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Eritrea

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AMW	*Arierib* Mobility Workshop
BMM	Better Migration Management
CBRD	Community Based Rehabilitation and Development
CEE	Complementary Elementary Education
CPD	Continued Professional Development
CWDs	Children With Disabilities
EDHS	Eritrea Demographic and Health Survey
EPHS	Eritrea Population and Health Survey
EEHCP	Eritrea Essential Health Care Package
EIHE	Eritrean Institutions of Higher Education
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ECRS	Eritrea Correction and Rehabilitation Services
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HTPs	Harmful Traditional Practices
HSSDP	Health Sector Strategic Development Plan
HRH	Human Resources for Health
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
MRE	Mine Risk Education
MNCDs	Major Non-Communicable Diseases
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MTCs	Medicines Therapeutic Committees
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoH	Ministry of Health
NAIDD	National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
NUEW	National Union of Eritrean Women
NUEYS	National Union of Eritrea Youth and Students
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NHP	National Health Policy
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PWDs	Persons With Disabilities
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TB	Tuberculosis

TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training

I. Introduction

1. The report covers the period 2019–2023 and was prepared in accordance with Human Rights Council Decision 17/119. Each concerned ministry and national organization received a cluster of thematic recommendations and prepared a written report based on a framework for action outlined by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) National Coordinating Body (NCB). Then, all reports received were compiled and circulated to NCB members for comments. The comments were incorporated into the report and later discussed at the NCB meeting and finally endorsed at policy level.

2. The 2019-2023 Framework for Action, developed by the NCB, serves as a guideline to monitor the implementation of the accepted UPR recommendations, with due consideration given to Eritrea's other international reporting obligations. Accordingly, the NCB held quarterly meetings on policy and organizational matters, as well as annual meetings to assess the continuous progress of UPR implementation, with due consideration to relevant international/regional reporting commitments.

3. The Working Group on the UPR, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its 32nd session from 21 January to 1 February 2019. The review process was held at the 12th meeting, on 28 January 2019. At its 17th meeting, held on 31 January 2019, the Working Group adopted Eritrea's third UPR Report and Eritrea supported 131 and noted 130 recommendations. The following sections will address the implementation status of the supported recommendations.

II. Economic, social and cultural rights

A. Right to health (Recommendations 131.223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228)

1. Investment in the public health system

4. In order to align its National Health Policy (NHP) with the 2030 SDGs Agenda that focuses on Universal Health Coverage, the Ministry of Health (MoH) reviewed its 2010 National Health Policy (NHP-2010) towards NHP-2020 and its second Health Sector Strategic Development Plan (HSSDP, 2017-2021) towards the third HSSDP (HSSDP 2022-2026).

5. Investment in Public Health System in conjunction with other development endeavors resulted in continuous improvements of health impacted indicators including under-five mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio and life expectancy that are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3 (See Annex).

6. Accordingly, rural areas are the most impacted as there was wider room for improvement there. As indicated in Figure 1, under 5 mortality rate is reduced by 76% (153 per 1000 live births in 1990 and 37 in 2022); infant mortality rate by 70% (94 per 1000 live births in 1990 and 28 in 2022; and neonatal mortality rate by 51% (35 per 1000 live births in 1990 and 17 in 2022).

7. Figure 2 (See Annex) also shows a reduction in maternal mortality ratio by 56% (from 735 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 322 in 2020). Life expectancy is 67.7 in 2023 with almost 20 years increase from that of 1991 as shown in figure 3 (See Annex).

2. Access to basic health care

8. With a network of health facilities distributed across the country (comprising of hospitals, health centres, health stations, and clinics) – access to basic health care within 10 km radius has increased from 46% in 1991 to 80% at the moment. 70% of the population live within 5 km radius from a health facility. Access to health services, infrastructural investments, fulfilling urgent health priorities (e.g. maternal care, child health and nutrition), increasing efforts to control communicable diseases and engaging communities through informal community- based health workers are among the top targets.

9. Health service continues to be heavily subsidized, with patients required to make only nominal payments (which are wholly waived in cases where financial assistances are required). Public and preventive services, such as immunization and growth monitoring, pre- and postpartum care, nutrition and supplementation, and health education, are free of charge. Patients with chronic diseases and other disorders, such as TB, HIV/AIDS, hypertension, diabetes, and mental disorders, are provided free of charge.

10. As shown in figure 4 (see Annex), universal immunization was sustained (at around 98% since 2013) and Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit) stands at 99%. Delivery at health facilities reached to 83.7% in 2023 from 6% in 1991. With universal coverage, these figures equally represent Urban as well as rural areas.

11. The 2022 Spectrum data for Eritrea indicated that the estimated HIV prevalence among adults of ages 15–49 was 0.5%. An estimated 85% of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) know their HIV positive status, 72% are on ART and 65% virally suppressed.

12. Malaria related death in Eritrea dropped to 5 deaths in 2022 (405 in 1998, 23 in 2016, 3 in 2019, 4 in 2020 and 6 in 2021). Between 1998 and 2016, malaria incidence dropped significantly, from 157 to 34 cases per 1,000 people. There are now 22 Sub-Zones with malaria incidence levels below 5 per 1000 population, meeting requirements for pre-elimination.

3. Quality health care

13. Hospital clinical policy, guidelines and protocols were revised in 2016 with health facility protocols and procedures that were disseminated to all Zonal medical offices in 2020. Eritrea Essential Health Care Package (EEHCP) has been developed in 2022 to provide guidance on the services to be provided for different age cohorts. Similarly, existing clinical guidelines are being revised in line with the EEHCP.

14. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) is being rolled out nationally, with IPC and Medicines Therapeutic Committees (MTCs) established in each hospital. Accordingly, all health facilities conduct internal quality of care assessments.

15. The National Drug Quality Control Laboratory has renovated its lab facility, procured key analytical equipment, and developed a quality manual and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The capability of the laboratory to run essential tests on medicines in the Eritrean National List of Medicines has increased from 10% in 2017 to 45% in 2020. The ability to conduct tests on listed products increased to 38% in 2020, compared to 25% in 2017. The proportion of fully or partially completed test samples (out of the total samples submitted for testing) has been increasing annually and stands at 98% since 2019.

