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Guinea-Bissau

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Introduction

1. The Republic of Guinea-Bissau is on the west coast of Africa. A total of 22 per cent of its territory is made up of 88 islands and islets. The country was governed by Portugal until September 1974, when it gained its independence.

I. Background information on the country

2. Power is officially exercised through a multiparty, semi-presidential system of democracy. The President is elected for a five-year term and may be re-elected only once. The National Assembly is elected for four years. There is a formal separation of presidential, legislative, governmental and judicial powers. Since the political and military conflict of 1998, no government has been able to complete its mandate owing to cyclical political and institutional instability.

3. This instability is reflected in the 2018 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, in which Guinea-Bissau ranks forty-second out of 54 African countries. It has fostered neither economic growth nor coherent social policies and has resulted in Guinea-Bissau being dependent on the international community for assistance in the economic, health and education sectors.

II. Methodology

4. In accordance with the guidelines set out in Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, this report was drafted by an ad hoc interministerial committee that included representatives of the National Assembly, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the National Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of National Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communities, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of the Family, Women and Social Protection and the Public Prosecutor's Office. The committee was established pursuant to Order No. 08/GMJDH/2019 of 23 August of the Minister of Justice, on the instructions of the Prime Minister.

5. The report, which considers the entire national territory, was drawn up using bibliographical research, surveys, comparative analysis of formal and material sources and factual information taken from daily life, i.e. information related to the practical application of constitutional and legal instruments.

6. On 18 September 2019, public bodies and non-governmental human rights organizations took part in a workshop to discuss and validate the report.

III. The State of Guinea-Bissau and the recommendations made in the first and second cycles

A. Implemented (fully, partially/in progress or pending)

Universal instruments

Fully implemented (recommendations 96.4, 96.5, 96.6, 96.7)

7. During the reporting period, Guinea-Bissau completed the process of ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (depositary notification, 2018) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (depositary notification, 2018).

Partially implemented/in progress (recommendations 96.2, 96.9, 96.10, 96.37, 96.38)

8. Some recommendations have been partially implemented, including those related to ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights. This important instrument has been approved by the Council of Ministers and parliament and awaits only ratification by the President of the Republic and notification to the depositary.

9. Guinea-Bissau is already a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In accordance with article 1 of the Optional Protocol, Guinea-Bissau recognizes the competence of the Human Rights Committee.

Reforms of the justice system

Partially implemented

In the area of infrastructure (recommendations 96.84, 96.85, 96.94, 96.91, 96.88, 96.101, 96.31, 96.110)

10. Sufficient progress has been made in the construction of basic infrastructure, such as the court house in Gabú, the courts in Canchungo, Mansôa and Bubaque, and the Palace of Justice in Bissau, which houses the Supreme Court of Justice, the Court of Audit, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Court of Appeal.

11. Birth registration centres have been established in the north (Cumura), the Eastern Province (Contuboel) and the south (Fulacunda and Tite) of the country.

12. The decentralization of birth registration services, which were formerly concentrated in Bissau, the capital city, has facilitated the registration process for parents and guardians, leading to a significant increase in the number of newborns registered free of charge.

13. The Judicial Training Centre has provided mandatory two-year training courses to candidates for the judiciary and refresher courses for judges who have not undertaken specialized training in the field. As a result, the technical quality of judicial decisions has improved.

14. In November 2017, the Bar Association of Guinea-Bissau instituted mandatory one-year legal training courses for new lawyers.

15. Through the Legal Information and Consultation Office, persons on low incomes can now apply for exemption from legal fees.

16. New civil registration and notarial services have been opened in Bissau.

17. To improve security, regional headquarters of the criminal investigation police have been built in Bubaque to support the work of criminal investigation officers in the Bijagós Islands, thereby discouraging organized criminal activities such as drug trafficking and money laundering.

18. The purpose of all these measures is to strengthen the judicial system by improving working conditions for staff and facilitating access to justice for citizens.

Modernization of services (recommendations 96.31, 96.86, 96.87, 96.89, 96.90, 96.92, 96.83, 96.84)

19. Steps have been taken to ensure that fees are paid through banks in order to facilitate effective control of revenue collection, thereby strengthening the Ministry's control of internal revenue.

20. The Government has strengthened the capacity of members of the judiciary in the areas of criminal justice and the management of judicial proceedings and ensured that judicial staff are better qualified to exercise their duties.

21. Legal information and guidance services have been opened and expanded in the regions of Quinara and Tombali (the Centre for Access to Justice in Buba).

22. The purpose of all the measures implemented is to bring legal services closer to the citizens of these regions and also to reduce the extent to which people take the law into

their own hands or resort to other forms of justice, such as traditional justice or intervention by the police.

