



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

Distr.: General
16 April 2010
English
Original: French

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

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 18 of the Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

**Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of States
parties**

Djibouti*

[October 2009]

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

Republic of Djibouti

Unity - Equality - Peace

**Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Family Welfare
and Social Affairs**

**Combined initial, second and third periodic reports on
implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All
Forms of Discrimination against Women**

October 2009

List of abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANEFIP:	Employment, Training and Job Placement Agency
BTS:	Brevet de technicien supérieur [Higher technical diploma]
CDC:	Community development centre
CFPEN:	Training centre for national education personnel
CFPS:	Training centre for health personnel
CNEC:	Caisse nationale d'épargne et de crédit [National Savings and Credit Cooperative]
CPEC:	Caisse populaire d'épargne et de crédit [Popular Savings and Credit Cooperative]
CPME:	Protection Centre for Mothers and Children
CRIPEN:	National Education Centre for Research and Pedagogical Information
DISED:	Directorate of Statistics and Demographic Studies
EDAM:	Djibouti Household Survey
EDSF:	Djibouti Family Health Survey
EDIM:	Djibouti Multiple Indicator Survey
ESAF:	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
FGM:	Female genital mutilation
GBV:	Gender-based violence
GDI:	Gender-related development index
GDP:	Gross domestic product
GEM:	Gender empowerment measure
HDI:	Human development index
HDR:	Human Development Report
ILO:	International Labour Organization
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
INDS:	National Social Development Initiative
LIC:	Lycée industriel et commercial
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
NHDR:	National Human Development Report
PAPFAM:	Pan-Arabic Project for Family Health
PDMM:	Microfinance and Microcredit Development Project
PRGF:	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSP:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDF:	Social Development Fund
SNAEI:	National Strategy for the Full Abandonment of All Forms of Excision and Infibulation
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNFD:	National Union of Djiboutian Women
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
WB:	World Bank
WFP:	World Food Programme
WHO:	World Health Organization

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Preface

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (“the Convention”) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1979. It entered into force on 3 September 1981, whereupon it became law, requiring all signatory States to make a firm commitment to action.
2. In December 1993, the General Assembly also adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which in particular called on States to “consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, or to include provisions for that purpose in plans already existing, taking into account, as appropriate, such cooperation as can be provided by non-governmental organizations, particularly those concerned with the issue of violence against women”.
3. Although the Convention sets forth the fundamental principle of the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women, it nonetheless requires that women enjoy the same rights as men on the understanding that equality is much more than simply ensuring the same treatment for all. True equality can stem only from efforts to combat and redress inequalities.
4. The Convention thus prescribes the measures to be taken to ensure that women are able to exercise the rights to which they are entitled. It provides guidelines, shows ways forward and sets goals for progress towards the equality of men and women.
5. In ratifying the Convention, without reservations, on 2 December 1998, the Republic of Djibouti undertook to do its utmost to respect, promote, protect and realize the rights of the country’s women and above all to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including by protecting them against all forms of violence.
6. At the same time, the Republic undertook to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (“the Committee”), reports on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which it has adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention.
7. Accordingly, under article 18 of the Convention, the Republic of Djibouti should have submitted its initial report in January 2000, or, in other words, within one year of the date of its ratification of the Convention. It should also have submitted periodic reports thereafter at least every four years, specifically in January 2004 and January 2008.
8. While Djibouti has admittedly failed to meet that obligation, it is worth recalling that, on the date of its ratification of the Convention, in December 1998, no ministerial department with responsibility for the promotion and protection of women was yet in existence. The National Union of Djiboutian Women (UNFD), a non-governmental organization (NGO) established on the eve of independence in 1977, perpetually worked single-handedly to protect the rights of women in Djibouti.
9. Given the country’s full and firm commitment to the Convention, however, in 1999 the Government of the Republic put in place a ministry responsible for the advancement of women, family welfare and social affairs, which was directly answerable to the Prime Minister and subsequently became a full-fledged ministry in 2008.
10. In this fight by Djiboutian women to assert and establish successfully a place for themselves in the machinery of government, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women nonetheless admits to having experienced administrative and financial problems, in

particular a lack of human resources qualified to implement and follow up the Convention, compounded by the lack of indicators and the inadequacy of statistical data in certain areas relating specifically to women.

11. These are the reasons for the Government's delay in preparing and submitting to the Committee reports relating to the Convention.