4. Improve health care facilities

16. The national health infrastructure is comprised of 30 hospitals, 54 health centres and 263 health stations and clinics. The total number of health facilities increased from 93 in 1991 (16 hospitals, 5 health centres and 72 health stations) to 347 as of December 2023, which is 3.7-fold increase from 1991 to 2023. While the number of doctors has been increased from 100 in 1997 to 291 by 2021. Across the same period, the number of dentists rose from 6 to 59, nurses from 625 to 1,474, assistant nurses from 1,220 to 2,918, dental therapists from 11 to 165, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians from 97 to 486, laboratory technicians from 99 to 517, radiologists from 28 to 132, physiotherapy technicians from 6 to 140, and specialized doctors from 5 to 74.

17. Hospitals' oxygen capacity has been significantly improved across the country. Currently, all hospitals receive regular cylinders, and three sites are producing oxygen: namely *Mendefera* Zonal Referral Hospital, *Halibet* National Referral Hospital, and *Orotta* National Referral Hospital. Additionally, there is a private oxygen-producing plant supplementing the availability of oxygen cylinders in hospitals.

18. The MoH has been constructing maternity waiting homes in health facilities for pregnant women who live far from health facilities where they can receive skilled birth attendance. These maternity waiting homes are contributing towards improving the health of pregnant mothers, and there have been efforts to increase their numbers. In the Southern

Zone, maternity homes have increased from 8 to 18; two of these were built in 2021. Similarly, the neonatal centers increased from 2 to 5 (one added in 2020 and two in 2021).

19. Efforts have been made to equip the hospitals with imaging and laboratory equipment to improve their functionality. For example, the GenXpert machines are available for TB diagnosis in all health care facilities. *Mendefera* Referral Hospital has diagnostic imaging (new imaging machines procured – digital and laser X-rays and ultrasound diagnostic machine) and up-to-date laboratory equipment (GenXpert, coulter machine, etc.). The hospital also has a stable water supply (own dam and pumping water to tank daily) and electric power (a generator and separate solar supply for each ward).

5. Non-Communicable Diseases

20. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have become the leading cause of morbidity and mortality among hospital and health center inpatients. These trends and developments indicate a shift in the national disease burden from communicable diseases to NCDs, associated with a variety of different factors, such as diet, lifestyle, and behaviors. Sustained efforts and further work will be required to reduce major modifiable risk factors.

21. To combat Major Non-Communicable Diseases (MNCDs), which consist of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases, Eritrea has developed an MNCD Five Year Strategic Plan and policy in 2019. In part, the plan aims to reduce the risk factors for chronic diseases among the population. Although the Eritrean population already has a relatively strong base for preventing risk factors, including healthy diets, physical activity, and limited tobacco and alcohol consumption, the country has undertaken many promotional activities to reinforce these healthy lifestyle choices. These activities include airing radio and TV spots, conducting community sensitization and education campaigns in all zones, and distributing various health promotional brochures on diabetes, hypertension, cancer, asthma, alcohol, physical activity, and tobacco.

B. Right to education (Recommendations 131.224, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 258, 259)

1. Expansion of access to education particularly in rural and remote areas

22. The Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE) places great importance on expanding access to education through the construction of new schools, reviewing existing education curriculum and enhancing the capacity of teachers among others. The government has shown significant attention to improving access to education, especially in rural and remote areas. During the reporting period, a considerable number of new schools were built at all levels. One of the government's strategies for enhancing access to education is expanding existing schools, which has a significant impact on the development and enrollment of students of all ages. To provide opportunities for enrollment in remote and hard-to-reach areas, the government is strengthening Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) and nomadic education.

23. Technical and vocational education has also been increased to 35% through the formal system, school-based training, and through the informal system of workplace-based training. This includes 5% for elementary, 15% for junior and 45% for high school students. To ensure access to education, particularly in rural and remote areas of the country, efforts have been made to increase the literacy rate from the present 85% to 100%.

2. Access to quality of education particularly for vulnerable groups and persons living in remote areas

24. Eritrea is implementing measures to enhance the quality of education for all school-age children. Some of these measures include providing continuous pre-service and in-service trainings to upgrade the professional competency of teachers and school administrators. The State of Eritrea has also implemented a policy of providing one textbook per child for all subjects and other relevant equipment and materials which help in facilitating the teaching and learning process.

3. Compulsory free education

25. Eritrea provides free education from primary up to higher education levels including boarding provisions. School materials and text books are also distributed to all the schools in the country for nominal fees. However, stationery materials, bag, uniform, transportation costs, and nominal registration fee are paid by parents.

4. Increase and strengthen access to education for girls and young women

26. In Eritrea, girls and young women's education is recognized as a fundamental developmental necessity. Various efforts have been made to address the gender disparity in education by creating equal educational opportunities in rural and remote areas, increasing girls' enrollment at all levels of education; introducing special incentive schemes such as providing educational materials, opening hostel or boarding schools in rural and remote areas, and improving accessibility through initiatives like providing bicycles for girls who travel long distances to schools. Local administrations, in collaboration with national unions, organize continuous awareness campaigns to encourage parents and communities to send their children, especially girls, to school. The government is committed to empowering girls' education and reducing gender disparity to improve access to education for girls at all levels. Additionally, the government follows a policy of positive discrimination by prioritizing girls' enrollment in higher education and during the selection of fields of study in colleges.

27. Educational opportunity in higher education has expanded during the reporting period. Total student population in all Eritrean Institutions of Higher Education (EIHE), at the end of the 1st semester of the academic Year 2019/2020 was 10,272 comprising 46% females out of which 6,048 (60.8%) were enrolled in Degree and 4,224 (37.4%) in Diploma Programs.

5. Efforts in inclusive education

28. The Ministry of Education is continuing its efforts to open opportunities for inclusive education for all school children with disabilities. Some of the measures taken include training of teachers to accommodate disabled children and providing facilities for these children. These initiatives have already been implemented and empowering them is an ongoing effort.

6. Access to nomadic education

29. The Government of Eritrea pays significant attention to nomadic education. In the reporting period, there were a total of 65 schools dedicated to the nomadic community, with 10 of them being boarding schools. Female students, particularly those within the nomadic community, receive both financial and non-financial support, especially to assist them in managing their household duties while pursuing their education.