Legislation (recommendations 96.83, 96.84, 96.85, 96.89, 96.92, 96.110)

23. The amendments made under this heading are intended to enable members of the judiciary to act in accordance with the principle of legality by strengthening their ability to prosecute criminal proceedings and bring them to trial more quickly. In line with this approach, parliament has approved laws related to the smuggling of migrants, money laundering and the new pay scale for judges.

24. Some pieces of legislation are being drafted while others have already been finalized or submitted to parliament by the Government:

- Organic Act on the registry of the judiciary and the prosecutor's office, regulations on the financial management of the justice system
- Regulations governing the profession of bailiff
- Draft code of civil status
- Draft regulations governing the profession of prison guard
- Draft internal regulations on prisons
- Draft decree on the Office for the Recovery of Assets from Crime
- Draft code of integrated child protection

Unlawful arrests, torture and ill-treatment (recommendations 96.99, 96.50, 96.51, 96.101, 96.102, 96.103, 96.104, 96.106)

25. Torture and cruel or degrading treatment are expressly prohibited under the Constitution and some pieces of ordinary legislation, including the Criminal Code. These practices are nevertheless common in some police stations.

26. In order to ensure that members of the security forces who commit human rights violations do not go unpunished, the Government has taken a number of relevant measures, including the immediate suspension of all persons involved in such acts, the opening of disciplinary investigations and the submission of the respective cases to the Public Prosecutor's Office to ensure due process is followed. These measures have sometimes resulted in the criminal conviction of the persons involved. A number of cases are pending trial.

- The case of the murder of a citizen in police custody in Bissorã, in 2016, resulted in the conviction of the four police officers involved.
- In 2018, an officer of the National Guard was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment for raping a woman.
- A case related to a sexual assault perpetrated in 2017 by two police officers from the model police station in Bairro Militar (a district of Bissau) against a woman who was in police custody in that police station, is pending trial.
- Police officers involved in the 2017 murder of a citizen suspected of theft, who was beaten to death while in police custody in Zona Sete (Bissau), are awaiting trial.

27. This is the first time that members of the security forces have been tried for violating citizens' fundamental rights.

28. Criminal justice bodies are taking these measures in order to discourage security officers from committing offences, as such officers should be protecting citizens' human rights rather than violating them.

Cooperation with special procedures of the Human Rights Council (recommendations 96.33, 65.32, 65.33)

29. The Government has invited the special procedure mandate holders to visit Guinea-Bissau. As a result, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights visited the country in 2014 and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers visited in 2015. They saw the situation at first hand and issued many recommendations which are deserving of comment. In the absence of a reply, however, their recommendations may be considered to have been accepted by the authorities.

Good practices (recommendations 96.93, 96.27)

- Participation in an international conference on human rights
- Participation in an international conference on restorative justice and comparative experiences
- Holding of a workshop on the granting of official status to the Institute for Access to Justice and Public Defence
- Drafting of a national plan on civil status and digital statistics
- Drawing up of a road map for the development of a national strategic plan on combating drugs and organized crime and reducing risk
- Signing of an agreement with the Law School of Bissau for the revision of the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure and the Code of Criminal Procedure
- Consolidation and increased availability of birth registration offices in health centres
- Holding of a joint workshop with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the evaluation of the previous national plan to combat drugs, organized crime and drug abuse
- Participation in a regional conference held by the Court of Justice of the West African Economic and Monetary Union on the harmonization of community justice
- Allocation, through the public treasury, of 10 million CFA francs (about 15,500 euros) of State funds per month to feed prisoners in the country's various prisons

Reforms of the defence sector

30. Since 2015, Guinea-Bissau has made significant progress in stabilizing the role played by the armed forces in maintaining a democratic State governed by the rule of law. The armed forces have kept out of all political disputes, which had always led to a change in the constitutional order. In that regard, they have respected the constitutional prohibition on their members' involvement in politics despite the political crisis that prevailed during the last parliament, which political actors used as justification for obstructing the implementation of important reforms in the defence and security sectors.

31. The approaches taken to demobilization and reintegration have not had the expected impact on the change in the operations of the defence and security forces. There is a need for public policies providing for the implementation of the recently revised legal framework with a view to promoting genuine defence and security forces that obey the rules of coexistence in a democratic State governed by the rule of law.