12. The present report - prepared by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women over 10 years after ratification of the Convention, under supervision by the Interministerial Committee for the coordination of reporting to treaty bodies - is thus a combined initial and periodic report providing a comprehensive account of the actions undertaken by the Republic of Djibouti to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the country, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention.

Part One

Introduction to the Republic of Djibouti

This introduction comprises four components:

1. Territory and population;
2. General political structure;
3. General legal framework for the protection of human rights;
4. Information and publicity.

1. Territory and population

1.1. Territory

13. The Republic of Djibouti is situated in the Horn of Africa on the Bab al-Mandab strait, which links the southern entry to the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. A former French colony dating back to 1892, the territory has had various names: French Somaliland (FSL) from 1862 to 1967, and subsequently the French Territory of the Afars and Issas (FTAI) until the eve of independence, on 27 June 1977.

14. The country covers a surface area of 23,200 square kilometres and shares borders with Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. It has 372 kilometres of coastline and a maritime space of approximately 7,200 square kilometres.

15. Located in the African Rift Valley, the country offers a varied terrain. It has a dry desert climate marked by low rainfall and generally high temperatures. Vegetation is scarce owing to the harshness of the climate.

1.2 Population

16. The most recent census was conducted in 1983. According to the Djibouti Household Survey/Social Indicators/2002 (EDAM-IS/2002), however, the population in 2002 was estimated at 632,000 inhabitants, of whom 98 per cent were Muslim, with women accounting for some 52 per cent. The population density stands at approximately 27 persons per square kilometre.

17. A new general population census is currently in progress. The first results are expected during 2010.

18. The three main groups constituting the country's national community are Afars, Arabs and Somalis.

19. Enjoying stability in a troubled region where various conflicts persist, the Republic of Djibouti has also been host to numerous refugees and displaced persons since the time of its independence.

20. The official languages are French and Arabic. The national languages are Afar, Somali and Arabic.

21. Over 80 per cent of the population lives in urban areas, with almost 65 per cent concentrated in the capital, Djibouti City, alone. The remainder of the urban population is unequally divided among the country's five interior regions (Arta, Ali Sabieh, Dikhil, Tajourah and Obock). The rural population is estimated at approximately 20 per cent.

22. The preponderance of the urban population is explained by the sizeable demographic weight of Djibouti City, after which the country is also named. Although it occupies under 2 per cent of the country's total surface area, Djibouti City contains 83.3 per cent of the country's settled households, one fifth of which, moreover, are headed by women.

23. An analysis of the trend in the masculinity ratio shows that it favours males aged between 0 and 19 years and females aged between 20 and 39 years. This reversal is the result of migration by women between the ages of 20 and 39 years from neighbouring countries in search of employment and/or income.

24. The population is also characteristically young; under-18s account for 40 per cent of inhabitants (and under-20s for 45.3 per cent).

Household composition - Djibouti, 2006

Age group	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-4 years	1 412	9.8	1 239	8.6	2 651	9.2
5-9 years	1 673	11.6	1 550	10.8	3 223	11.2
10-14 years	1 753	12.2	1 766	12.3	3 519	12.2
15-19 years	1 928	13.4	1 734	12.1	3 663	12.7
20-24 years	1 605	11.1	1 752	12.2	3 357	11.7
25-29 years	1 261	8.8	1 453	10.1	2 714	9.4
30-34 years	932	6.5	1 097	7.6	2 029	7.0
35-39 years	863	6.0	937	6.5	1 800	6.3
40-44 years	743	5.2	685	4.8	1 427	5.0
45-49 years	618	4.3	463	3.2	1 081	3.8
50-54 years	533	3.7	526	3.7	1 058	3.7
55-59 years	371	2.6	392	2.7	763	2.7
60-64 years	288	2.0	401	2.8	689	2.4
65-69 years	118	0.8	144	1.0	261	0.9
70 years and over	193	1.3	153	1.1	346	1.2
Persons unaccounted for	108	0.7	93	0.6	201	0.7
Age						
Children aged 0-17 years	5 957	41.4	5 569	38.7	11 526	40.0
Adults aged 18 years + persons unaccounted for	8 440	58.6	8 815	61.3	17 256	60.0
Total	14 397	100	14 384	100	28 781	100
0-4 years						

25. It should be noted that the findings of the Djibouti Multiple Indicator Survey (EDIM) were derived from 4,888 settled households making a total of 28,781 persons.