7. Educational efficiency

30. Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development and many of their themes are mainstreamed and tightly integrated within different aspects of Eritrea’s national education system: in national education policies and guidelines, being measured at approximately 0.81; in teacher education (0.72); in curricula (0.76); and in student assessment (0.73).

31. Improving the participation, retention, and achievement of school-age children in education has been a top priority. Several measures have been taken to strengthen achievement rates and reduce dropouts and repetitions. These measures include: increasing awareness among parents about the importance of keeping their children in school, improving feeding programs in schools, empowering girls and young women by recognizing and rewarding exemplary and successful ones at all levels, and conducting motivational campaigns featuring speeches by successful female graduates. Additionally, feeding programs are being implemented in remote and disadvantaged areas to attract out-of-school children and ensure they have full access to education.

C. Right to adequate standard of living (Recommendations 131.215, 216, 217, 218, 219)

32. Agriculture constitutes the primary livelihood for approximately 65% of Eritrea's rural population, serving as a crucial source of sustenance, income, and employment. Eritrea boasts 2.1 million hectares of arable land, with 500,000 hectares currently utilized for rain-fed cultivation, primarily for cereal crops. Additionally, approximately 600,000 hectares of land are suitable for irrigated farming. However, the current extent of irrigated land is a mere 37,000 hectares, accounting for only 6% of the potential land. This clearly highlights the significant potential for Eritrea to develop its agricultural sector and agro-industry through strategic planning and targeted investment. Promising investment opportunities include the integration of sustainable irrigation technologies, the implementation of efficient farm implements, and the cultivation of drought and pest-resistant, high-yielding crop varieties.

Ensuring access to food

33. The Government of the State of Eritrea, in general, and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), in particular, has been working diligently to ensure the availability of affordable and nutritious food through the enhancement of agriculture in all zones of the country. As a matter of fact, there is year-round availability of fruits and vegetables in all cities and towns of the country. Likewise, there is a significant improvement in the production and productivity of different types of crops. Some of the major activities implemented to ensure food and nutrition security and cope with climate change are the following:

(a) The construction of masonry micro-dams and the implementation of soil and water conservation structures at the village level have been key initiatives. Over the past five years, a total of 44 micro-dams capable of irrigating 440 hectares of land and supporting 1920 households have been successfully built in all six regions of the country. Additionally, the beneficiary communities have taken measures to treat 4400 hectares of catchment areas located upstream of the dams. Moreover, to enhance crop production, 10 watersheds with a combined catchment area of 23,231 hectares and 4,450 hectares of irrigable land have been carefully assessed. This assessment involved the utilization of efficient water harvesting, conservation, and spreading techniques;

(b) On the other hand, approximately 50% of the country consists of rangeland that is suitable for livestock farming. The Ministry places great emphasis on providing services that cater to the needs of pastoral communities. This, in turn, helps to maintain and enhance livestock production and productivity. During the reporting period, a total of 3,814,833 large and small ruminants as well as dogs were vaccinated against Lumpy Skin Disease, PPR, Sheep Pox, FMD, Brucellosis, and Rabies. Additionally, 414,135 commercial and backyard chicks received vaccination against the four major poultry diseases. Furthermore, around 7,566 blood serum samples were collected from cattle and sheep for testing the prevalence of Brucellosis in both animals and humans. Alongside efforts to protect and control livestock diseases, the Ministry also supports rural communities, particularly those female headed households, by providing them with one-month-old backyard chicks. These chicks can be sustained with limited feed resources. As a result, a total of 882,131 backyard chicks were distributed to 27,621 beneficiaries over the past five years;

(c) Assuming that 10% (88,213) of the distributed chicks (882,131) have perished due to various reasons, and 50% (356,959) of the remaining chicks are female, the estimated egg production amounted to 107,178,930. This data serves as evidence that the recipient households were successful in enhancing their quality of life, ensuring a nourishing food supply for their families and local communities, and playing a vital role in stabilizing the prices of eggs and chicken;

(d) Pest control is a crucial responsibility of the Ministry. Consequently, to safeguard crops and vegetation from the detrimental effects of desert and tree locust infestations, the Ministry has established a well-structured system to monitor and manage locust outbreaks throughout the country. As part of this effort, approximately 938,500 hectares of land suspected of desert locust invasion were surveyed over the past five years. The survey primarily focused on the *Gash-Barka*, Northern Red Sea, and Southern Red Sea

regions. Remarkably, this initiative resulted in the preservation of approximately 100,000 tons of crops. Furthermore, a survey of 150,000 hectares of land suspected of tree locust invasion was conducted in three sub-regions within the *Gash-Barka* region. Additionally, control measures were implemented on 387 hectares of land in the aforementioned sub-regions;

(e) In order to increase productivity per unit of land, the National Agricultural Research Institute of the Ministry is engaged in the development of adaptive and high-yielding crop varieties that can be disseminated all over the country. Accordingly, over the last five years, 14 varieties of cereal crops have been developed and released. Out of these, six were Improved Wheat, three Barley, one maize, one Sorghum, and three pearl millet. Thus, the average yield of sorghum from an ordinary farm has increased from 8 to 16 quintals (by 100%); pearl millet from 6 to 12 quintals (by 100%); wheat from 12 to 20/25 (by 67 or 108%); barley from 8 to 16 (by 100%).

34. The propagation of table potato production in the lowlands of Eritrea is a recently introduced program by the MoA. Historically, potatoes were exclusively cultivated in the highlands. However, due to the high demand for this crop and in order to ensure a sustainable and affordable supply of potatoes nationwide, the Ministry has undertaken efforts to introduce potato cultivation in the lowlands. As part of this initiative, a total of 36.8 hectares of land in 9 sub-regions of *Gash-Barka,* 2.7 hectares of land in 2 sub-regions of the Northern Red Sea, and 6.75 hectares of land in 2 sub-regions of the Southern Red Sea were utilized for planting 926 quintals of improved seed potatoes. The resultant yields were quite promising, particularly in sub-regions such as *Shambko* where the harvest reached 267 quintals per hectare, *Ghindae* with 74 quintals per hectare, and *Afambo* with 170 quintals per hectare.

