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National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21*

Democratic Republic of the Congo

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. The present report is submitted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review.
2. The preparation and submission of this report reflect the State's determination to respect its human rights commitments and obligations, despite the political, economic and social context of insecurity in the eastern part of the country.
3. It has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines contained in Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of June 2007 and decision 17/119 of June 2011, which set out the general guidelines adopted by the Council for the preparation of information to be used for the review of the fourth and subsequent cycles.
4. It includes a status report on the implementation of the recommendations from the third cycle and of voluntary commitments and it describes new challenges, in particular progress made and difficulties encountered, as well as the challenges likely to require the support of the international community.
5. It is structured around the following points: Description of the methodology and general process for gathering information for the universal periodic review (I); New developments since the third cycle of the review of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the normative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights (II); Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground (III); Respect for international human rights obligations (IV); Follow-up to the previous review (V); Progress made, best practices identified and challenges and constraints encountered in implementing the accepted recommendations (VI); National priorities, initiatives and commitments (VII); and Expectations (VIII).

I. Methodology and general consultation process for preparing the report

A. Follow-up to implementation of recommendations

6. Following the third cycle of the country's universal periodic review on 7 May 2019, 239 recommendations were accepted.
7. In November 2019, the Ministry of Human Rights, through the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights, with the support of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), organized a preliminary workshop to classify the 239 recommendations by theme, followed by an expanded workshop with the participation of representatives of some key sectoral ministries and relevant State agencies and of civil society organizations. These events were organized with the technical and financial support of UNJHRO and UPR-Info, and they made it possible to validate a thematic classification of the recommendations and to identify the different actors for implementation, making use of an existing comprehensive plan of recommendations issued by other human rights protection mechanisms.
8. To help disseminate and increase knowledge of the accepted recommendations of the third universal periodic review cycle, an awareness-raising document was prepared by the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights, under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Rights, with technical and financial support from UNJHRO. Two radio and television programmes were subsequently broadcast on the national television channel, RTNC No. 2, with the participation of the Interministerial Committee's permanent secretaries, representatives of the National Human Rights Commission and civil society, and on Radio Okapi, a United Nations media outlet.

B. Preparation of an interim report

9. To meet its voluntary commitment, the Government prepared an interim national report and submitted it in 2022, with the support of UNJHRO, following consultations that brought together representatives of several key sectoral ministries and civil society organizations.

C. Preparation of the national report

10. The preparation and submission of this report took place in the following stages:

- Consultations were held with key sectoral ministries, institutions and other relevant agencies, in particular the Presidency of the Republic, the Prime Minister's Office, the Supreme Council of Justice, the parliament (through the National Assembly's Standing Committees on Human Rights, Gender, Family and Children, Defence and Security) and the National Human Rights Commission, and with the relevant civil society organizations in Kinshasa and the provinces. The consultations were aimed at gathering information on legislative and administrative measures, as well as policies, plans, programmes, strategies and actions carried out at various levels between September 2019 and March 2024 to implement the accepted recommendations.
- Data were collected in the provinces, with the support of UNJHRO and the UPR Trust Fund, and specifically in Equateur; Tshopo, Haut-Katanga, Maniema and Kinshasa
- The draft national report was prepared by the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights
- A workshop was organized in Kinshasa to validate the national report to be submitted to the Working Group on the universal periodic review, attended by representatives of public institutions, the National Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, the diplomatic corps and United Nations agencies.

II. New developments since the previous review

11. Since September 2019, the country's normative and institutional framework for human rights has evolved significantly, notably with the adoption of several legal and regulatory texts aimed at promoting and protecting human rights, as follows.

A. Normative framework

12. Since its last appearance for the universal periodic review, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has adopted the following legislation:

- Organic Act on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons living with disabilities
- Act on the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Pygmy peoples
- Act on the protection and responsibility of human rights defenders
- Act on the basic principles of the prison system
- Act amending and supplementing the Congolese Criminal Code of 1940, with special reference to the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons
- Act establishing the fundamental principles for the protection and reparation of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes
- Ordinance-Law amending and supplementing the Decree of 30 January 1940 on the Congolese Criminal Code with regard to gender-based violence
- Decree establishing a National Children's Council
- Decree creating a special fund to compensate victims of illicit acts carried out by Uganda in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or to their beneficiaries

- Decree creating a universal service development fund
- Ministerial Decree on the creation, organization and operation of a humanitarian monitoring and alarm centre