26. The annual population growth rate is estimated at 2.8 per cent. Fertility and mortality rates remain ever high, although a fall has been recorded in the past few years. The total fertility rate (TFR) shifted from 5.8 children per woman in 1996 to 4.2 per woman in 2002, while the infant mortality rate fell from 103 to 67 deaths per 1,000 live births between 2002 and 2006. Life expectancy at birth is 47 years, according to EDAM-IS/2002.

1.3. Socioeconomic change

27. Five major periods of socioeconomic change are distinguishable in the Republic of Djibouti since it gained independence.

The period 1977-1991

28. During this first period, starting with the year of independence and continuing until 1991, the country's economic results were modest. Measured in constant prices, the average growth in gross domestic product (GDP) was around 1 per cent.

The period 1992-1996

29. The second period stretched from 1992 to 1996 and heralded a deterioration in the socioeconomic situation. This upheaval of the economy is explained by the emergence of problems, both internal (disturbances in the north of the country) and external (reduction of budgetary aid, increased regional competition, influx of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia, etc.). During this period, economic growth was negative and public finances were damaged.

The period 1996-1999

30. In the face of this unprecedented crisis, the Government entered into negotiations in April 1996 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which culminated in the signing of a confirmation agreement for the period 1996-1999. This third period marked the beginning of the structural adjustment policy (SAP), the bywords for which were the reduction of budget deficits and the implementation of sweeping structural reforms, which nonetheless made it possible to increase the margins of manoeuvre for the governmental authority and to liberate key market forces.

The period 1999-2002

31. This fourth stage began with encouraging results recorded as a result of the policy of austerity being implemented. In October 1999, Djibouti was able to benefit from a three-year agreement under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF).

32. The Government successfully built on the progress achieved during the structural adjustment and put the economy on a higher growth path. However, the other goals sought, namely higher per capita income, lower unemployment, poverty reduction and improvement of the country's social indicators, were not attained.

The period 2002-2009

33. From 2002, the country returned to an energetic period of steady, albeit modest, economic growth. The results were positive in terms of quantitative budgetary objectives, but the social indicators were disquieting.

34. The country is faced with an unemployment rate of almost 60 per cent, with levels particularly high among poor households (66.5 per cent) and the extreme poor (72.4 per cent). For women, the situation is even more dramatic; 68.8 per cent of economically active women are unemployed, compared with 54.6 per cent of men. Poverty associated with the high unemployment rate has therefore increased, indiscriminately affecting all segments of the population.

Poverty eradication

35. In the face of this fact and in common with many Third World countries, Djibouti was obliged to develop a Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction (SFPR) in 2001 and elaborate a first-generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2002, followed by a second-generation PRSP in 2004.

36. Designed to serve as effective poverty-reduction tools, these strategies were based on the four major themes of:

- Boosting the country's competitiveness and creating the conditions for strong and sustainable economic growth;
- Putting in place a genuine human-resources development policy through the implementation of programmes targeted at poverty-stricken areas and vulnerable groups;
- Reducing poverty by improving access for the poor to water and essential services;
- Promoting good political, local and economic governance, building the planning and management capacities of the administration and upgrading its tools and resources.

37. It must be said, however, that the two PRSPs failed to meet expectations owing to the lack of implementation in practice. The Head of State, Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, thus sounded the alarm. The finding by the Presidency of the Republic is disconcerting: "Large fringes of the Djibouti population and whole areas of the national territory are experiencing difficult living conditions, sometimes in situations of poverty and marginalization."

38. According to the estimates available for the past five years, the recorded incidence of individual poverty rose dramatically from 45.1 to 74 per cent for the relatively poor and from 9.6 to 42.1 per cent for the extreme poor, thereby confirming the structural nature and the immensity of poverty in Djibouti.

39. Survey results also show that poverty is widespread and affects all geographical areas and social groups. In terms of concentration, Djibouti City contains the largest number of poor, with a proportion of 65.2 and 57.4 per cent respectively for relative and extreme poverty.

40. It is in the outlying urban areas, however, that the poor are most concentrated. Districts 5 and 6 of Djibouti City (representing 41.8 per cent of the total population) alone account for 51.1 per cent of overall extreme poverty and 47.1 per cent of relative poverty among individuals. As to household poverty, districts 4 and 5 together account for 41.6 per cent of overall poverty and 45.7 per cent of extreme poverty.