D. Right to social security

35. The 2022-2026 National Social Protection Policy and National Social Protection Strategic Plan were developed in 2021. This guidance is aimed at addressing socio-political drivers that perpetuate socio-economic needs and identifying persons with special needs, including persons living with disabilities, children, etc.

E. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Children (Recommendations 131.105, 170, 212, 251, 252, 253, 254, 256, 257)

36. National counseling, complaints receiving, and reporting mechanism has been put in place to safeguard the safety of children in Eritrea. This mechanism aims to address violence against children and enhance the community-based child protection activities. It also seeks to eliminate practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), underage marriages, and other Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs). To achieve these goals, a total of 67 committees have been set up in all Zones and sub-Zones across the country.

37. During the reporting period, a series of awareness-raising activities were conducted nationwide. These seminars focused on various important topics such as birth registration, the elimination of harmful practices, the consequences of illegal migration, child right protection, and efficient time management; reaching to a total of 163,082 participants. Comprehensive training program was conducted nationwide on the prevention and rehabilitation of juvenile children, child-friendly justice, and the consequences of child and youth illegal migration to social workers, police officers, judges, attorneys, and other relevant stakeholders.

38. Furthermore, female-headed families, which include girls, orphans, children with disabilities and families hosting orphan children received support through the provision of mobile shops, special skill trainings and other Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) tailored to their preferences and family's economic assessment criteria. Based on field monitoring and follow-up reports, the implementation of these IGAs have had a significant positive impact

on enhancing the accessibility of basic social services, such as education, healthcare, food, and nutrition security as well as improves the quality of life of families and their children.

39. In 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), in collaboration with UNICEF, offered socioeconomic assistance to 528 orphans residing with 132 vulnerable families and caregivers. Furthermore, 984 children with disabilities living with 246 vulnerable families were also prioritized. In 2020, support for Income Generating Activities was extended to 232 vulnerable families hosting 928 orphans and 76 vulnerable families hosting 304 children with disabilities. In 2021, assistance was provided to 243 families hosting 729 orphaned children and 113 families caring for children with disabilities. The provision of socioeconomic support encompasses all zones, determined by a family's economic assessment criteria, while considering their preferred area for income-generating activities.

40. In 2021, copies of the Comprehensive National Child Policy were printed and distributed to all national actors. Additionally, the awareness-raising manual on combating all forms of violence and discrimination against children underwent a thorough review and was updated to ensure its effectiveness.

41. During the reporting period, a total of 138 households, hosting a combined total of 478 orphans, were supported through various Income Generating Activities (IGA) of their choosing. It is worth noting that 50% of the beneficiaries are female-headed households. This financial assistance comes in the form of a one-time grant, amounting to USD 667.00 per family.

42. Several children living with HIV/AIDS have received monthly financial assistance. These monthly cash transfers have improved their households' daily consumption and supported those taking antiretroviral medication in extending and improving the quality of their life. Furthermore, comprehensive care to families and children affected by HIV, including psychosocial support and case management procedures has been consistently provided.

43. In 2021, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare developed a child labor reference manual for trainers, social workers, and inspection officers. The primary objective of this manual is to raise awareness and strengthen efforts to prevent and monitor child labor. Child labor monitoring is done by the Labor Inspection Service (Article 143(1) of Labor Proclamation) in collaboration with social workers, local administrations and if need with an authorized police department.

2. Persons with disabilities (Recommendations 131.258, 259)

44. The 2016 comprehensive National Policy for Persons with Disabilities has been updated in 2021. This update aims to provide guidance to national stakeholders in enhancing awareness of the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities, as well as in the effective implementation and monitoring of the relevant policy across all sectors. The MoLSW has been actively involved in an ongoing advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and preventive measures against disabilities. These efforts primarily focus on preventing community stigmatization and conducting campaigns to raise awareness about the rights of children with disabilities. They are carried out through the extensive structure of the MoLSW and the Community-Based Rehabilitation and Development program (CBRD).

45. Capacity-building and refresher training was provided for CBRD workers in five different regions. The training was based on the guidelines of the World Health Organization, which were adopted by the MoLSW. It focused on two key components: first, promoting the delivery of social services for children living with disabilities, with a special emphasis on reaching those in hard-to-reach communities; and second, providing integrated Mine Risk Education (MRE) to prevent injuries, death, and disabilities caused by landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in communities affected by conflicts.

46. The CBRD Program for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) has been reviewed to ensure its inclusiveness towards individuals such as persons with disabilities, women-headed households, the elderly, and individuals living in extreme poverty, demobilized members of

the army, and those affected by mental health issues within the community. Furthermore, the CBRD program integrates its approach with the activities of other institutions, thereby maximizing the efficient and equitable use of community resources.

47. Activities were put in place to manufacture, repair, and distribute orthopedic appliances to people with disabilities in the country. The mobility appliances produced by these workshops include artificial limbs above and below the knee, crutches, wheelchairs, etc. The majority of PWD receive services for free or at a very minimal cost. To this effect, training on orthotic, prosthesis, and physiotherapy services were provided.

48. Orthopedic or mobility appliances were provided to help children with disabilities with mobility problems to participate in different social and economic activities. During the reporting period, 734 PWDs were provided with mobility appliances from the orthopedic workshops managed by the MoLSW.

49. In 2019, UNICEF allocated an amount of 1,628,403.30 Nakfa to ensure the availability of raw materials for orthopedic workshops in order to provide mobility support for PWDs, with a special focus on children with disabilities.

50. In 2022, as a partial contribution to strengthening the capacity of the *Arierib* Mobility Workshop (AMW), 40 new recruits were provided with mobility training on orthotic, prosthesis, and physiotherapy services. To this effect, a training manual has been prepared by AMW, which is approved and monitored by the Department of Technical Vocational Educational Training of the Ministry of Education.

51. Currently, there are three elementary schools dedicated to serving students with special needs. One of these schools is operated by the government, while the remaining two are non-governmental institutions specifically catering to children with vision and hearing impairments. The Ministry of Education (MoE) provides support to these non-government schools, which includes initiatives for curriculum development and capacity building. Upon completion of their studies at these three schools, students receive specialized support and consultation to aid their integration or transition to mainstream education at the next level.

