain. Existing complaint and reporting mechanisms, including a hotline, are not regarded as being sufficiently effective and many victims do not seem to be aware of the existence of mechanisms to report abuse and to access justice and remedy. For victim protection and assistance, the Government relies to a considerable extent on civil society organizations, which are chronically understaffed and underresourced. However, the Government reportedly does not provide sufficient support to civil society organizations to carry out their important work. Moreover, funding from donors is often of a temporary nature, project-based and not sufficiently sustainable in the long term.

## **6. Strengthening accountability for instances of contemporary forms of slavery**

45. The Special Rapporteur considers that accountability for contemporary forms of slavery should be strengthened.

46. Effective labour inspection is an important first step in identifying instances of exploitation and abuse and it is important to recognize that the Government has made significant improvements in this regard. There are over 400 inspectors nationally and every region has an inspectorate. The Special Rapporteur was informed that inspections may be conducted without the receipt of complaints and there seems to be a follow-up mechanism in place. There are also specialized centres to identify instances of child labour. According to information received, Côte d'Ivoire is drawing up a strategic plan for interventions by the labour inspectorate and the process is being supported by ILO.

47. While the efforts of the Government should be acknowledged, there is scope for improvement. For instance, insufficient human and financial resources, capacity and specific

expertise on forced labour and related practices among labour inspectorate and law enforcement authorities has been raised as a concern by a number of interlocutors. The Special Rapporteur also received allegations of potential collusion between the authorities and employers in order to avoid detection, underscoring the need to tackle impunity and corruption more effectively. In addition, rates of prosecution and conviction for breaching criminal and labour are said to be low and the punishments imposed on employers, such as fines, do not appear to be sufficiently stringent to deter them from exploiting workers. Detailed statistics on prosecutions and convictions need to be reviewed for a more comprehensive assessment in this regard.

48. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur found gaps in human rights due diligence among companies operating in Côte d'Ivoire. Aside from multinational cooperations, many local companies, most of which are small and medium-sized enterprises, do not seem to be aware of the importance of human rights due diligence in their business operations. Gaps also remain regarding the traceability of supply chains. In the cocoa sector, for instance, all cooperatives and purchasing centres are currently required to report to the Coffee and Cocoa Council and to register all sales of cocoa beans, using Sydor, a traceability software introduced by the Ivorian Government. The test or pilot phase of a national traceability system, including Sydor, is currently under way and, according to information received, implementation is planned for 2024–2025. Nevertheless, large parts of the supply chain are not mapped, as reportedly only 44 per cent of Ivorian cocoa is traced to cooperatives, and 22 per cent is traced to farms under the Cocoa & Forests Initiative, a public-private partnership launched in 2017.

49. Because of the limited transparency of supply chains, it is difficult to guarantee that a product has not been produced using forced or child labour. The Special Rapporteur was informed that, at present, businesses do not always uphold workers' rights in order to minimize costs. At the time of his visit, a national action plan on business and human rights was being developed. The concept of the plan is encouraging, and the Special Rapporteur urges the Government to complete the process as soon as possible.

## **7. Importance of addressing the root causes of contemporary forms of slavery**

50. The Special Rapporteur considers that more needs to be done to address root causes of contemporary forms of slavery. To begin with, poverty and inequality, which are pressing matters in the country, prevent many people from gaining economic independence and create an environment suited to exploitation.<sup>12</sup> The Government has been facilitating economic empowerment of its citizens, such as the implementation of the National Development Plan 2021–2025 and the second phase of the Government's social programme which are aimed at empowering vulnerable populations. Raising the national minimum wage to 75,000 CFA francs per month in 2023 is also commendable. However, it appears that the enforcement of the minimum wage is difficult in practice as employment contracts between workers and employers are not systematically issued. A number of interlocutors also pointed out that the minimum wage is not sufficient in the light of the rising costs of living, affecting all parts of the country. This may, in effect, force parents to work longer hours, find additional jobs, borrow money or encourage their children to work. As a starting point, the Government should consider promoting living, as opposed to minimum, wages for all workers in the country.