41. Contrary to other countries in Africa, poverty in Djibouti is primarily an urban phenomenon symptomatic of a specific context characterized by the fact that the country is small and highly urbanized, has no substantial rural sector and is affected by conflict and migration.

42. The phenomenon nevertheless reaches disastrous proportions in rural areas, where the incidence of relative poverty may well approach 95 per cent, while more than three out of every four rural inhabitants live in extreme poverty. The incidence of poverty and

extreme poverty is especially high in the interior regions, which account for 33.5 per cent of overall poverty and 41.5 per cent of extreme poverty for a demographic weight of 27.1 per cent.

The National Social Development Initiative (INDS)

43. The new National Social Development Initiative (INDS) launched by the President of the Republic is accordingly designed to tackle rampant poverty, improve living conditions for the most disadvantaged inhabitants and promote the employment and integration of young people.

44. The INDS operational stage began with the establishment of the State Secretariat for National Solidarity in March 2008. It comprises four strategic thrusts, namely: (i) growth, macroeconomic stabilization and competitiveness; (ii) promotion of access to essential social needs; (iii) the fight against poverty and exclusion, and pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); (iv) democratic, economic, financial, administrative and local governance.

Djibouti's economy

45. Djibouti's economy is essentially based on services, which account for three quarters of GDP. The two other traditional sectors of agriculture and industry contribute only minimally to the GDP make-up.

46. Accounting for approximately 5 per cent of GDP, the primary sector plays a negligible role in the economy and is restricted to animal husbandry, market gardening and small-scale fishing. The sector is affected by climatic conditions that are hardly conducive to agriculture (high temperatures, low and sporadic rainfall, etc.).

47. The secondary sector is similarly underdeveloped in Djibouti owing to extremely high production costs (particularly those relating to energy), a limited domestic market, a shortage of skilled labour and a scarcity of natural resources. Its GDP share is estimated at 18 per cent.

48. The tertiary sector chiefly comprises transport (ports and airports) and transit activities, banking and telecommunications. The remarkable development of this key sector has been driven by development projects aimed at turning Djibouti into the region's hub. The sector's contribution to the GDP make-up is to the tune of 75 per cent.

49. The predominance of the tertiary sector is above all due to the country's particularly exceptional geostrategic position at the crossroads of Africa, the Arabian peninsula and the shipping route between West and East.

GDP

50. In short, Djibouti's macroeconomic environment has improved significantly over the past decade. Annual GDP growth rose from an average of 3 per cent between 2001 and 2005 to 4.8 per cent in 2006 and 5.9 per cent in 2007 and 2008. According to IMF, GDP in 2008 stood at US\$ 1,216 per capita. GDP growth of around 7 per cent is forecast for the period 2009-2011.

51. Djibouti has benefited from direct foreign investments in the ports, tourism and construction sectors. The Government has also brought in a large public investment programme for the social sectors.

52. Economic progress nonetheless remains hampered by exogenous constraints that led to major inflation and affected household purchasing power in 2008. The pace of inflation accelerated to 9.2 per cent in 2008, compared with 8.2 per cent in 2007, 3.5 per cent in 2006 and under 2 per cent in 2004.

Debt situation

53. In 2008, total (direct foreign and domestic) debt servicing rose to 2.136 million Djibouti francs (DF), based on an initial projection of DF 2.212 million. A breakdown of direct debt servicing by type of creditor shows multilateral debt to be much higher than bilateral debt.

Table

Breakdown of bilateral and multilateral debt

<i>Debts</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>%</i>
Multilateral	1 420	80.5	1 355	77
Bilateral	345	19.5	404	23
Total	1 765	100	1 759	100

54. The country's financial sector has not yet been noticeably affected by the global financial crisis owing to low usage of the banking system and the financial soundness of Djibouti's banks. There is nonetheless an ever-present risk of a gradual reduction in external financing.