52. Numerous in-service training programs have been conducted to enhance the capacity of teachers in special needs education. Moreover, educational projects are underway in some parts of the country for children with Intellectual Developmental Disability. According to the report of the National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NAIDD), the student population increased from 255 to 646.

3. Women (Recommendations 131.250, 107)

53. As a national organization, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) plays a vital role in empowering women and ensuring the enforcement of national laws and policies that impact women. It possesses its own constitution, vision, mission, and structure, all of which are mandated by the Government of Eritrea. NUEW is a nationwide organization that encompasses Eritrean women from both within the country and the diaspora. To effectively execute its strategic programs, NUEW has established a comprehensive organizational structure. The NUEW National Policy on Gender and Action Plan aims to foster equal rights and opportunities for women, men, girls, and boys from diverse backgrounds, enabling them to engage in and benefit from a supportive, sustainable, and suitable economic, legal, social, and political framework.

(a) Gender parity and participation in decision making (Recommendations 131.133, 201)

54. Eritrea has implemented national mechanisms to promote the empowerment of women and facilitate their eligibility for decision-making roles. The country's policies guarantee equality for all citizens and are enforced through relevant government laws.

(b) Fighting against discrimination and harmful practices (Recommendations 131.129, 130, 131, 132, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 245)

55. Provisions against discrimination can be found in various national codes and proclamations. For instance, anti-discrimination clauses are present in Article 4(4) of Proclamation 58/1994 (Land Proclamation), Article 65 of Proclamation 118/2000 (Labor

Proclamation), Article 1492 of the Transitional Civil Code of Eritrea, Article 45 of Proclamation 2/1991 (equality of spouses), Article 50 of Proclamation 2/1991 (abolishing and criminalizing the traditional practice of abduction for marriage), and Proclamation 158/2007 (FGM/C).

56. The National Strategic Plan to ensure Children and Women's Rights, abandon FGM/C, and Underage Marriage 2020-2024 emphasizes the necessity of comprehensive and multi-sectoral actions to effectively eradicate these harmful practices. The plan also advocates for the establishment of a strengthened coordination platform, which includes the National Steering Committee, National Technical Committee, and Village Committees.

57. Anti-FGM awareness campaigns have been organized at the community level in Eritrea with the aim of reducing and eliminating the practice of FGM/C. In 2020, the Ministry of Health, MoLSW, and National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) conducted an FGM mapping study with the support of UNICEF. This study builds upon previous studies conducted in 2014, 2016, and 2018. The primary objective of the study was to assess the communities' readiness to publicly declare their abandonment of the practice. A total of 112 randomly selected villages and 7,836 individuals aged 15 years and above were included in the study. These villages were chosen from five sub-regions: *Halhal* in *Anseba* region, *Logo-Anseba* in *Gash-Barka* region, *Galnefhi* in the Central region, and *Afabet* and *Nakfa* in the Northern Red Sea region.

58. Knowledge of the harmful effects of FGM/C was almost universal (98.7%), with no significant variation among the sub-zone and the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

59. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the respondents expressed a desire for the discontinuation of the practice. This percentage was significantly higher compared to the estimates obtained from women aged 15–49 years in the 2002 EDHS and 2010 EPHS surveys (52.2% and 82.2% respectively). A notable finding from the study was that 96.8% of the respondents believed that there are no benefits from FGM/C. This percentage is significantly higher compared to the estimates from the 2002 EDHS and 2010 EPHS, which were 29.1% and 81.8% respectively, among women aged 15–49 years. Another significant finding was that almost all respondents (96.1%) were aware of the proclamation that prohibits the practice of female circumcision in Eritrea. To further reduce and ultimately eliminate the practice of FGM/C, it is crucial for the community to collectively decide or declare to abandon the practice in large gatherings.

(c) Women empowerment programs

60. During the reporting period, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) implemented 26 projects across the country in collaboration with the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW), the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS), as well as the Ministry of Education's Adult Education program.

61. The NUEW training centers have successfully trained 654 women, enabling them to either start their own businesses or secure employment in small enterprises. The training courses offered encompass a range of disciplines, including Basic Computer Training, Musical Instrument, Camera Shooting and Editing, Sound Recording and Editing, Tailoring, Weaving, Cooking and Catering, Body Care and Beautification, as well as Handcraft. As a result of these opportunities, many trainees have obtained employment and are now earning income.

F. Cultural rights

Strengthen social harmony and increase attention towards Eritrean heritage (Recommendation 131.141)

62. In 1993, after Eritrea declared its independence, it became a member of several international organizations, such as UNESCO, and also signed several important international documents, including the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (in 2001), the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural

Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention (in 2004), and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (in 2010).

63. Significantly, in 2015, Eritrea introduced legislation, Proclamation 177/2015, aimed at protecting its national cultural and natural heritage, with a particular focus on tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The purpose of this legislation was to establish a framework for the protection of Eritrea's intangible cultural heritage for future generations, as well as to raise public awareness about its importance. This legislative milestone not only emphasized the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, but also recognized its potential contribution to sustainable development.

64. Proclamation 177/2015, addresses various issues, including the establishment of integrated systems for identifying, registering, documenting, monitoring, administrating, conserving, protecting, safeguarding, and preserving heritage resources. It also includes measures to control the illicit transfer, export, or transport of heritage materials. The Proclamation also focuses on protecting Eritrea's cultural heritage from damage and hazards, promoting research and information dissemination, and ensuring the active involvement of government institutions and the public.

65. Additionally, the Proclamation defines what constitutes cultural heritage in Eritrea, outlines administrative and management schemes, and provides guidelines for ownership, repatriation, research, and the management of sites, monuments, movable heritage, and intangible aspects of heritage. It also specifies the sanctions for violating the Proclamation.

III. Civil and political rights

A. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Recommendations 131.182, 178, 179)

66. The State of Eritrea guarantees citizen’s rights to freedom of conscience and religion according to the law. The National Charter of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) states that the national system must be secular and independent from religion, while still upholding religious equality. In essence, nationhood should form the basis for all political institutions and policies. Similarly, Article 2 of Proclamation 73/1995 clearly establishes the fundamental principle of separating state and religion. It explicitly prohibits religious institutions from participating in any political activities, whether in support or opposition to the government.