B. Institutional framework

13. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has established several structures ensuring the proper functioning of the State based on the rule of law and the promotion of human rights, including the following:

- The National Fund for reparation for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes against the peace and security of humanity
- The Special Fund for the reparation and compensation of victims of illicit acts carried out by Uganda in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- The National Solidarity and Humanitarian Disaster Management Fund
- The Environmental Defence Fund
- The Carbon Market Regulatory Authority
- The Congolese Water Authority (Office Congolais de l'Eau)
- The National Office for Family Stabilization

III. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

A. Fulfilment of international obligations

14. Since the consideration of the third national report to the universal periodic review, in a bid to respect and safeguard human rights in the country, the Government has taken several legislative, judicial and administrative measures to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights.

15. Specifically, Act No. 23/027 on the protection and responsibility of human rights defenders was adopted; the perpetrators of serious human rights violations have been convicted and campaigns have been carried out to raise public awareness of human rights.

B. Voluntary commitments

16. In December 2023, at the ceremony held in Geneva to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo voluntarily undertook five human rights commitments:

- To do everything possible to reduce cases of violence against women and girls through prevention, care and legal action, and to continue to implement the commitments for positive masculinity made at the African level
- To make the right to development a reality through policies and legislative measures in various fields, including the extractive industries sector; to remove obstacles to development and ensure environmental sustainability; and to ensure the realization of the rights of persons living with disabilities or HIV/AIDS, as well as the rights of persons with albinism and Indigenous Pygmy peoples, through concrete measures in the fields of education and vocational training, housing, health, employment and access to justice
- To strengthen the protection of civilians thanks to a local community-based police force and a national army respectful of human rights and through effective accountability mechanisms such as the judge advocate's department and the Inspectorate General of Police, and also to bolster measures against impunity at all levels, including through the use of forensic expert reports, both for abuses and

violations of civil and political rights, and for the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights, through independent courts and tribunals with human and material resources that meet the needs of the Congolese people

- To promote transitional justice through the implementation of the national transitional justice policy throughout the country and to actively support the revitalization of the Human Rights Liaison Unit, which is the sole framework for consultation and collaboration involving national and international players working to promote and protect human rights
- To strengthen the civic space by protecting the rights of human rights defenders and journalists and by supporting community organizations and associations committed to the inclusion and participation of women and young people in initiatives to promote peace, social cohesion, local development and environmental protection in the country

17. The implementation of some of these commitments has made the following possible:

- The establishment within the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children, of a Mixed Technical Unit for Positive Masculinity, with a presence in each of the country's provinces;
- The adoption, on 7 March 2024, of four decrees implementing the Act on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons living with disabilities, specifically relating to the representation of persons with disabilities, accessibility, the creation of a national fund to support accessibility and the empowerment of persons with disabilities, and administrative, tax and customs facilities for organizations of persons with disabilities;
- The establishment of a Scientific Committee on Transitional Justice under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Rights, which in 2021 drew up a draft national policy on transitional justice;
- The organization of national consultations for transitional justice in 14 of the country's provinces: Kinshasa – Kongo Central – Kasai – Kasai Central – Kasai Oriental – Lualaba-Tanganyika – Sankuru – Lomami – Tshuapa – Haut-Katanga – Haut-Lomami – Haut-Uélé – Bas-Uélé;
- The establishment and initiation of the work of the Kasai Central Provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission;
- The establishment of a Transitional Justice Compensation Fund with a budget of 2 billion Congolese francs (CGF), equivalent to US\$ 788,800;
- The revitalization of the Human Rights Liaison Unit, through the appointment of members of its secretariat, its Committee of Experts and its Steering Committee.

18. The following activities were organized for the implementation of some of these commitments:

- Designation of 2 August every year as the National Genocost Commemoration Day
- On 22 and 23 February 2024, training in Kinshasa for 70 people, including 30 women, by the National Fund for reparation for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes against the peace and security of humanity on the preparation of documentation and certification for events in the provinces
- From 9 to 15 April 2024, training in Kalemie, Tanganyika Province, for 26 police officers, including 4 officers and high-ranking staff of the Inspectorate General of the Congolese National Police, 1 officer of the police forensic service, and criminal investigation officers from various police units in Tanganyika Province, on the protection of human rights and forensic expertise in investigations
- From 5 to 7 June 2024, capacity-building for 30 criminal investigation officers from the Congolese National Police's Child Protection and Sexual Violence Unit, on the prevention and effective monitoring of human rights violations and sexual violence
- In July 2024, training in Bukavu, Sud-Kivu Province, for 150 criminal investigation officer cadets, on an introduction to forensic medicine