51. The Special Rapporteur, having had the opportunity to examine the cocoa industry, wishes to raise an additional issue of pricing of cacao and its impact on poverty and inequality among workers in the sector. Many interlocutors expressed concern, at the time of his visit, that the price of cocoa was too low (1,000 CFA francs (\$1.65) per kilo as of November 2023) as it did not take various expenses incurred during the production and processing phases or

<sup>12</sup> According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index issued by the United Nations Development Programme, 46.1 per cent of the population in Côte d'Ivoire (12,659 thousand people in 2021) is multidimensionally poor while an additional 17.6 per cent is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (4,829 thousand people in 2021). See <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MPI/CIV.pdf>.

the increasing cost of living into account. The low price, in turn, made it difficult for many producers to pay a minimum wage to their workers, pushing them into a financially precarious position and increasing the risk of labour and sexual exploitation, including for children.

52. In reality, the pricing is mainly influenced by the international market, which is dominated by five major companies which control over 59 per cent of market share globally.<sup>13</sup> According to information received, over 70 per cent of the market value of cocoa production goes to the chocolate companies, while Côte d'Ivoire only receives 5 per cent. There is a fear among interlocutors that the price may be manipulated by these major players in order to reduce their overall costs and maximize their profits. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is not consulted when world prices for cocoa are set and producers, local cooperatives and other stakeholders also have no voice in the decision-making process. Due to these factors, many farmers have left the sector and started working in the rubber industry, in the mining sector or in other areas.

53. Limited access to education is another contributing factor that has consistently been raised by a number of interlocutors, despite the ongoing efforts by the Government and private companies to build more schools and to facilitate access to education. While education is mandatory and free for children in Côte d'Ivoire up to age 16, as noted above, this is not the case in practice as many parents are not able to provide uniforms, books and food for their children. Bad roads, the cost of school buses and the lack of buses also hinder access to education, particularly in rural areas. One family told the Special Rapporteur that their daughter had to walk 8 kilometers to school and that they were concerned about her safety.

54. A concern frequently raised with the Special Rapporteur is that farmers face a considerable financial strain at the beginning of the school year, in September. Typically, farmers receive payment only upon delivering their cocoa, which is often later in the year. Hence, many farmers do not have the financial means to send their children to school, which increases the risk of their children being engaged in child labour. To address this problem, farmers would need to receive support at the start of the school year, for instance through prepayment for cocoa, cash transfers or assistance with school materials. Such measures could alleviate the financial burden on farmers during critical times. Further, the quality of education requires enhancement in many cases. In rural areas, schools reportedly lack qualified teachers and infrastructure such as access to information and communication technologies. Owing to these and for other reasons, nearly 1.5 million school-age children are said to be out of school.<sup>14</sup>

55. The situation of particularly vulnerable children should be highlighted. As a result of gender inequality, Ivorian girls have traditionally had limited access to education and are less likely to transition to secondary school, despite significant Government investment in this area. The Special Rapporteur is concerned that 47 per cent of the entire population is illiterate and that two thirds of that population is said to comprise women and girls.<sup>15</sup> Interlocutors explained that some migrants prefer not to disclose their nationality or that of their children for a variety of historical and other reasons, making them de facto stateless and unable to access basic services. Further, the Special Rapporteur also met with civil society organizations and human rights defenders promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, who pointed to the limited access to quality education for children living with disabilities, cultural prejudice and stigmatization and isolation from society at large. When such vulnerable children are not in school, many have no choice but to work in order to support their parents.

56. In addition, access to health care and social security has been raised as an issue of concern, in particular for workers in the informal economy. As of November 2023, the urban informal sector employed nearly 7 million workers, more than either agriculture or the formal sector. Women constitute a significant portion – two thirds – of business owners in the

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/chocolate-market>.