67. Article 3 of the same proclamation recognizes that religions and religious institutions have the right to practice their spiritual activities, and any materials they produce, whether written or broadcasted, should not be subject to press regulation. However, these spiritual activities must not disrupt the peace, security, and unity of the state and its citizens. Therefore, all religions and religious institutions are required to register and declare all their movable and immovable properties (Article 10).

B. Freedom of opinion and expression (Recommendations 131.185, 186, 188, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197)

68. Article 14 of the Transitional Civil Code of Eritrea, along with the provisions in regional and international human rights instruments to which Eritrea is a state party, guarantee the right to express one's own ideas. This right may only be restricted in order to respect the morality and rights of others, as well as the law. Interference with the exercise of these rights is not tolerated, but they may not be used for political purposes or to undermine morality and public order. Consensus-building and the implementation of the Social Contract within the participatory approach of the government depend on having full access to information. National Radio Services, which cover a wide range of current economic, developmental, social, and political issues, are available in all nine ethnic languages spoken in the country. There are also plans to expand television services to the same level.

69. The Government's policy approach aligns fully with the concept of overseeing and facilitating access to information, but the specific oversight mechanism is not yet in place. The Government has also installed FM Radio Stations throughout the country to supplement MW/SW Transmitters and improve access to information for people living in remote and rural areas.

70. Eritrea's internet connectivity is currently provided through satellite, which limits the internet speed and bandwidth. However, Eritrea Telecommunication Corporation (EriTel) is working to address this issue by implementing various projects to increase the bandwidth. Since 2021, EriTel has introduced a new satellite technology called Medium Earth Orbit (MEO), which offers higher internet speeds and reduced latency compared to the previously used Geostationary Earth Orbit satellites.

71. EriTel is actively taking steps to ensure continuous availability of internet services throughout the country. This includes deploying a higher capacity backbone network and adding backup gateway sites in different geographical locations. The ultimate goal is to provide reliable and affordable internet services to the population. In addition, EriTel has introduced various optional packages, such as volume-based services and off-peak hour services, to incentivize internet service customers. These options are offered alongside the dedicated ADSL and Wi-Fi facilities.

C. National legal system (Recommendations 131.79, 151, 152, 175, 182, 188, 204, 210, 221, 151)

72. The national legislations of Eritrea are based on core principles that prioritize human dignity and the recognition and protection of fundamental rights. The National Charter explicitly states that equal rights must be respected, and this forms the foundation of the country's political program. As a result, the people and government of Eritrea are committed to creating a just and equal society where the dignity and basic rights of women, workers, children, refugees, persons with disabilities, and others in need of assistance are equally upheld. The Transitional Civil Code of Eritrea (Proclamation 2/1991) incorporates the fundamental rights of individuals under Articles 8-31, ensuring the equal implementation of these rights without discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, language, color, sex, religion, disability, age, social or economic status, or any other improper factor. All existing national legislations are grounded in these principles and guarantees that the national legal system protects the rights of the people of Eritrea.

73. Eritrea is a state party to several UN and regional human rights instruments, including six core human rights treaties (ICCRD, ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC & CAT). The Eritrean national laws, policies, and strategies duly recognize and incorporate the contents of these instruments, thereby enforcing them through Eritrean courts. As a result, every individual is entitled to basic human rights and is required to fulfill corresponding obligations.

74. The basic human rights of the people in Eritrea, including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, are protected by sectoral laws, policies, and strategies. There is a gradual progress in realizing these rights, with a particular focus on children's rights and women's rights.

75. The newly adopted Eritrean Civil Code, Civil Procedure Code, and Penal and Criminal Procedure Code (2015) ensure legal measures to prevent and respond to various crimes, including sexual offenses. There is a stronger stance against sexual offenses involving children and minors. The principle of due process of law is upheld, ensuring that no one is detained without proper legal procedures, and that no perpetrator escapes a free and fair trial.

76. The Eritrean Penal and Criminal Procedure Code (2015) ensure that no one is detained without due process of law, and that all perpetrators receive a free and fair trial.

D. Administration of justice (Recommendations 131.96, 163, 164, 177)

77. The Government of Eritrea has enacted Proclamations No. 184/2023, a Proclamation to amend the Structure and Jurisdiction of Courts in Eritrea, among others, aimed at improving people's access to quality justice in Eritrea. These measures allow minor civil litigations to be adjudicated by lower-level courts with wider geographic coverage. This ensures that court services are easily accessible and facilitates the speedy delivery of justice.

78. The Ministry of Justice is currently implementing a comprehensive strategy to further improve access to justice in Eritrea. This strategy includes various components such as the establishment of an efficient legal aid system, the promotion and institutionalization of out-of-court dispute resolution mechanisms, and the enhancement of public awareness-raising efforts. Uniform standard procedural forms will also be introduced. The strategy aims to enhance the quality of the justice system by strengthening institutional capacities and ensuring its accessibility to the general public. All these efforts take into consideration the historical, social, economic, and cultural norms, values and practices of Eritrea.

79. In regard to capacity building, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) periodically conducts training for judges, prosecutors, Ministry staff, and other law enforcement professionals. These trainings cover various topics such as crime prevention, the criminal justice system, investigating and prosecuting financial crimes, and the application of international norms in domestic governance, the rule of law, and the administration of justice. The aim of these capacity building initiatives is to provide legal professionals with contemporary knowledge and skills in the overall administration of justice. The MoJ is actively working towards building a skilled law and justice workforce. Currently, 129 young legal professionals are pursuing post-graduate studies in Master of Laws (LL.M) from the University of South Africa. The MoJ will continue to explore opportunities to enhance the capacity in law and justice for its staff, ultimately strengthening Eritrea's legal system and the administration of justice.

80. The MoJ has organized two successive annual National Law Weeks: from November 6th to 11th, 2021, and March 13 to 18 2023 respectively, as part of its efforts to raise public legal awareness. These Law Weeks includes public seminars, shows, experience sharing, webinars, nationwide pro-bono legal services, and various social activities. Additionally, the MoJ, in coordination with the Ministry of Information (MOI), regularly conducts law awareness programs on TV, radio, and in daily newspapers. These programs are aimed at strengthening community understanding of the law and ensuring efficient public participation in the administration of justice.