- From 17 to 18 July 2024, training for 37 civil and military magistrates from four courts in the city of Kinshasa on the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol) and efforts to combat torture, organized by the Supreme Council of Justice

C. Raising public awareness of human rights

19. From 2019 to 2023, on the occasion of the international days of human rights and of support for victims of torture, the Ministry of Human Rights organized public speaking competitions on human rights themes for students at national universities. Winners were awarded a variety of prizes.

20. In 2023, as part of the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ministry of Human Rights, together with its partners, organized several activities to raise public awareness of human rights in schools, universities and churches across the country.

21. As part of World Autism Awareness Day (2 April 2024), the Ministry responsible for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable persons organized a week-long public awareness campaign on autism, from 2 to 8 April 2024, in the city of Kinshasa.

D. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

22. The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, represented by the Ministry of Human Rights, regularly takes part in sessions of the Human Rights Council, the treaty bodies and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

23. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is also cooperating closely with various special procedures, in particular the experts appointed in connection with the situation in Kasai Province.

24. Since the end of the third cycle of the universal periodic review, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has prepared and submitted the following reports in fulfilment of its human rights commitments and obligations:

For United Nations bodies

- Addendum to the fourth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Addendum to the second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Presentation of the sixth periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Submission of the initial report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Submission of the report under the exceptional reporting procedure for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Submission of the midterm report for the universal periodic review

For bodies under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

- Fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth periodic reports on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the second periodic report on the implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child:

- The preparation and submission process is under way
- The preparation and drafting of the report are complete
- All that remains is validation by all the stakeholders and submission

IV. Follow-up to recommendations issued during the third cycle of the universal periodic review

A. Ratification of treaties

Rec.: 119.1; 119.3; 119.5; 119.19; 119.20; 119.21; 119.22; 119.23; 119.24; 119.25; 119.26

25. On 23 February 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo deposited with the African Union the instrument of ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, of 22–23 October 2009, following the adoption by the parliament of Act No. 14/025 of 8 July 2014 authorizing ratification.

26. With regard to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 28 September 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 30 August 1961, the Government has prepared two bills for ratification, which it is about to present to the parliament.

B. National Human Rights Commission

Rec.: 119.54; 119.56; 119.57; 119.58; 119.59

27. On 15 December 2022, the National Assembly confirmed the new members of the National Human Rights Commission. On 23 January 2023, they were invested in their posts by the President of the Republic and on 23 March 2023 they were sworn in by the Constitutional Court.

28. The budgetary resources allocated to the Commission for the 2024 financial year amount to CGF 17,668,171.647, equivalent to US\$ 70,159,012, a slight increase on previous budgets (Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 6).

C. Interministerial Committee on Human Rights

Rec.: 119.41

29. Since 2020, the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights has had a staff appointed by the Minister of Human Rights and paid by the public treasury. In 2021, it was provided with a building.

30. Similarly, in September 2021, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, through UNJHRO of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), provided the Committee with equipment and materials for its operations.

31. The Committee currently has a budget line in the 2024 budget of the Ministry of Human Rights in the amount of CGF 200,000,000, equivalent to US\$ 78,880 (Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 6).

D. Cooperation with human rights promotion and protection mechanisms

Rec.: 119.28; 119.32; 119.33; 119.34

32. Since 2019, the Government, through the Ministry of Justice (*Garde des Sceaux*), the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Human Rights, has been working to implement the recommendations contained in document [A/HRC/41/31](#) of 7 May 2019, the Report of the team of international experts on the situation in Kasai. It has proceeded with the conviction at the level of the first instance of the alleged killers of two United Nations experts in Kasai.

33. After the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a judicial cooperation agreement was renewed between the country and the Court on 2 June 2023.

34. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is continuing to work with the United Nations system and its international partners, notably MONUSCO.