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.unicef.org/media/152756/file/Cote-d-Ivoire-2023-COAR.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> See [https://www.gouv.ci/\\_actualite-article.php?recordID=15651](https://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?recordID=15651).

informal economy.<sup>16</sup> Universal health coverage has been compulsory for everyone living in Côte d'Ivoire since 1 July 2019, including for non-nationals. There is also a non-contributory medical scheme, known as the régime d'assistance médicale, for the economically weak or destitute. While such measures are commendable, the Special Rapporteur has been made aware that workers in the informal economy may nevertheless not have access to universal health care in practice. The remaining challenges in terms of access to quality health care and medicine for everyone without discrimination should be addressed. Further, in reality, since there may be long delays until health-care affiliation cards are received, patients may have to pay for medical kits and other expenses. For many people living in remote locations health-care facilities are not easily accessible, and the quality of medical services that are available in rural areas has been called into question as, frequently, there is a lack of infrastructure. With regard to the social security system, the Special Rapporteur received information that the bureaucracy surrounding the system and the lack of sufficient information given to workers means that many do not access it in practice.

57. Related to the above issues are some shortcomings surrounding birth registration and access to identity documents, despite efforts undertaken by the Government. It is possible to re-establish the civil documentation of all children born in Côte d'Ivoire either through a judicial procedure or through special laws on civil registration, Law Nos. 2018-862 and 2018-863 of 19 November 2018, which instituted a special procedure for declaring birth, restoring identity and transcribing birth certificates. Under that law, the declaration and registration of civil status events are compulsory and free of charge and, as a result, children are allowed to register for school without a birth certificate. However, in practice, several challenges may prevent parents from registering a birth in a timely way. Local registration offices are often located far from people living in rural areas or may be difficult to reach due to road conditions. Further, fees are incurred after three months, which many people are not able to afford. The Special Rapporteur was also informed that, in certain cases, it takes an excessive amount of time for local authorities to process birth registrations, and that there is not enough awareness-raising about the importance of birth registration among the general public. Some people reportedly rely on intermediaries, who may deceive parents and charge them a fee without actually registering a birth.

58. Finally, intersecting forms of discrimination present complex challenges for women, persons with disabilities, migrants and other marginalized groups. For instance, although the relevant national legal frameworks guarantee equal access to land for everyone,<sup>17</sup> the Special Rapporteur was informed that, in practice, women are at a disadvantage in this regard and that this reality has a negative impact on their economic autonomy. Persons with disabilities and migrants experience further vulnerabilities, as they are often excluded from social and economic opportunities as well as necessary services and protections. Intersecting forms of discrimination create multilayered disadvantages that are difficult to disentangle and require targeted, inclusive and multidimensional policies that address the specific needs and barriers faced by these and other marginalized populations.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

59. Côte d'Ivoire has robust legal frameworks to address contemporary forms of slavery. The country has made significant progress in tackling child labour in certain sectors through legislation, policy and awareness-raising and the adoption of a multistakeholder approach. As the cocoa sector is of particular importance for the country, eradicating child labour in this area has been a priority for the Government. Nevertheless, instances of contemporary forms of slavery persist and there are a number of gaps in the implementation of existing laws and policies.

60. Strengthening the operational and technical capacity of relevant stakeholders by allocating adequate resources to ending child labour, particularly its worst forms, could

<sup>16</sup> Raphaëla Karlen, Solène Rougeaux and Sara Johansson De Silva, "From market stalls to mechanic shops: better jobs for Côte d'Ivoire's urban youth", World Bank Blogs, 22 November 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Equal access to land for men and women is stipulated in Law No. 2013-655 of 13 September 2013 and Law No. 2019-868 of 14 October 2019.



help address current shortcomings. In addition, early, child and forced marriage, forced labour among adults, trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation should be addressed with the same commitment. Going beyond law enforcement measures and ensuring the active participation of community and religious leaders in ending these practices is essential. Women and girls, as well as migrants and persons with disabilities, are particularly affected by such human rights violations, which require escalated action by the Government and other stakeholders to ensure their access to education, income-generating opportunities and land without discrimination.

61. Despite the economic development of Côte d'Ivoire, poverty continues to be both a cause and a consequence of contemporary forms of slavery in the country. This has resulted in a lack of access to education, social services and infrastructure, in addition to fragile livelihoods. Consequently, the elimination of these practices needs to be addressed through measures leading to the reduction of inequality, decentralized resource allocation, more stringent oversight and enhanced access to decent work. In addition, the access of victims to protection, assistance, justice and remedy should be ensured, including through the identification of the most marginalized victims, notably domestic workers. It is imperative that businesses play a stronger role in protecting workers and the environment, including by adopting and implementing human rights due diligence policies.