32. In that regard, the Government, acting through the Ministry of Defence, has enabled the National Assembly to adopt the following pieces of legislation, which are aimed at regulating the organization and functioning of the armed forces:

- Code of Military Justice, to be promulgated by the President of the Republic
- Organic Act on Military Justice (not yet adopted by the specialized parliamentary committee)
- Regulations on military discipline (Act No. 4/2015 of 3 November on the regulations governing the organization and functioning of the armed forces)

33. Since 2016, the Ministry of Defence, operating through the National Defence Institute and the Social Affairs Division of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, and in partnership with the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, has provided the following in relation to human rights training, in stages, in order to disseminate fundamental human rights values in the country's military units and foster a culture of respect for human rights within the armed forces:

- Basic training in human rights for all military units
- Development of a practical guide to human rights for the armed forces in 2016
- Training of trainers in the field of human rights in various military zones, in mid-June and July 2019
- Three conferences on relations between the civil authorities and the military to enhance understanding of the basis for the subordination of the armed forces to constitutionally established political power
- Seminar on the content of the reform
- Intensive courses in French, English and German
- Collaborative work related to a study of the security level, from 19 to 23 December 2016, carried out by the National Defence and Security Institute and the Maritime and Port Institute
- Rehabilitation of five military facilities: the headquarters of the air staff, the headquarters of the army, the headquarters of the Gabú, Bafata and Quebo battalions, the command headquarters of the southern military zone and ongoing work to rehabilitate the headquarters of the General Staff of the Armed Forces; the provision of vocational training to 20 military staff members, 10 national guards and 10 public order police in order to promote their social reintegration

Security

34. There are around 5,000 persons in the security forces, but the number of staff currently serving is around 3,500.

35. The recruitment of police officers and auxiliaries is helping to improve the gender balance in the security forces.

36. In recent years, the number of women joining operational police units has increased significantly. For example, a considerable number of women police officers are employed in police stations (an average of 10 to 15 women per police station).

37. Women are employed at managerial level in four of the six police stations in Bissau.

38. A significant number of women work in the traffic police.

39. Although the majority of senior officers, junior officers and soldiers are men, many senior officers are women.

40. Most of the training courses delivered at the local level have been short courses and 60 per cent of them have been funded by United Nations human rights agencies.

41. Only two of the existing police stations were built from scratch, using United Nations funding and in accordance with international standards. The other police stations are located in residential buildings and do not comply with international standards.

42. Four police stations have recently been rehabilitated in Caió, Mansôa, Nhacra and Ondame. Six security outposts have been established in Bissau and in some inland locations.

43. The conduct of police officers responsible for patrolling events and gatherings has improved considerably, partly as a result of the training given to officers recruited in recent years. However, the standard of uniforms and equipment falls well short of expectations and equipment, transportation and infrastructure are in short supply. It is also common

knowledge that no strategic training plan addressing retraining, internships and long-term training has been established.

44. In the area of cooperation, the public order police have signed a partnership agreement with the public security police of Portugal, in accordance with which two police officers travel to Portugal each year to obtain a Master's degree in police science.

45. Members of the National Guard have undertaken internships in Spain under a partnership established with the Spanish Civil Guard. Cooperation with the Government of Timor-Leste has resulted in training programmes being established for sergeants while Bachelor's courses in police science have been conducted in cooperation with the Government of Russia. A training programme for 10 officers has been conducted in cooperation with the Government of Ghana.

Public administration

46. Significant legislative developments related to the civil service and employment have taken place in the past five years under the reform and modernization of the public administration. They include the promulgation of the following pieces of legislation: Legislative Decree No. 5/2009 on the general outline of the reform; Legislative Decree Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, adopting the legal regime of incompatibility; Decree Law No. 11/12 on the regulations governing the reform of the civil service; Decree No. 12/12 on the legal regime for reassignment and retraining; Decree Law No. 13/12 on the system of statutory leave, absence and dismissals in the public administration and Decree Law No. 14/12, adopting the rules and principles governing vocational training in the public administration. An action plan for the reform of the public administration has also been adopted.

47. The purpose of this plan is to reform and modernize the public administration through the integrated system for the management of human resources in public administration and the integrated system for public finance management. However, these two tools have not been implemented as the funds for purchasing the relevant software are not available. As part of the process of modernizing the public administration, the Integrated Attendance Management System for the Public Administration has been implemented to monitor the presence and attendance of public administration staff.

48. The staffing structure for all the ministries was recently adopted. In the course of that process, attention was drawn to the innovative approach taken in the designation of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

Good practices

Reform of public administration (recommendations/partially implemented 96.114)

- A commission has been set up to manage the pension fund into which all civil servants are required to contribute 6 per cent of their salaries. This initiative by the National Union of Workers, which has been approved by the Government, will enable hundreds of social housing units to be built, thereby addressing the issue of the right to housing.

Education

Improve the education system (recommendations 96.134, 96.136, 96.143)

49. The Government has developed strategic programmes and plans and adopted various pieces of legislation, such as the Education Sector Programme (2009–2020), the Education Policy Charter of Guinea-Bissau (2017–2025), the Education Sector Plan (2017–2025), the Terra Ranka Strategic Plan (2015–2025), the World Programme for Human Rights Education and Act No. 6/2018 on school canteens and the regulations governing the teaching profession. However, the political crisis in the country makes it difficult to implement them.