E. National mechanism for the prevention of torture

Rec.: 119.47; 119.48; 119.49; 119.50; 119.51; 119.52; 119.53; 119.55

35. On 10 February 2023, an ad hoc Commission set up at the initiative of the Ministry of Human Rights and made up of representatives of State institutions concerned by the problem of torture and representatives of civil society organizations, with the technical assistance of experts from the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, drafted a bill to establish a national preventive mechanism. The Commission took into account the requirements of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and also the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

36. The bill creating the national preventive mechanism will soon be submitted to the parliament after it is presented to the Law Commission and the Council of Ministers. (Sustainable Development Goal 16, targets 2 and 3).

F. Protection of human rights defenders and journalists

Rec.: 119.90; 119.91; 119.92; 119.97; 119.99; 119.100; 119.101; 119.102; 119.103; 119.104; 119.108; 119.110; 119.97

37. In addition to the Government's efforts to provide civil society players in general, and media professionals and human rights defenders in particular, with an environment conducive to the exercise of their activities or mission, the following is of note:

- National consultations on communication were held in Kinshasa from 26 to 29 January 2022 to take stock of the situation of the press and journalists in the country
- Ordinance-Law No. 23/009 of 13 March 2023 was published, setting out the conditions for exercising freedom of the press and freedom of information and of radio and television broadcasting, of the written press and of any other means of communication
- Act No. 23/027 of 15 June 2023 on the protection and responsibility of human rights defenders was adopted
- Edict No. 001/2019 of 30 November on the protection of human rights defenders in Nord-Kivu Province was issued
- A proposal was made for an edict for the protection of human rights defenders in Sud-Ubangi Province

G. Improvement of the legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

Rec.: 119.36; 119.37

38. Since 2019, a series of initiatives has been taken to improve the legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, through the enactment of the following laws:

- Ordinance-Law No. 20/058 of 30 June 2020 on a collective pardon for several persons and politicians
- Organic Act No. 22/003 of 3 May 2022 on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities
- Act No. 22/030 of 15 July 2022 on the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Pygmy peoples
- Act No. 22/067 of 26 December 2022 amending and supplementing the Decree of 30 January 1940 on the Congolese Criminal Code, with regard to the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons
- Act No. 22/065 of 26 December 2022 laying down the fundamental principles for the provision of protection and reparation for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes against the peace and security of humanity
- Publication of Ordinance-Law No. 23/009 of 13 March 2023 setting out the conditions for exercising freedom of the press and freedom of information and of radio and television broadcasting, of the written press and of any other means of communication
- Act No. 23/028 of 15 June 2023 setting out the fundamental principles of the prison system
- Act No. 23/027 of 15 June 2023 on the protection and responsibility of human rights defenders
- Ordinance-Law No. 23/024 of 11 September 2023 amending and supplementing the Decree of 6 August 1959 on the Code of Criminal Procedure with regard to the free provision of legal assistance for victims of gender-based violence

H. Capacity-building in the field of human rights

Rec.: 119.39; 119.63; 119.64; 119.66; 119.67; 119.193; 119.147

39. In general terms, after the third cycle of the country's universal periodic review, training modules to build the capacity of the security and defence forces continued, notably at the Congolese National Police Academy, where two classes of police commissioners have benefited from human rights training since 2022.

40. It is also worth noting the integration of the human rights approach in the training modules at military academies and national police academies.

41. In 2020 and 2021, the defence and security forces received human rights training through the Civic, Patriotic and Social Education Service. For example, 1,571 members of the military were trained in May 2024 in Equateur Province.

42. In addition to the defence and security forces, officers from other government departments also received training in human rights and the fight against sexual violence (Sustainable Development Goal 4, targets 4 and 7).

I. Civil and political rights

Right to life – Right to liberty – Right to security of person – Administration of justice – Fight against impunity – Rule of law – Fundamental freedoms

Rec.: 119.69; 119.62; 119.89; 119.83; 119.93; 119.94; 119.95; 119.96; 119.98; 119.105; 119.106; 119.107; 119.109; 119.111; 119.112; 119.118; 119.119

43. The following measures have been taken to implement these recommendations:

- Act No. 22/067 of 26 December 2022 was adopted, amending and supplementing the Decree of 30 January 1940 on the Congolese Criminal Code with regard to the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons
- The Agency for the Prevention and Fight against Trafficking in Persons was made operational
- Ordinance-Law No. 20/058 of 30 June 2020 on a collective pardon for several persons and politicians was issued
- Ordinance-Law No. 23/009 of 13 March 2023 was issued, setting out the conditions for exercising freedom of the press, freedom of information and of radio and television broadcasting, of the written press and of any other means of communication
- The Act ratifying Ordinance-Law No. 23/010 of 13 March 2023 on the Digital Code was adopted (Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 6).