E. Juvenile justice (Recommendations 131.170, 171, 172, 173, 174)

81. The Eritrean Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes prioritize the rehabilitation of young offenders, aiming to help them become self-sufficient and valuable members of society. These codes contain specific chapters that address juvenile offenders. Juveniles are treated differently from adults and are not held in custody with them. When young offenders are found guilty, they are subject to special disciplinary measures, such as admission to a rehabilitation institution and supervised education.

82. To ensure justice for children, the government has established a probation service that provides counseling and supports the integration of children in conflict with the law into schools and communities. Cases involving children in conflict with the law are heard in closed chambers or benches. Efforts to enhance protection include training for justice professionals and sub-regional administrators in the administration of justice and law enforcement.

83. Considering Eritrea's strong sense of community and the community-based dispute resolution mechanism, the Ministry of Justice aims to introduce a restorative justice model for children in conflict with the law. This model aligns with Eritrea's community values and focuses on repairing harm, strengthening the community, fostering relationships between offenders and victims, and reintegrating juvenile delinquents into society.

84. The recently adopted Eritrean Civil Code, Civil Procedure Code, and Penal and Criminal Procedure Code (2015) establish legal measures to prevent and respond to different forms of violence against children. Sexual violence is now a serious crime, with stricter penalties for offenses against children and minors. The minimum age of criminal responsibility has been raised to 18 in the 2015 penal code. The penal code also incorporates child-friendly justice mechanisms, offering alternative measures aimed at reforming and rehabilitating young offenders and promoting rehabilitation and restorative juvenile justice model.

F. Harmonization with international instruments (Recommendations 131.78, 93, 94)

85. MoJ is providing technical support to the relevant Ministries that are leading the drafting of sectoral legislations to ensure that these legislations are in line with national, international, and regional instruments to which Eritrea is a party. Additionally, MoJ has drafted the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Civil Code to align with international and regional standards.

86. The Eritrean family law upholds the principle of gender equality in all matters related to marriage and family. This means that both men and women are treated equally when it comes to entering into marriage, managing children's affairs, handling property, determining residence, resolving family disputes, and exercising other family-related rights and responsibilities. The Civil Code of Eritrea covers family relationships and inheritance, and it regulates various aspects such as family relationships, betrothal, marriage, divorce, child custody, adoption, and maintenance. This is in accordance with the provisions of CEDAW and other human rights instruments.

G. Conditions of detention (Recommendations 131.159, 160)

87. Conducting investigations of criminal procedures is crucial for delivering justice to suspects and properly addressing the commission of crimes. These investigations are conducted within a specific time limit, usually 28 days. Over the past 4 years, 82.6% of investigations have been completed within this time frame. Efforts have been made to ensure that proper standards are followed in all police stations, safeguarding the rights of detainees. Police inspectors and the legal services office regularly conduct institutional inspections. Additionally, the office of the Prosecutor General and high court judges carry out regular inspections of all police stations and detention facilities, as mandated by Proclamation 1/1991.

H. Penitentiary system

88. Eritrea Correction and Rehabilitation Services (ECRS) is responsible for managing detention facilities in compliance with human rights principles and standards. The primary principle is to ensure that detained individuals are treated with humanity and dignity. The objective of ECRS is to rehabilitate convicted individuals so that they can become law-abiding and productive citizens upon reintegration into society after their release.

89. Major prison facilities have their own health services, equipped with basic laboratories and staffed by nurses to address basic healthcare needs. Additionally, seven centers have dedicated HIV testing facilities. For more severe cases, detainees are referred to national healthcare facilities and hospitals. Furthermore, regular HIV and TB prevention sensitization and advocacy programs are conducted in all prison centers. Hygiene and health committees periodically review the state of prison hygiene and healthcare. Overall, the prison centers have not encountered any major health challenges and have successfully implemented the COVID-19 health guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health without experiencing any significant issues during this period.

90. The national education policy is implemented in all prisons and correctional centers. All prison centers provide regular education programs from elementary to secondary level in

accordance with the national curriculum and follow the academic calendar. During the period of 2019–2022, 3623 inmates were enrolled from 1st to 12th grade in several prison centers, and the average promotion rate to the next grade has been 82%.

91. Successful incarcerated individuals are encouraged to participate in the national university entrance examination, providing them with the opportunity to continue their education at the degree, diploma, and certificate levels. The teaching and learning process is primarily facilitated by the inmates themselves, with periodic supervision from higher education institutions. Noteworthy accomplishments in higher education include the following: In 2019, twenty detainees took part in the national university entrance examination, resulting in six successful candidates at the degree level, five at the diploma level, and four at the certificate level – all of whom were admitted to higher education institutions. In 2020, six inmates successfully graduated with a degree in management and business. In 2021, twenty-seven inmates participated in the examination, with three achieving a passing score at the diploma level. As of 2022, five detainees are still pursuing their studies in the management and business degree program, while seven are currently enrolled in an accounting diploma program.

92. In 2019, 348 detainees were trained in makeup, computer skills, accounting, electrical installation, solar installation, and more. In 2020, 79 detainees received training in mechanics, electricity, photography, computer skills, and other areas. Unfortunately, there was no training in 2021 due to the COVID-19 situation. However, in 2022, 101 detainees were trained in computers, literature, graphics, sewing clothes, and other subjects.

93. The awareness-raising program comprises cultural performances, sports activities, and recreational initiatives that are organized annually to commemorate religious, national, and international holidays. Moreover, seminars led by diverse experts are conducted, with a specific emphasis on subjects including HIV, TB, reading and work practices, Eritrean National codes, the role of women in Eritrean society, child rearing, the causes and consequences of psychological stress, and other topics that hold significance in their daily lives.

94. The right of detainees to unrestricted religions belief and practice in accordance with the prison management regulation is implemented, and inmates continue to pray, fast and observe other rites that are observed in their respective religion and belief.

IV. Cross cutting issues

A. Right to development (Recommendations 131. 213, 214, 135, 136, 137)

95. In Eritrea's mixed economy, both the state and the private sector play crucial roles in the country's development. Eritrea has prioritized short and medium-term development plans to enhance its development planning capacity. As part of these efforts, Eritrea has chosen to pursue a medium-term, five-year Indicative National Development Plan. This plan is executed through comprehensive sector development plans and corresponding annual development plans. Eritrea employs a synergistic development plan approach, integrating top-down and bottom-up planning techniques, to formulate the Indicative National Development Plan. This approach entails an iterative process that addresses local community priorities, assisting the government in establishing clearly defined macro-level priorities.