Improve the quality of education and increase school enrolment (recommendation 96.135)

50. According to data taken from the State Report on the Education System, 76 per cent of children (88,949 in total) enrol in the first year of basic education but 18 per cent of them leave school before the sixth year of schooling while only 48 per cent reach the final year of basic education.

51. In rural areas, girls are half as likely to complete basic education as boys, while in urban areas they are 0.7 times as likely to complete it. At the national level, only 25 per cent of the 1,674 schools in the unified basic education system offer the full second cycle (seventh to ninth years of schooling).

52. In order to increase school enrolment and eliminate the problem of late entry, the Government has prepared the “6-6 Programme”, in accordance with which children are encouraged to start primary education at the ideal age of 6 years. In August 2018, the Ministry of Education issued Ordinance No. 02/GM/MEESJCD/2018, pursuant to which students with disabilities are exempt from paying monthly and periodic tuition fees.

53. Under the Quality and Inclusive Education Programme, the Government, in collaboration with its partners, has introduced facilities to enhance accessibility, such as ramps, accessible classrooms, low boards and latrines. However, the Programme does not provide for training activities for teachers or other material or educational measures (such as the use of Braille or sign language) that would meet the needs of children with disabilities.

54. There are only three special schools, of which two are in Bissau (the Bengale Blanc School and the National School for the Deaf) and one in Bissora, in the Oio region, for all the children with disabilities in the country.

55. The Quality and Inclusive Education Programme does not extend to higher education (university and polytechnic education). The Framework Act on Education provides for the introduction of special education to ensure that adequate educational care is provided to persons with physical and mental disabilities and that primary school pupils with special educational needs are monitored and given additional tuition.

Improve the national education system and include human rights education in school curricula (recommendation 96.137)

56. A project to reform the curriculum is being developed. It provides for the inclusion of content on human rights in school curricula, particularly in the second and third cycle of primary education. The human resource challenges are immense and affect the quality of the education provided.

57. Of the 8,866 State schoolteachers, 43.32 per cent have permanent contracts and 26.57 per cent are new recruits, while 30.11 per cent are on fixed-term contracts with the Government or are paid by the community. There is a lack of trained and qualified teachers, especially women teachers. Furthermore, human resource management is generally poor, and teachers do not receive adequate technical and pedagogical preparation before joining the system. The classification of teachers according to whether they are permanent, on temporary contracts or new recruits also hinders their career development. Only 39 per cent of primary school teachers are qualified and discrepancies exist in the salaries of teachers of the same rank who have received the same training.

Increase funding and implement the law on the education sector (recommendations 96.138, 96.139, 96.140, 96.142, 96.145, 96.146, 96.147, 96.150)

58. The Government allocates 14 per cent of the general State budget to education. Of this amount, 85 per cent is spent on salaries while only 11 per cent is spent on other aspects of education. As a result, the State depends heavily on technical and financial partnerships for the development of the sector.

59. The Framework Act on Education (No. 4/2011 of 29 March 2011) provides for mandatory, universal and free education up to the sixth year of schooling (basic education). According to data on early childhood, 13 per cent of children aged between 36 and 59

months attend an organized education programme for this age group. There are significant differences in enrolment rates between urban and rural areas and between regions: 29 per cent of children in urban areas are enrolled in such a programme, as opposed to 4 per cent of children in rural areas.

Reduce disparities in access to education (recommendation 96.144)

60. In order to increase preschool enrolment rates and reduce disparities between rural and urban areas, the Government has committed itself to improving the availability of State education, which is currently low, by diversifying the range of preschool options.

61. A pre-primary year is gradually being introduced in rural schools, along with a programme for developing a two-year preschool course for children of 4 or 5 years of age.

62. Facilities for this sub-sector, in the form of preschool classrooms, will be constructed mainly in regions where the primary school completion rate is relatively low and the gross enrolment ratio among preschool children is lower than the national average.

63. To make it easier for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend preschool, steps will also be taken to harmonize and reduce the financial contributions that households are required to make to existing State kindergartens. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations will be established to support the most disadvantaged.

Improve infrastructure and access to education for all children (recommendations 96.141, 96.142)

64. Although a number of schools were built between 2015 and 2017, mainly in the regions, the sector continues to face significant infrastructure problems. Not every locality in the regions has enough schools.

65. In sum, 25.84 per cent of the country's 6,833 classrooms are in good condition, 24.76 per cent are in poor condition (open-air shacks), and only 49.39 per cent are in better condition. Consequently, it is difficult to ensure that classes can continue to be taught until the rainy season, which has been made necessary by the teachers' strikes.

Relaunch the policy to encourage girls to enrol in school (recommendations 96.148, 96.149)

66. In order to overcome the gender gap in access to education, a school canteen project covering about 80 per cent of the country's schools has been introduced, with food provided for children up to grade six.