J. Fighting impunity

Rec.: 119.68; 119.70; 119.113; 119.116; 119.194; 119.195; 119.200; 119.201; 119.202; 119.203; 119.120; 119.121; 119.122; 119.124; 119.125; 119.126; 119.127; 119.128; 119.129; 119.130; 119.131; 119.132; 119.133; 119.134; 119.135; 119.136; 119.137; 119.138; 119.139; 119.140; 119.141; 119.142; 119.143; 119.144; 119.146

44. Since 2019, the fight against impunity for serious human rights violations has resulted in an increase in the number of cases investigated and prosecuted, in particular in military courts, as illustrated in the following statistics:

- Number of files received: 2,472
- Number of files processed: 1,027
- Number of unprocessed files: 1,445
- Percentage of files processed: 41.55 per cent
- Percentage of files not processed: 58.45 per cent
- Number of investigations carried out: 3,917

K. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to education, right to health, right to work, right to a decent wage, right to social security

Rec.: 119.46; 119.60; 119.78; 119.79; 119.148; 119.151; 119.152; 119.153; 119.154; 119.155; 119.156; 119.157; 119.158; 119.159; 119.160; 119.161; 119.162; 119.163; 119.164; 119.165; 119.166; 119.167; 119.168; 119.169; 119.170; 119.171; 119.172; 119.179; 119.180; 119.174

45. The following measures have been adopted to implement these recommendations:

- Continuation of the implementation of free basic education, resulting in the reintegration of a large number of children into the education system
- Increase of the gross enrolment ratio from 114.8 per cent in 2022 to 115.7 per cent in 2023

- Launch in 2022 of the plan for universal health coverage as part of the strengthening of the social security system and the development of health insurance
 - Adoption of a national road map consisting of five strategic areas
 - Elimination of direct payment, through an adapted health insurance system targeted by population category, in accordance with article 70 (1) of Act No. 17/002 of 8 February 2017, which sets out the fundamental principles for non-profit mutual insurance assistance schemes. This makes health insurance compulsory for all persons, and there is the possibility of withholding contributions at source.
 - The creation, by a decree of 9 April 2022, of five public establishments, as follows:
 - The Agence Nationale d'Ingénierie clinique, de l'informatique de santé (National Clinical Engineering and Health Informatics Agency) became the Agence Nationale d'ingénierie clinique et du numérique de la santé (National Clinical Engineering and Digital Services Health Agency)
 - The Universal Health Care Regulation and Monitoring Authority
 - The Health Promotion Fund
 - The Health Solidarity Fund
 - The National Public Health Institute
46. In the same vein, the following other measures have been adopted:
- Implementation of the 145-Territory Local Development Programme (PDL-145)
 - Development of the National Policy for Employment and Vocational Training
 - Establishment of a policy and strategy for implementation of the National Social Protection Policy
 - Continuation of modernization and refurbishment of the public administration through the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (the National Administration School) (fifth to eighth classes), which trained 400 civil administrators between 2019 and 2022
 - Competitive recruitment of the fourth wave of 1,000 junior professional officers, in accordance with the civil servants and State employees statute
 - Expansion of the standard structures of the second wave in 13 central administrations, in order to migrate to the programme budget at various government ministries
 - Retirement of more than 4,000 civil servants through the National Social Security Fund for State Officials
 - Creation of the compulsory universal health insurance scheme, instituted by Act No. 37-2014 of 27 June 2014, supplemented and amended by Act No. 12-2023 of 12 May 2023
 - Adoption of the Youth Employment Programme
 - Establishment of the national mechanism to support and monitor the National Youth Employment Plan
 - Adoption of the Support Project for the Development of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, a start-up and entrepreneurship project to fund youth projects and development programmes for youth innovation and entrepreneurship, with funding of US\$ 100 million to finance young people at schools and universities
 - Recruitment of 2,000 labour inspectors in September 2023
 - Recruitment of 75 finance department inspectors in December 2021
 - Establishment and monitoring of the minimum wage
 - Establishment of the National Professional Certification Council
 - Organization of National Labour Council sessions (employers, workers and the State)

- Updating of the reference database of public officials to control headcount and increase civil servants' salaries, and harmonizing conditions for new civil servants, teachers and doctors
- Organization in 2021 and 2022 of a workshop on the rationalization of prices and tariffs for health-care products and services in the country
- Signature in 2021 of Decree No. 007/CAB/MIN/ECONAT/JKY/DELD/2021 of 7 August 2021 setting air transport fares and rates on domestic routes

47. Universal health coverage is the political option taken by the Head of State to express his commitment to ensuring health for all and access to quality health care and services, equitably distributed and without any financial barrier for all categories of the population, in accordance with the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) of the International Labour Organization and article 47 of the Constitution (Sustainable Development Goal 4, targets 3 and 4; Sustainable Development Goal 3, targets 3 and 7; and Sustainable Development Goal 1, target 3).