Table

Trend in socioeconomic indicators between 2002 and 2006

<i>Socioeconomic indicators</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2006</i>
Population (in millions of inhabitants)	632 000	N/A
Population growth rate	2.8	N/A
Urban population of Djibouti City	81.1 %	83.6 %
Population aged under 20 years	49.5 %	45.3 %
Population aged between 20 and 64 years	46.8 %	51.4 %
Population aged 65 years and over	2.8 %	2.1 %
Density (inhabitants / km ²)	27.7	N/A
Human development index (HDI)	0.490 ¹	0.494 ²
HDI ranking out of 177 countries	155th ¹	148th ²
Life expectancy at birth	47.0	N/A
Access to improved drinking-water sources	91.2 %	93.5 %
Use of improved sanitation facilities	N/A	67 %
Neonatal mortality rate (per thousand births)	50.8	N/A
Infant mortality rate (per thousand births)	103.0	67

<i>Socioeconomic indicators</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2006</i>
Infant and child mortality rate (per thousand births)	129.1	94
Maternal mortality rate (per one thousand births)	546	N/A
TFR	4.2	N/A
Net preschool enrolment rate	N/A	13.5 %
Preparation for primary school	N/A	11.2 %
Primary school enrolment rate	N/A	63.7 %
Children reaching grade 5 (end of primary cycle)	N/A	95.5 %
Primary school enrolment rate	74.4 % (GER)	66.2 % (NER)
Secondary school enrolment rate		
Girl/boy ratio in secondary education		
Literacy rate among 15-24 year-old females		
Illiteracy rate among the total population		

Sources: Data for 2002 from EDAM-IS-2/2002 and the Djibouti Family Health Survey/Pan-Arabic Project for Family Health/2002 (EDSF/PAPFAM/2002); data for 2002 from EDIM.

¹ HDI for 2002, according to the Human Development Report 2003.

² HDI for 2004, according to the Human Development Report 2006; GER = gross enrolment ratio; NER = net enrolment ratio

(N/A = not available)

N.B. : The EDSF/PAPFAM survey covered the entire country and its sedentary, urban, rural and nomad settings, whereas the EDIM survey focused only on the settled population, which accounts for over 90 per cent of inhabitants.

55. It should be noted that Djibouti's HDI rose from 0.479 in 1995 to 0.490 in 2000, 0.494 in 2004 and 0.513 in 2007, according to the National Human Development Report (NHDR) produced and published by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) in 2007. Djibouti is therefore ranked 148th out of 177 countries and appears among the countries with medium human development.

56. As to the gender-related development index (GDI), which corresponds to HDI discounted for gender inequality, it is estimated at 0.473, clearly signalling a positive trend in the index, taking into account the countrywide efforts in favour of women throughout the 2000s. The differential in progress cannot be measured, however, as 2007 was the first time ever that UNDP had calculated Djibouti's GDI.

57. Concerning the gender empowerment measure (GEM), with reference to the situation described in the NHDR for 2000, it rose to 0.127, which gave Djibouti a ranking of 102nd, or only penultimate place in the ranking. Given the lack of disaggregated statistical data, no GEM calculation could be made in 2007.

2. General political structure

58. Between the time of its independence on 27 June 1977 and September 1992, the Republic of Djibouti had no constitution and was governed by three pieces of legislation: Constitutional Acts 001 and 002 of 27 June 1977 and the National Mobilization Act of 24 October 1981, which officially established the one-party system. The regime instituted by the first President of the Republic was presidential and based on the one-party system.

59. With the adoption by referendum of the new Constitution of 4 September 1992, the Republic of Djibouti embarked on a process of institutional and political democratization. The new Constitution is founded on the principles of rule of law and pluralist democracy. It provides for a multiparty system limited to four parties for a transitional period of 10 years. It also guarantees freedom of citizens and the press.

“Since assuming the office of President of the Republic, guardian of the Constitution, I have been committed to continuing and strengthening the construction of a modern State capable of preserving rights and freedoms and reinforcing the foundations of a republican system based on the separation of powers and the supremacy of the law.

“It is in this sense that I continue to express my commitment to our republican Constitution and to the multiparty system in order to build a law-based State and protect human rights and individual and collective freedoms...”

(Extract from the address delivered by the President of the Republic, Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, to the National Forum on the Human Rights Situation in Djibouti, May 2004).

60. Concerning the organization of government, the President of the Republic and the National Assembly are elected by universal suffrage. The presidential term is six years, renewable once only, while the term of office for deputies is five years.

61. The Republic of Djibouti is thus a democracy founded on the principle of separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers.

2.1 Executive power

62. The President of the Republic serves as Head of State and Head of Government Constitution (arts. 21 to 44).

63. In discharging his functions, the President is supported by a Government composed of 21 ministers, including the Prime Minister, who is responsible for the coordination of interministerial activities.

64. In the event that the President of the Republic is temporarily indisposed, the Prime Minister deputizes for him.

65. In the event that the office is vacant, it is temporarily assumed by the President of the Supreme Court, who is in fact a woman.