96. Eritrea is fully committed to the interconnection of human rights, development, and peace and security. In pursuit of this objective, it places high priority on the integration of human rights into the Indicative National Development Plans. Additionally, Eritrea actively incorporates international and regional human rights mechanisms, as well as International and Regional Development Goals and Agendas, into its national framework. Eritrea's steadfast dedication to peace, security, human dignity, and prosperity is clearly demonstrated through its successful implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. The country's processes of development and nation-building are driven by principles of social justice and inclusivity, ensuring that every citizen, irrespective of religion, language, or geographic

location, is afforded the freedom and opportunity to participate in and reap the benefits of national development programs.

97. Eritrea's large diaspora, resident in an array of countries around the world, plays a positive role in assisting development processes in the country. In addition to making substantial financial and in-kind contributions to a range of initiatives and projects in different areas, the Eritrean diaspora promotes trade and investment opportunities, is highly active in business creation and entrepreneurship, provides diverse volunteer support, and assists in the transfer of new knowledge and skills.

B. Prohibition of slavery and trafficking (Recommendations 131. 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211 and 106)

98. The issue of human trafficking and smuggling is a persistent problem that extends across various territories and legal systems because of its transnational nature. This presents challenges in terms of apprehending and prosecuting the individuals responsible for these offenses. Eritrea is a member state of the International Organization for Migration and has ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its trafficking protocol on September 25, 2014. The act of trafficking is also recognized as a criminal offense under articles 605 of the Transitional Penal Code of Eritrea.

99. The Eritrean government has actively participated in various international and national initiatives to combat human trafficking and smuggling. These efforts include engaging in conventions such as the Palermo Convention, the Valetta Summit, and the Khartoum Process, as well as collaborating with UNODC and other UN bodies. Currently, a steering committee has been established and is closely collaborating with the Better Migration Management (BMM) program. The BMM program aims to assist potential and actual migrants, victims of trafficking and smuggling, and other vulnerable groups, including children and women.

C. Acceptance of international norms and cooperation with international mechanisms

100. Since the last review the State of Eritrea acceded to the African Youth Charter (2009), Convention on early Notification of Nuclear Accident, Convention on the Assistance in case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological accident, Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendments, Convention on the safety of spent fuel Management and on safety of Radioactive Waste Management, IAEA Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocols, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, December 2015, Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, Minamata Convention on Mercury and ratify the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

101. The State of Eritrea is actively participating in international cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this respect and as a continuation of previous framework agreements with the United Nations, it signed the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 on 20th of December 2021. It also submitted and held interactive dialogue on the Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the SDGs, the Sixth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the second and third combined periodic report on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the second and third combined periodic report on the Implementation of African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) respectively.

D. Inter-state cooperation (Recommendations 131.74, 75)

102. Efforts at building the Horn of Africa (HoA) peace, security and cooperation despite continued challenges, have shown progress in the last two decades. But in spite of all the

manifest political goodwill, it is not a simple undertaking that will materialize overnight. In the situation of the seismic shift in the geopolitical balance of power leading to multi-polarity and the effort exerted to focus on the Horn of Africa strategy, it is important to highlight that the vested interests driven by geopolitical interests of Western countries is bent on impeding the promising effort of regional peace, security and development. Eritrea has continually and strongly opposed the tendencies and efforts.

103. The state of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea came to an end in 2018 ushering a new era of peace and friendship. The agreement underscores a wide scope of cooperation on political, economic, social and security sectors, as well as joint endeavors to ensure regional peace, development and cooperation.

104. Nonetheless, Eritrea continues its efforts to consolidate regional peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa. Normalized Eritrea-Ethiopia ties have further spurred and catalyzed new or supplemental multilateral agreements with Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya. Furthermore, the joint 2018 meeting (in Djibouti) of the Foreign Ministers of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia with the President of the Republic of Djibouti was an important development in promoting healthy relations and cooperation. Soon after this, President Isaias of Eritrea and President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti also agreed to establish a new chapter of cooperation and good neighborhood between the two countries during a meeting in Jeddah.

105. Eritrea closely follows the present conflict in Sudan and is exerting its influence and support to stop the internal conflict between the two warring parties and address the pertinent issues through a comprehensive negotiated approach. Eritrea has pursued a policy of active engagement and periodic consultations with Sudanese warring parties.

106. The State of Eritrea also activated its membership in IGAD and the resumption of its contribution and participation in the work of the Authority, subsequently participated in the 14th ordinary session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of States and Governments. It also participated in the Africa Climate Summit and the sixth BRICS meeting.

V. Challenges and the way forward

A. Challenges

107. As a least developed country, Eritrea has faced multitude challenges such as recurrent drought caused by the continuous impacts of climate change which has impacted the availability of reliable and secure food supply, the COVID-19 Pandemic and the recurrent intra-state and interstate conflicts occurring in the Horn of Africa. For almost a decade, the country and its people were subjected to unwarranted UN Security Council sanctions, based on fabricated allegations. Yet, the country is further sustaining the illegal unilateral sanctions imposed by the US and EU. Those sanctions have highly impacted the development trajectory of the State due to the lack of correspondent banking relations caused by excessive over-compliance mechanisms by international financial institutions.

B. Way forward

108. The State of Eritrea will continue its endeavors to raise the level of protection, respect and fulfillment of human rights and fulfill the comprehensive development objectives and improve the livelihood of its citizens. Eritrea will actively participate in the global human rights governance, advocate for a genuine dialogue and cooperation with human rights mechanisms on the basis of the basic principles of objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization. It will also promote the work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms adhering to the principle that all human rights are indivisible, interrelated, and interdependent and mutually reinforcing and that all human rights issues must be treated in a fair, more equitable, more reasonable and inclusive manner.

VI. Pending recommendations

109. The following recommendations were not implemented during the reporting period due to the challenges stated in part V: recommendations 131.1, 3, 11, 16, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 38, 39, 40, 47, 49, 51, 97, 140 and 210.