L. Vulnerable groups

Rec.: 119.149; 119.150; 119.181; 119.182; 119.264

48. In order to strengthen care programmes for the most vulnerable groups, a new ministry with a secretariat has been established: the Ministry for Persons with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Persons.

49. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action is responsible for humanitarian action taken in the event of disasters and for providing care for vulnerable people.

50. Four decrees have been issued to implement the Act on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons living with disabilities and other vulnerable persons.

51. In addition, a national campaign was launched in November 2023 to publicize the law promoting and protecting vulnerable persons and persons with disabilities (Sustainable Development Goal 1, targets 2, 3 and 4).

M. Women's rights

Rec.: 119.80; 119.61; 119.81; 119.183; 119.184; 119.185; 119.186; 119.187; 119.188; 119.189; 119.190; 119.191; 119.215; 119.216; 119.217; 119.218; 119.219; 119.220; 119.221; 119.222; 119.223; 119.224; 119.225; 119.226; 119.227; 119.228; 119.229; 119.230; 119.231; 119.232

52. The implementation of these recommendations has led, since the last cycle of the universal periodic review, to the creation of the National Fund for reparation for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes against the peace and security of humanity, and the issuance of a decree establishing "One Stop Centres" aimed at improving the provision of multisectoral services for survivors of sexual violence.

53. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a party to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The provisions of article 14 of the Protocol have been popularized on numerous occasions to ensure that they will be applied.

54. Guidelines for safe abortion have been drawn up by the national reproductive health programme.

55. With regard to the implementation of the 2018–2022 National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), several actions have been carried out. Secretariat 1325, the national body coordinating implementation of the resolution, has been set up in the provinces, and training and awareness-raising sessions have been held for organizations working to promote and protect women's rights and for opinion leaders and young people.

56. In the same vein, a National Strategy to Combat Gender-based Violence, revised in 2020, was adopted, followed by a zero tolerance campaign launched on 19 June 2021, and the first men's conference on positive masculinity, held in Kinshasa on 25 November 2021.

57. With regard to measures to promote women's participation in political and public life, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children has drafted a national strategy for women's political participation in democratic governance, which will soon be adopted (Sustainable Development Goal 1, target 4, and Sustainable Development Goal 5, targets 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

N. Combating sexual violence

Rec.: 119.192; 119.196; 119.197; 119.198; 119.199; 119.204; 119.205; 119.206; 119.207; 119.208; 119.209; 119.210; 119.211; 119.212; 119.213; 119.214

58. In 2020, the Government updated its National Strategy to Combat Gender-based Violence, adopted in 2009.

59. Along the same lines, Ordinance-Law No. 23/024 of 11 September 2023 was issued, amending and supplementing the Decree of 6 August 1959 on the Code of Criminal Procedure with regard to the free provision of legal assistance for victims of gender-based violence (Sustainable Development Goal 1, target 4 and Sustainable Development Goal 5, targets 1, 2, 4 and 5).

O. Rights of the child

Rec.: 119.40; 119.42; 119.43; 119.65; 119.75; 119.173; 119.175; 119.176; 119.177; 119.178; 119.233; 119.234; 119.235; 119.236; 119.237; 119.238; 119.239; 119.240; 119.241; 119.242; 119.243; 119.244; 119.245; 119.246; 119.247; 119.248; 119.249; 119.250; 119.251; 119.252; 119.253; 119.254; 119.265

60. With regard to recommendations concerning the promotion and protection of children's rights, the following measures have been taken:

- Decree No. 22/26 of 20 October 2022 was issued, on the organization and operation of the National Children's Council
- Several awareness campaigns were conducted to prevent child marriage

61. An action plan prohibiting the recruitment of children by armed groups has been adopted, followed by an action programme for the reintegration of child soldiers.