2.2. Legislative power

66. Legislative power is held by the National Assembly, composed of 65 deputies, including 9 women, who are elected for five years.

67. The National Assembly passes laws, which, pursuant to article 57 of the Constitution, establish rules on, inter alia:

- The enjoyment and exercise of civil and civic rights, nationality, status and security of persons, organization of the family, the property and inheritance regime and the law of obligations;
- The fundamental guarantees accorded to citizens for the exercise of their public liberties;
- The fundamental principles of labour law, trade-union law, social security, etc.

The National Assembly is also empowered to oversee the executive. To that end, it may question members of the Government or establish commissions of inquiry.

68. Pursuant to article 71 of the Constitution, the judicial power is independent of the legislative power and the executive power. It is exercised by the Supreme Court and the other courts and tribunals.

69. The President of the Republic is the guarantor of the independence of the judiciary. He is assisted by the High Council of the Judiciary, which supervises the management of the judicial profession and gives its opinion on any issue relating to the independence of the judiciary.

2.4. Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic

70. This institution was established by the Act of 21 August 1999 in the interest of improving the proximity of the administration to citizens with a view to better guaranteeing the transparency of public services by permitting dialogue and active involvement by citizens.

71. It enjoys institutional independence. Within the dual framework of State modernization and good governance, the institution of the Office of the Ombudsman is an important factor of social peace.

72. In instituting the Office of the Ombudsman, the State aspired to build an efficient administration mindful of delivering a quality public service and establishing new relations with citizens.

73. Efforts to broaden the reach of the Office of the Ombudsman have been made, both in the capital and in the country's interior regions, and need to be stepped up in order to cope with all needs.

2.5. Decentralization

74. The aim of decentralization is to establish local governance with reference to the aspects required for public participation in decisions on resources management. The first phase of the process was commenced in 2000 and two components were identified for anchoring the process in the country: (i) an institutional and legal component; (ii) a social and communications component.

75. Main achievements included: (i) the establishment of provisional regional councils; (ii) delineation of the administrative boundaries of the regions; (iii) the establishment of a new region (Arta); (iv) the conduct of studies on the assets and potentials of the territorial units; (v) the preparation of a database on the regions; (vi) the implementation of microprojects for rural populations (four localities per region); (vii) the holding of local elections; (viii) the transfer of competences to local authorities for matters relating to civil status, road maintenance and town administration.

76. Capitalizing on decentralization, the second phase of the process was launched in April 2006 with the inauguration of regional assembly headquarters, the establishment of Djibouti Council (Town Hall) and the assumption of office by elected local officials, including women.

3. General legal framework for the protection of human rights

3.1. Provisions of the Constitution

77. The Constitution of the Republic of Djibouti, which entered into force on 15 September 1992, proclaims in its preamble that Islam is the State religion.

78. The Constitution enshrines human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is the supreme law of the State. Title II is devoted to the rights and duties of the person.

79. The rights and freedoms recognized in the Constitution include: (i) equality before the law, without distinction as to language, origin, race, sex or religion; (ii) the right to life, liberty, security and integrity of the person, mandatory prosecution, and the presumption of innocence; (iii) the right to legal counsel and a doctor in the event of arrest; (iv) prohibition of detention without a warrant; (v) the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship and opinion; (vi) the right to own property and to inviolability of the home; (vii) the secrecy of correspondence, and freedom of movement; (viii) freedom of expression, freedom to form associations and trade unions, and the right to strike; (ix) prohibition of torture and of cruel, inhuman, degrading or humiliating treatment or punishment.

80. The Republic of Djibouti has incorporated into the preamble of its Constitution the principles of democracy and human rights, as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the provisions of which are an integral part of the Constitution.

81. The Constitution affirms the country's resolve to establish the rule of law and a multiparty democracy guaranteeing the full development of individual and collective rights and freedoms, as well as the harmonious development of the national community.

82. In order to put these rights and freedoms into practice, the Constitution empowers the legislature to set the conditions for their enjoyment and the procedures for their exercise. It is within this framework that key legislation is adopted.

3.2. Main instruments ratified by Djibouti

83. The Republic of Djibouti is a party to numerous international and regional human rights instruments that also guarantee the rights of women.