67. Under the Quality and Inclusive Education Programme, the Government, in collaboration with its partners, has created access facilities such as ramps, accessible classrooms, low desks and latrines.

68. A slightly lower proportion of boys (28 per cent) than girls (30 per cent) begin primary school at the age of 6 years in Guinea-Bissau. A total of 31 per cent of children of this age attend the first year of primary school.

Health

Strengthen the health system (recommendations 96.123, 96.131, 96.133)

69. With regard to the allocation of human, financial and technical resources, the Ministry of Health has evaluated the National Health Development Plan II 2008–2017 and is awaiting approval of the National Health Development Plan III 2018–2022, which contains strategies for addressing the above-mentioned problems, is divided into eight main sections and has a budget of approximately €214,000,000.

70. Although, because of the low utilization rate, there has been a significant reduction in funding for health system strengthening from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, grants received from the Fund between 2016 and 2019 amounted to around €2,149,130, of which about €1,111,723 was spent on infrastructure, hospital equipment and staff training, among other items.

Human resources (recommendation 96.123)

71. At the end of 2007, there were 2,546 health workers in the country, or 17.3 health workers for every 10,000 Guineans. There were 211 doctors, or 1.4 doctors (national and expatriate) per 10,000 inhabitants, 2.3 nurses per 10,000 inhabitants and 5.4 midwives per 10,000 women of child-bearing age.

72. The ratios per 10,000 inhabitants have improved for all groups of professionals apart from doctors and radiology technicians. However, there is little differentiation (only 29 per cent of all doctors are specialists) and staff are difficult to retain and unevenly distributed (the number of staff has decreased at the primary care level but increased at the secondary and tertiary levels).

73. The proportion of senior professionals has increased slightly and the relative proportion of mid-level professionals has doubled, while the proportion of auxiliaries is very low.

State funding for health care (recommendation 96.129)

74. Partners are contributing more to the funding of the health sector. The manner in which they contribute varies in accordance with annual bilateral and multilateral collaboration agreements.

75. On 25 March 2015, the Government presented the Terra Ranka Strategic and Operational Plan 2015–2020 at a round table in Brussels and obtained funding pledges that exceeded expectations.

76. The implementation of these commitments has been compromised by the political crisis that followed shortly afterwards and continues to this day, despite the parliamentary elections held in March 2019.

77. Although State investment in health fluctuates considerably from year to year, it never exceeds 6 per cent of the general State budget, which is well below the 15 per cent set in the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases. Execution of the health budget was highest in 2017, at 11 per cent, exceeding the budget forecast of 5.7 per cent.

Reduce maternal, infant and child mortality (recommendations 96.124, 96.125, 96.126, 96.127, 96.128)

78. The aim of the national health policy is to improve the health of the population. Reducing child mortality, and particularly neonatal and maternal mortality, should be the main focus of the Government and its partners.

79. As the country has not achieved Millennium Development Goal 5, the guidelines established under the National Reproductive Health Programme are aligned with the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality in Africa.

80. The main aim of the Campaign and the Programme is to increase the availability and uptake of universally accessible quality health services, including reproductive health services, which are essential for reducing maternal mortality in accordance with the National Strategic Plan on Reproductive Health 2018–2022.

81. Although a cost recovery policy has been adopted, several services remain free of charge. Since 2013, the Government has taken steps to ensure the provision of free consultations and medication for pregnant women, children under 5 years of age and persons of 60 or more years of age.

82. The positive impact of free health coverage was demonstrated at a national forum on maternal and child health held on 12 and 13 July 2016. The 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey also highlighted this impact and showed that infant and child mortality rates had fallen although the maternal mortality rate had not.

83. Order No. 08/GMSP/2015, adopted in 2015, provided that maternal and neonatal death certificates must be issued within 24 hours. A technical committee for the evaluation of maternal and neonatal deaths was also established.

Epidemiological surveillance vaccination service/Expanded Programme on Immunization

84. The implementation of surveillance strategies and routine vaccination campaigns enabled the country to be certified polio-free in December 2018. Although progress has been made, political instability and the failure to procure vaccines have sometimes caused shortages of antigens and/or vaccines.

The National Programme for Combating Malaria

85. In 2016, seasonal malaria chemoprevention was introduced in the Bafata and Gabú regions. This treatment reduces malaria transmission between August and November, when transmission rates are highest.

86. Impregnated mosquito nets are distributed during consultations and routine vaccination campaigns.

87. Diagnosis must be confirmed before treatment and antimalarial drugs are provided for free.

Challenges

88. Despite the above-mentioned efforts to reduce maternal and infant mortality, the following problems exist:

(a) Target groups lack access to free medicines because of the ignorance of health technicians;

(b) Essential medicines are sometimes unavailable or out of stock;

(c) The Regional Health Directorate plays little part in monitoring the functioning of free health coverage;

(d) The continual strikes in the country are problematic and adversely affect efforts to reduce mortality.