62. By Decree No. 00122/CAB.MIN/MINES/01/2020 of 6 March 2020, the Interministerial Commission on Work in Artisanal Mines was established to monitor child labour in artisanal mines.

63. A five-year project was adopted to support the alternative well-being of children and young people involved in supplying cobalt, with beneficiaries first in the provinces of Lualaba and Haut-Katanga. In February 2022, a mission to identify the project's beneficiaries covered the sites of Kasulu, Bwaya and Fungurume.

64. A mining police unit monitors artisanal mines to combat child labour (Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 3, Sustainable Development Goal 10, target 3 and Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 2).

P. Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Rec.: 119.255; 119.256; 119.257; 119.258

65. With regard to the implementation of these recommendations, kindly refer to the information concerning vulnerable people in the above paragraphs (Sustainable Development Goal 10, target 2).

Q. Rights of Pygmy Indigenous Peoples

Rec.: 119.77; 119.260; 119.261; 119.262; 119.263

66. The implementation of these recommendations led to the adoption of Act No. 23/030 of 15 July 2022 on the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Pygmy peoples, promulgated on 16 November 2022.

67. A national programme has been adopted to promote the rights of Indigenous Pygmy peoples, with a budget of CGF 3,000,000,000, equivalent to US\$ \$1,183,198.50 (Sustainable Development Goal 1, target 2).

R. Fighting statelessness

Rec.: 119.266; 119.267

68. As part of the fight against statelessness, a National Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Statelessness was created in 2019 and placed within the Ministry of Justice, followed by the adoption, in October 2021, of a National Action Plan for the Fight against Statelessness (Sustainable Development Goal 10, target 2).

S. Business and human rights

Rec.: 119.82

69. A national workshop on business and human rights was held on 22 and 23 June 2023, during which a road map was adopted and a multisectoral technical committee was established to draw up a national business and human rights action plan. The committee was placed under the coordination of the Ministry of Human Rights (Sustainable Development Goal 8, target 7).

T. Justice reform

Rec.: 119.88; 119.114; 119.115; 119.117; 119.44

70. Adoption of the 2021–2023 priority action plan of the National Justice Reform Policy.

71. Recruitment of 5,000 new judges and prosecutors.

72. The military justice system organized and held several mobile court sessions in Kinshasa and in certain provinces.

73. Appointment, through nine presidential ordinances issued on 31 July 2022, of judges and prosecutors at the Constitutional Court, the Court of Cassation, the Council of State, the Supreme Council of Justice and the country's various courts of appeal.

74. Retirement of judges and prosecutors and recruitment of new ones under way.

75. Organization of the Judicial Police Inspectors Corps, attached to the public prosecutor's offices, and of the Judicial Police of the Congolese National Police.

76. Of the 1,444 courts scheduled for establishment in the 2022 priority action plan, 343 have already been set up.

77. The Government plans to set up 38 district courts in some parts of the country.

78. In addition, there are 16 *tribunaux de grande instance* (courts of major jurisdiction) in the territories and 11 children's courts in each province.

79. Inauguration on 13 August 2021 of the Luzumu detention camp in Kasangulu, in Kongo Central Province, by the Minister of Justice. This rehabilitated prison is designed to accommodate male inmates who have reached the age of majority and have been sentenced to 3 years or more of imprisonment (Sustainable Development Goal 10, target 3, and Sustainable Development Goal 16, target 6).

U. Right to peace and security

Rec.: 119.38; 119.71; 119.123; 119.35

80. The Congolese Demining Centre and the United Nations Mine Action Service are working to remove the threat of anti-personnel mines, with the aim of achieving “zero mines”, “zero explosive remnants of war” and “zero explosive devices”.

81. The national Government is continuing its efforts to eradicate all armed groups operating in the country.

82. Similarly, in June 2023, the United Nations Security Council recommended that the Rwandan-backed M23 withdraw from the areas that it was occupying in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

83. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is continuing to work with its local and international partners for lasting peace (Sustainable Development Goal 16, targets 1 and 3).

V. Adherence to voluntary principles

Rec.: 119.2

84. In 2020, the Democratic Republic of the Congo established the Extractive Industries Human Rights and Security Monitoring Entity.

85. On 3 August 2020, the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued a decree establishing the modalities for implementing the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in the extractive industries.

86. On 25 May 2023, the Democratic Republic of the Congo joined the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights initiative, thus becoming a committed member.