At the international level, the Republic of Djibouti has ratified:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (6 December 1990);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (27 December 1990);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (12 December 1998);
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2 September 2002);
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (9 September 2002);
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (5 February 2004);
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2009);
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2009);
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009);
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto;
- The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto;
- The core conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO);

- The core conventions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

At the regional level, the Republic of Djibouti is a party to:

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1991);
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (2005);
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (signed in 1992);
- Human rights commitments in the framework of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

3.3. Institutional human rights framework

84. Each of the constitutional institutions, namely, the Presidency of the Republic, the Government, the National Assembly, the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Council and the High Court, plays a direct or indirect role, depending on the extent of their involvement, in the promotion and protection of human rights.

3.3.1. Judicial institutions

The Supreme Court and other courts and tribunals

85. Under article 71 of the Constitution, the judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature. Judicial authority is exercised by the Supreme Court and the other courts and tribunals, which monitor respect for the rights and freedoms defined by the Constitution.

86. As judicial authority is in the hands of judges, it is they who are primarily responsible for the effective protection of those rights. Rights are subject to judicial protection throughout the country through ordinary and administrative courts.

87. The right of any person to bring a claim before these courts is formally recognized and subject only to limitations concerning legal capacity, time limits for entering appeals and interest in legal action.

88. The courts and tribunals are organized and operate in conformity with the highest international standards of justice, namely, equality before the law without discrimination, the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, the presumption of innocence, the legality of criminal offences and penalties, the appeal system, the right to a defence and legal assistance and aid.

The Constitutional Council

89. The Constitutional Council is the principal guarantor of fundamental human rights and public freedoms. It plays this role by monitoring the constitutionality of the laws and the legality of elections and by regulating the institutions and the work of governmental authorities (art. 75 of the Constitution). Its decisions are not subject to appeal and are binding on government authorities, all administrative and judicial authorities and all natural and legal persons.

90. The Constitutional Council comprises six members whose term of office lasts for eight years and is non-renewable. Former Presidents of the Republic are ex officio members. Members of the Constitutional Council enjoy the immunity accorded to members of Parliament.

91. The provisions of a law on fundamental human rights recognized by the Constitution can be referred to the Constitutional Council as a defence in a court case. Unconstitutionality can be put forward as a defence by any party before any court. A provision found to be unconstitutional ceases to apply and cannot be invoked at trial.

3.3.2. Other constitutional institutions

92. The Government plays an essential role in the promotion and protection of human rights through various ministries, in particular the Ministry of Justice responsible for Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Family Welfare and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Housing, Town and Country Planning and the Environment, in addition to the State Secretariat for National Solidarity.

93. The National Assembly contributes to the promotion and protection of human rights by enacting legislation and monitoring public policy. It is responsible for putting into practice the rights enshrined in the Constitution and for following up on Djibouti's international and regional commitments by passing legislation. It can question the Government directly or through commissions of inquiry on any breach of human rights and ask it to take appropriate measures to bring the situation to an end.

3.3.3. Other institutions and mechanisms

94. Alongside the constitutional institutions, three other independent administrative authorities and mechanisms make a more direct contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, namely the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Human Rights Commission and the Independent National Election Commission (CENI), which is not permanent.

3.4. The National Human Rights Commission

95. The National Human Rights Commission was created recently, in April 2008. Its members are drawn from a variety of social and institutional backgrounds: some are from NGOs and trade unions, others are religious or traditional leaders, while still others come from national institutions such as the Office of the Ombudsman and the bar.

96. The Commission assists the competent public authorities concerning all matters generally relating to human rights in the country. Its views, recommendations, proposals and reports may be published, either on its own initiative or at the request of the authority in question. The Commission is furthermore tasked with hearing, in working groups or subcommittees, undisputed experts selected for their knowledge and independence, with a constant mind to diversity.

97. It is charged with drawing the attention of the public authorities to measures that it believes will encourage the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly in connection with: (i) the ratification of or accession to international human rights instruments and their implementation at the national level; (ii) where necessary, the alignment and harmonization of legislation, rules and national practices with the international instruments to which the Republic is a party, and their effective implementation; (iii) the dissemination of human rights and the fight against all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia, in particular through sensitizing and informing the public.

98. The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and the ratification of human rights instruments demonstrate that the Government of Djibouti is endeavouring to establish a framework conducive to the improvement of human rights in the country.