HIV/AIDS (recommendation 96.130)

89. The guidelines related to adolescents and adults in the 2017 national health policy identify the fight against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and viral hepatitis as a priority.

90. The National Strategic Plan to combat AIDS 2015–2020 is aligned with the objective of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths within the framework of the 90-90-90 target established under the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, which is expected to continue until 2030.

91. This Plan is linked to the ECOWAS strategic plan on AIDS, which is aimed at tackling HIV/AIDS at all stages of the HIV life cycle by promoting self-diagnosis of HIV and viral hepatitis, together with pre-exposure prophylaxis.

92. In 2018, a biological, social and behavioural study and an estimate of the size of the populations most at risk of HIV infection indicated that the groups that play the largest part in spreading the epidemic in Guinea-Bissau are sex workers (18 per cent), men who have sex with men (3 per cent), street vendors (8.4 per cent), young persons, long-distance truck drivers (5.9 per cent), uniformed officials (6.8 per cent) and intravenous drug users.

93. Young persons aged between 15 and 20 years have become more aware of HIV/AIDS but no form of sex education has yet been included in any curriculum.

94. The 2019–2023 National Strategic Plan and the treatment protocols have been updated in compliance with the World Health Organization recommendation concerning a new type of antiretroviral drug.

95. Although there has been a 40 per cent increase in the number of persons living with HIV/AIDS who are receiving treatment, there are still times when the drugs are unavailable or available in insufficient quantities for the target population and insufficient funds have been allocated to the implementation of the National Strategic Plan.

Good practices

96. The following concrete measures have been taken in the area of health:
- A contract has been awarded to a private company in order to ensure that imported medicines are purchased, stocked and distributed in accordance with international quality standards.
 - Towards transparency and the management and quality control of medicines, some 20 tonnes of expired medicines were incinerated in the presence of the competent authorities and partners on 14 September 2019.

Protection of women and children

Recommendation 96.41

97. The Government works to ensure gender equality in all areas of political life.
98. Act No. 4/2018, on equality, provides that women must constitute at least 36 per cent of the candidates for all elected positions.
99. The current Government has 31 members, of whom 11 are women.
100. In November 2017, the Council of Ministers adopted a national policy and action plan on gender equality and equity.

Recommendation 96.42

101. Pursuant to Directive No. 16/GMMFCS/2019, the Government has appointed a focal point to liaise with UN-Women as part of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Recommendations 96.45, 96.46, 96.148, 96.149

102. Legislation and ongoing measures for promoting gender equality in education and health are likely to be implemented in the country.
103. Support provided by the World Food Programme has enabled school canteens to be established in rural areas, resulting in an increase in the number of girls enrolled in school.

Recommendations 96.53, 96.54, 96.55, 96.56, 96.57, 96.59, 96.60, 96.61

104. In June 2011, Act No. 14/2011 was adopted to prohibit and criminalize female genital mutilation throughout the country. The Act is supported by punitive measures and awareness-raising campaigns that help to discourage this practice.

Recommendations 96.29, 96.30

105. In 2018, a national committee for the prevention and combating of trafficking in human beings was established, as was an inter-institutional network of social workers. The latter body includes other professionals who work to protect and support vulnerable children and victims of violence.
106. The Office for Gender Equality was established pursuant to Ordinance No. 9/2015 of the Cabinet of the Minister of Women, Family and Social Cohesion.
107. In 2010, in partnership with the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre established a national committee on academic merit scholarships for adolescent girls who are in difficult circumstances but have satisfactory academic results.
108. The process of drafting a code for the comprehensive protection of children is under way with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund and the project for supporting child victims of human rights violations of the West Africa Regional Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Its technical validation is scheduled for February 2020.

109. In November 2017, the Government adopted two important instruments on child protection: the law on foster care and the law on the recognition and supervision of care homes for children and young persons.

B. Not implemented

Universal instruments (recommendations 96.1, 96.3, 96.11, 96.12, 96.13, 96.14, 96.15, 96.16, 96.17)

110. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

Reforms

Justice sector (recommendations 65.87, 96.19, 96.20, 96.21, 96.22, 96.23, 96.24, 96.25, 96.26, 96.36, 96.90, 96.98, 96.108)

111. A law on the protection of human rights defenders and journalists.

112. Revision of the regulations governing the National Human Rights Commission and registration with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

113. A national plan on human rights; establishment of an interministerial committee for the implementation of international human rights obligations and a law protecting whistle-blowers and witnesses of offences related to corruption.

Pending (recommendation 65.75)

114. Investigations into the killings of politicians and members of the defence and security forces.

C. Looking ahead

115. The planned actions listed below reflect the constitutional Government's draft programme for the tenth parliament.

Justice

116. Strengthen the institutional capacity of courts, judges and prosecutors.

117. Improve the operating conditions of the courts by constructing and equipping new buildings and rehabilitating existing ones.