87. A committee tasked with drawing up a national business and human rights action plan is due to be appointed in the very near future (Sustainable Development Goal 8, target 7).

V. Progress, best practices, challenges and constraints for the implementation of certain accepted recommendations and developments in the human rights situation in the country

A. Progress made and best practices

88. Since the last cycle of the universal periodic review, tireless efforts have been made to improve the legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular for: persons with disabilities, Indigenous Pygmy peoples, human rights defenders, media professionals, persons subjected to any form of detention or imprisonment and victims of serious human rights violations.

89. During the same period, the organic and structural framework for caring for victims of human rights violations was also improved, notably with the creation of compensation and reparation funds and other public services and institutions.

90. In terms of best practices, it is worth noting the good collaboration between national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, such as the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights, (responsible for preparing and submitting national reports), the National Human Rights Commission, the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly, the Gender, Family and Children Committee of the National Assembly, the courts and tribunals (civil and military, through the Supreme Council of Justice) and the relevant civil society organizations, as part of the exchange of information on human rights issues.

B. Challenges and constraints for the implementation of certain accepted recommendations

91. Since the last cycle of the universal periodic review, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has encountered some notable difficulties in implementing certain accepted recommendations. Specifically, the competent State services have been unable to gain access to areas in conflict and under the occupation of armed groups in order to implement national policies, plans and programmes, as well as national strategies aimed at promoting and protecting human rights in general and the rights of certain groups in particular.

92. Many of these State services have even been forced to leave areas that are in conflict or under occupation.

C. Evolution of the human rights situation in the country

93. Despite the armed conflicts that continue to throw the country's human rights priorities into disarray, the human rights situation has at least evolved significantly since the last cycle of the universal periodic review, notably through policies, plans, programmes, strategies and priority actions already implemented or under way thanks to efforts to mobilize public funds and the support of certain technical and financial partners.

VI. National priorities, initiatives and commitments for implementation

A. Priorities

94. Since the last cycle of the universal periodic review, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has set a number of human rights priorities. They are reflected in the expressed will and commitment of the President, who is the Head of State, and the Prime Minister, the Head of Government.

95. To this end, the Government has undertaken to:

- Create more than 6.4 million jobs by 2028
- Effectively ensure public safety
- Protect household purchasing power
- Continue free maternity care
- Provide for teacher education
- Significantly improve access to drinking water
- Continue household electrification in rural areas
- Increase competitiveness, with the processing of unprocessed agricultural mining products
- Continuing economic diversification
- Guarantee access to basic social services through universal health coverage and free primary education
- Strengthen the efficiency of public services by renewing and training the staff working in the public administration
- Focus on youth entrepreneurship

B. Initiatives

96. In the context of development initiatives, it is worth noting the implementation, by decision of the President of the Republic, with public funding and the support of technical

and financial partners, of the 145-Territory Local Development Programme (PDL-145), which aims to improve the living conditions of rural populations.

97. Together with the 2019–2023 National Strategic Development Plan, the 2021–2023 Government Action Programme and the Accelerated Presidential Programme to Combat Poverty and Inequality, PDL-145 is organized around the following four components:

- Improving access to basic socioeconomic infrastructure and services for people living in rural areas
- Promoting the development of rural economies and local value chains
- Strengthening local development management capacities
- Developing a geo-referenced information monitoring system capable of keeping track of the programme's progress

C. National commitments for the implementation of accepted recommendations

98. At the end of the third cycle of the universal periodic review, the Democratic Republic of the Congo undertook to implement recommendations by:

- Developing a brochure to group recommendations by theme
- Popularizing the recommendations through the media (national radio and television and community radio services)

VII. Expectations

99. In view of the difficulties encountered in implementing certain accepted recommendations, the Democratic Republic of the Congo calls upon the international community to:

- Strongly support the re-establishment of lasting peace throughout the country, particularly in areas in conflict and under the occupation of armed groups, with a view to restoring the authority of the State
- Provide multifaceted support to facilitate the implementation of national policies, plans, programmes and strategies to promote and protect human rights.

VIII. Noted recommendations

100. It should be recalled that at the end of the third cycle of the universal periodic review the Democratic Republic of the Congo took note of recommendations mainly relating to the abolition of the death penalty and the protection of LGBT+ persons. The position of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on these issues remains as it was at the end of the interactive dialogue before the Human Rights Council.