62. Finally, urgent attention needs to be paid to the mining sector, in particular to illegal artisanal mining, where children and adults are exploited, despite measures taken by the Government, and serious environmental damage is caused. The worst forms of child labour in this area are a major concern and it is imperative that the Government step up inspections and bring perpetrators and others who benefit from criminal businesses to justice. Conciliation with employers is insufficient and has proven ineffective. It is also important to go beyond law enforcement and to invest in sustainable development, poverty reduction and access to decent work in order to promote alternative livelihood opportunities and prevent contemporary forms of slavery.

63. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government:

(a) Enforce existing criminal and labour laws more effectively by increasing the human and financial resources for relevant authorities, including the police, the gendarmerie, the labour inspectorate and the judiciary, and by enhancing their capacity and expertise through regular training and awareness-raising, in cooperation with other stakeholders;

(b) Strengthen labour inspections in high-risk sectors and step up proactive labour inspections in the domestic sector and in other high-risk sectors, including agro-industry;

(c) Consider streamlining the different existing committees to simplify the governmental architecture for the elimination of child labour and to avoid overlap and ensure that they operate effectively at the local level through a multistakeholder approach and that resources reach children in need and their families;

(d) Identify, prevent, monitor and address child labour, align the National Child Labour Monitoring System of Côte d'Ivoire with private sector child labour monitoring and remediation systems and ensure that the latter comply with agreed sector benchmarks and feed data from the National Child Labour Monitoring System into a national traceability system that incorporates social, economic and environmental data;

(e) Accelerate the roll-out of the National Child Labour Monitoring System, for instance, by providing farmers across the country with a unique identification code;

(f) Hold perpetrators of contemporary forms of slavery accountable more effectively, including businesses and employers;

(g) Ensure that information about workers' rights and entitlements and about grievance procedures in cases of human rights violations is available and

accessible to workers in languages and formats they understand; channels should be free and adapted to users with limited access to the Internet, particularly in remote rural areas, and services should be equipped with sufficient qualified staff to manage the grievances received;

(h) Allocate sufficient resources to relevant governmental and non-governmental entities in order to provide individually tailored assistance, justice and remedies for victims and survivors of contemporary forms of slavery without discrimination of any kind;

(i) Strengthen referrals by improving coordination between Government actors in charge of providing protection, remediation and support to victims of contemporary forms of slavery, including children, and consider developing a centralized, secure database to allow referral from one Government service to another and to guarantee an effective response;

(j) Continue ongoing efforts to secure equal access to education for all children in order to prevent child labour by building more schools in rural areas, providing financial support to families who are unable to cover the education costs and improving transportation to educational institutions;

(k) Allocate adequate resources and intensify sensitization and public awareness-raising campaigns to change the mindset of religious and traditional leaders and the general public on early, child and forced marriage and cooperate and coordinate with civil society in this regard;

(l) Facilitate proactive birth registration and provision of identity documents to Ivorian citizens and migrant workers, including by strengthening the deployment of mobile units to reach remote and rural areas;

(m) Ratify and implement the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) in order to enhance protection for domestic workers;

(n) Review the 2016 list of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18 issued by the Government, in line with article 4 of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), assess specifically the situation of children in domestic work and increase monitoring in this area;

(o) Regularly collect disaggregated data on child labour, including its worst forms, forced labour, early, child and forced marriage and trafficking for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation;

(p) Increase efforts to prevent/address forced labour among adults by effectively implementing existing legislation and developing and implementing an appropriate strategy;

(q) Formalize the informal economy as expeditiously as possible through legislative and other means in order to enhance the rights of workers, for instance through the introduction of written contracts, registration of informal businesses and access to financial and social security, in addition to inclusion of all workers without discrimination;

(r) Step up efforts for the socioeconomic empowerment of women as a means of addressing poverty, gender inequality and preventing labour and other forms of exploitation; to that end, strengthen and expand community service groups and village savings and credit associations;