118. Strengthen training programmes for all justice officials.

119. Promote careers and improve working conditions in the justice system.

120. Promote legislative reforms, including by reviewing criminal laws and procedures, to ensure better prevention and control of crime.

121. Strengthen human rights protection mechanisms.

122. Implement the national policy for the protection of women and children and establish a centre for counselling, social care and follow-up care for victims of violence.

123. Expand the prison network.

124. Strengthen the institutional capacity of the criminal investigation police.

125. Actively combat corruption and excessively close relations between the State and the private sector.

126. Improve mechanisms for combating transnational crime in general and drug trafficking in particular.
127. Implement and disseminate the decree-law and implementing decree on the simplification of procedures for issuing registration documents and calculating the relevant fees.
128. Expand civil identification services in the capital and regional capitals.
129. Accelerate the computerization of civil registration services in order to broaden access to them and improve efficiency.
130. Adopt and launch a strategic plan on civil status for the relevant period.
131. Adopt the new civil status code.
132. Organize the files of the civil identification register and the central registers.
133. Promote the training of registrars and notaries.
134. Implement Decree No. 1/2017, adopting the regulations for justice officials.
135. Implement Act No. 1/2018 on the general fund for justice.

Defence

136. Complete the reform of the defence and security sectors, including by restructuring, resizing and modernizing the defence and security forces and establishing pension and bonus funds for the demobilization and integration of freedom fighters.
137. Implement the law on military careers.
138. Disseminate laws, policies and strategies related to defence within the armed forces and train its members on the laws in force for this sector.
139. Continue and strengthen the policy of ensuring the dignity of national freedom fighters, in particular with regard to housing, health, social integration of their dependants and, especially, education for their children.
140. Invest in training and specialization courses for the defence forces in Guinea-Bissau and abroad.
141. Promote the participation of defence forces in international missions, including peacekeeping missions.
142. Foster the establishment of programmes that enable defence and security officers to contribute to the country's development.
143. Improve conditions in barracks.
144. Establish a fund for the social assistance and rehabilitation of freedom fighters.
145. Rehabilitate some military infrastructure, including the facilities belonging to the navy, the paratroops and the hospital at the Bissau airbase.
146. Promote military agricultural production and improve the management and delivery of services at the Amizade Sino Guineense Hospital (main military hospital).

Ministry of the Interior

147. Ensure the security of elections.
148. Monitor and manage social conflicts.
149. Establish outposts (police stations) in various parts of the country.
150. Improve the management of cross-border migration flows and increase the use of modern technology at border crossings.
151. Ensure at least a minimum level of patrolling of urban neighbourhoods and sensitive areas.

152. Invest in training and specialization courses for security forces in Guinea-Bissau and abroad.

153. Strengthen the response capacities of the National Civil Protection Service.

Education

154. In the area of education, the Government proposes to:

- Conduct a broad national debate as the basis for reviewing the Framework Act on Education in order to adapt it to current challenges and requirements
- Increase the proportion of the State budget allocated to education to 15 per cent until the end of the current parliament and to 25 per cent in the current budget in order to help achieve universal primary education by 2025
- Expand the provision of State education services by increasing the number of full-cycle primary schools and secondary schools; to that end, build 38 school complexes that offer classes from nursery school to ninth grade, eight regional secondary schools and eight vocational training schools (one of each in each region)
- Implement the regulations governing the teaching profession
- Depoliticize the system by holding public competitions to appoint regional school principals and management boards
- Establish an in-service training system for all school principals, inspectors, teachers and educators already working in the education system
- Introduce electronic governance in the education system and gradually computerize educational establishments, connecting them to networks
- Conduct a review of basic education curricula, ensuring, inter alia, that the history of the country is covered by school textbooks
- Ensure gender parity in basic education (primary and lower secondary school) attendance and reduce disparities in secondary school attendance
- Expand the school canteen programme to all State schools that teach basic education cycles one, two or three
- Convert Koranic schools into madrasas
- Design and implement a national literacy programme
- Design and implement a nationwide programme for students with special educational needs
- Monitor and assess the impact of education policies, including by setting up comparative assessment tests for primary and secondary school pupils
- Use results-based management models to establish a performance assessment system for all persons working in the education sector
- Strengthen the operational capacity of the Directorate General of Education and General Inspection
- Establish a national institute for scholarships in order to coordinate and develop partnerships in this field and review and update regulations on scholarships
- Extend Amílcar Cabral University to comprise three university campuses (one per province) equipped with laboratories and information and communication technology equipment
- Establish the Polytechnic Institute of Guinea-Bissau by incorporating the following institutions:
 - The School of Engineering and the Higher School of Petroleum and Mines; the School of Education; the Higher School of Agrarian Sciences and Fisheries;

- The Higher School of the Environment and Tourism; and the Higher School of Arts
- Promote the establishment of a support structure for the most disadvantaged students
- Promote scientific research by establishing a fund for scientific development and awarding scholarships for applied scientific research
- Establish a science training programme for scientists

Health

155. Ensure universal access to quality health services for all sectors of the public by establishing a network of health centres and adopting a system of family doctors.

156. Allocate 10 per cent of the total State budget and 15 per cent of the current budget to the health sector every year.

157. Give the highest priority to reducing infant and maternal mortality by improving the training of managers and the conditions in which childbirths take place.

158. Improve reproductive health services by increasing pregnant women's access to prenatal consultations and the proportion of births attended by qualified staff.

159. Extend maternity leave and create incentives for pregnant women to attend prenatal consultations and all necessary maternity check-ups.

160. Use internal and external funding, including from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization Fund, to strengthen the national immunization programme and ensure universal immunization coverage for the main diseases.

161. Ensure that each region has a public health physician (who may be the health officer) who is responsible for epidemiological surveillance, among other tasks.

162. Promote programmes to monitor and control malaria, HIV/AIDS, cholera and other infectious diseases, as well as non-communicable conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

163. Establish an authority for medicinal products and ensure the quality of the medicines sold in Guinea-Bissau.

164. Take steps to ensure that a functional haemodialysis centre is set up before the end of the current parliament to allow persons suffering from chronic renal failure to be treated in Guinea-Bissau.

165. Establish a national medical emergency system.

166. Establish a national blood institute.

167. Collaborate with professional bodies in the sector to promote continuous in-service training for professionals and establish a performance assessment process for career progression.

168. Adopt incentives to encourage health-care staff to work in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas.

169. Take steps to encourage doctors and other health workers from Guinea-Bissau who are working abroad to make periodic working visits to the country.

170. Establish telemedicine rooms in the country's hospitals to enable doctors to discuss clinical cases with their counterparts abroad, thereby facilitating the interpretation of additional diagnostic tests.

171. Build and equip a specialist hospital centre in Guinea-Bissau for the treatment and resolution of more complex cases in order to reduce significantly the number of medical evacuations abroad.

172. Transform the National Health Laboratory into a reference laboratory that complies with international standards.

173. Establish a national medical commission with revised, simplified and up-to-date mechanisms and working processes to promote social justice in the granting of authorization for medical evacuation.

174. Establish a regular and effective mechanism for coordinating health sector activities that involves national and international partners in order to maximize the use of human, financial and material resources and accelerate the implementation of activities.

Extreme poverty, employment and food

175. Ensure better distribution of wealth through inclusive public policies.

176. Promote and finance programmes and projects that have an impact on rural areas, the agriculture sector, cashew nut processing, small-scale fishing and fish processing, using intensive labour.

177. Promote labour-intensive activities in rural areas, using the work-for-food approach.

178. Gradually improve the business environment in Guinea-Bissau by aiming to improve the country's ranking on the World Bank's ease of doing business index.

179. Support capacity-building in the private sector, including through the institutional strengthening of its representative organizations.

180. Promote an ongoing dialogue with the private sector, including by establishing a standing forum for dialogue between it and the Government (an economic and business council).

181. Review and adopt laws governing public-private partnerships.

Conclusion

182. In this report, the Government has provided a reliable picture of the human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau by attempting to respond to the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council in the most recent cycles of the universal periodic review, in 2010 and 2015.

183. Aside from the introductory statements, the text is entirely focused on the efforts made to strengthen developments in the protection and promotion of human rights in Guinea-Bissau between January 2015 and August 2019. It also provides some information on prospects for the coming years.

184. The report describes the efforts made by the national authorities to comply with the recommendations made, particularly during the first two years of the ninth parliament. However, the political and institutional crisis, which has adversely affected relations between the various State agencies, has hindered all the prospects for reform that were already under way.

185. For this reason, some recommendations have not been implemented while others have been implemented only partially.

186. Cyclical institutional crises have undermined the normal functioning of the State, hindering the consolidation of the rule of law and impacting on the implementation of socioeconomic policies and the protection of human rights. However, Guinea-Bissau hopes to turn this situation around by implementing the "Terra Ranka" strategic programme, which is focused on developing human capital, promoting all human rights, particularly for the most disadvantaged, combating impunity and corruption, reforming and modernizing the justice, defence and security sectors, fighting poverty, particularly in rural areas, and promoting sustainable economic development in strict accordance with environmental protection and conservation standards.

187. To this end, the country hopes that it will continue to benefit from the trust and technical and financial support of the international community so that stability can be achieved and the aspirations of the people of Guinea-Bissau can be met.