(s) Increase skills training and employment opportunities for the young workforce as a matter of priority, including in rural areas;

(t) Enhance the implementation of temporary special measures for persons with disabilities in order to secure equal access to education, decent work and essential services;

(u) Develop a holistic intergovernmental response to the mining sector, with the support and involvement of existing bodies, to counter child labour and trafficking

in persons and to strengthen action to halt child labour, forced labour, sexual exploitation and environmental destruction in that sector, including by promoting dialogue among all relevant stakeholders and by prosecuting illegal mining companies;

(v) Provide appropriate support and increased resources to the National Human Rights Council, civil society organizations, trade unions and workers' organizations, which play a vital part in identifying, protecting and reintegrating victims and returned migrants;

(w) Intensify its multistakeholder efforts to reducing poverty by:

(i) Investing in education and vocational training;

(ii) Introducing a living wage;

(iii) Increasing access to social safety nets, including but not limited to social and child protection services, health care and health insurance;

(iv) Investing in entrepreneurship, self-employment and other income generating opportunities;

(v) Increasing efforts to reduce socioeconomic inequality and address intersecting forms of discrimination;

(vi) Distributing resources more equally across the country, decentralizing and deconcentrating the public administration apparatus and increasing the autonomy of departments and continue, in consultation with local communities, to allocate resources to community and social development at the local level, based on the needs identified;

(vii) Addressing corruption and impunity more effectively;

(x) Develop and implement, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, a national action plan to strengthen human rights due diligence among businesses operating in the country, in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;

(y) Strengthen cooperation with ECOWAS and the main countries of destination of migrants through the adoption of bilateral agreements and actively facilitate regular migration pathways to prevent contemporary forms of slavery;

(z) Sensitize Ivorian citizens who may wish to migrate abroad for employment in order to prevent sexual and labour exploitation and create incentives to avoid migration through irregular and dangerous channels;

(aa) Provide sufficient resources to Ivorian embassies abroad, including by deploying additional labour attachés to support and assist Ivorian nationals who may have been exploited in third countries;

(bb) Enhance support to returned Ivorian migrants.

64. The Special Rapporteur recommends that businesses, employers and investors:

(a) Adopt and implement a human rights due diligence policy, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, in order to identify, monitor, prevent and address human rights risks and impacts (including child labour and forced labour) in direct operations and supply chains;

(b) Support suppliers and supply chains, through awareness-raising and capacity-building, to undertake their own human rights due diligence and provide appropriate remedies in case of human rights violations;

(c) Set up independent, anonymous and accessible company grievance mechanisms in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and linked to governmental referral channels;

(d) Pay a living wage to all workers;

(e) Share data from child labour monitoring and remediation systems with national monitoring and remediation systems (including the National Child Labour Monitoring System) to inform referral, prevention and remediation measures;

(f) Strengthen good efforts in supporting community-based programmes, including education, employment and other income generating activities, the expansion of social safety nets and financial inclusion, aimed at empowering marginalized populations, including migrants;

(g) Facilitate the inclusion of and constructive dialogue with all relevant stakeholders in order to develop and implement initiatives to prevent and address forced labour and child labour;

(h) Introduce written contracts for workers in all sectors;

(i) Enhance the transparency of supply chains through more effective monitoring and evaluation;

(j) Continue to work collaboratively with the Government, trade unions, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote and protect the rights of all workers;

(k) Encourage the conduct of more regular audits by certification companies, such as the Rainforest Alliance, to increase their effectiveness in identifying instances of exploitation or abuse.

65. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the international and regional communities:

(a) Provide adequate support to the efforts of the Government and non-governmental stakeholders to prevent and eliminate contemporary forms of slavery;

(b) Facilitate regional and international cooperation among States, including States that are not members of ECOWAS, in order to prevent trafficking of persons and other forms of exploitation to and from Côte d'Ivoire;

(c) Provide appropriate support to Côte d'Ivoire, both financial and technical, to comply with the human rights due diligence legislation adopted by other States and by regional entities such as the European Union;

(d) Continue to support Côte d'Ivoire in addressing the root causes of contemporary forms of slavery, such as poverty, lack of access to education and essential services, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality.

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