99. The current plan to enlarge the membership and scope of the Commission to include civil society and national human rights institutions is furthermore part of the strategy for supporting the efforts of national actors to develop their capacities. The aim is to ensure monitoring of the human rights situation in Djibouti and the submission of reports to the United Nations bodies responsible for overseeing the implementation of treaties ratified by Djibouti.

100. It should be noted that the Commission substantially assisted the Government of Djibouti in elaborating and compiling the report defended by the Djibouti delegation before the Human Rights Council in Geneva, on 2 February 2009, in the context of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

101. The functioning of the Commission is also part of the strategy aimed at strengthening national mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of international conventions relating to human rights, to better informing Djibouti citizens of their rights and to improved access to justice for vulnerable groups (women, children and refugees).

102. In order to communicate its beliefs and its commitment to human rights, however, the Commission must serve as a place of debate and a forum for reflection where major human rights problems are considered, with the three matters of diversity, transparency and expertise in mind.

103. To that end, the Commission plans to elaborate a code of conduct for observing the fundamental human rights problems encountered by society, including with regard to racism, xenophobia, migratory flow, refugees, the family, women, children, the meaning of a prison sentence, detention conditions, poverty and exclusion.

104. The Commission also aims to make a mark at the international level by joining the network of independent national institutions. For example, it has just acted as a member of the Francophone Association of National Human Rights Commissions (AFCNDH) in its capacity as observer to the main international forums.

4. Information and publicity

105. The Republic of Djibouti has for some years been making significant efforts in the area of human rights.

Human rights forum, seminars and workshops

106. The first forum on the human rights situation took place in May 2004 at the UNFD headquarters. Organized by the Ministry of Justice, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNPD), it was opened by the President of the Republic.

107. Under the high patronage of the Head of State, an analysis workshop on the prospects for strengthening human rights later took place on 11 and 12 May 2008 in Djibouti.

108. The workshop participants especially encouraged the Government of Djibouti to catch up with the worrying backlog in reporting to international treaty bodies.

109. On the basis of the recommendations produced by the workshop, an initial training session was organized from 11 to 13 October 2008 by the Ministry of Justice, with support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and offices of the United Nations system in Djibouti. The session brought members of the Interministerial Committee for the coordination of reporting together with members of the National Human Rights Commission and civil society.

110. The UPR mechanism and the common core document were discussed, as was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

111. In the interim, the Government of Djibouti submitted its national UPR report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/WG.6/4/DJI/1), which was considered in the presence of the Djiboutian delegation at the fourth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, held from 2 to 13 February 2009 in Geneva.

112. On 17 and 18 February 2009, the Ministry of Justice responsible for Human Rights, supported by OHCHR-East Africa Regional Office and offices of the United Nations system, organized a workshop to follow up the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/DJI/CO/2) and those made in the UPR context (A/HRC/11/16).

113. This workshop aimed in particular to translate the recommendations into a plan of action and to incorporate some of them into a two-year joint technical support programme in the area of human rights, which was adopted by the Ministry of Justice responsible for Human Rights, the National Human Rights Commission, offices of the United Nations system, OHCHR-East Africa Regional Office, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

114. This technical support programme notably provides support to the Interministerial Committee for the coordination of reporting to treaty bodies, including training in the methods of such reporting.

115. The project implementation period is 24 months, from January 2009 to December 2010, with the possibility of extension on the basis of needs and priorities identified by the OHCHR-East Africa Regional Office, United Nations institutions in Djibouti and national partners, depending also on the resources and financing available at the end of this period.

116. The national implementation partners are the Ministry of Justice responsible for Human Rights, the National Police Force, the National Human Rights Commission and civil-society organizations.

117. The beneficiaries of this project will be the Ministry of Justice responsible for Human Rights, the Interministerial Committee for the coordination of reporting to treaty bodies ("the Interministerial Committee"), the National Human Rights Commission, Djiboutian NGOs, law practitioners (magistrates and lawyers) and law enforcement officers (from the National Police Force, the Prison Administration and the National Gendarmerie).

118. The Djiboutian people and vulnerable groups in particular, such as women, children, refugees, the elderly and persons living with disability, will benefit indirectly from this support programme.

119. A workshop held in March 2009 also validated a strategic document. This gathering represented an important and decisive moment in the process now under way, insofar as it enabled identification of the main obstacles preventing or delaying the progress sought in the area of human rights and of the key short-term challenges.

120. A training workshop on United Nations mechanisms for the protection of human rights took place in October 2009. This workshop brought together members of the National Human Rights Commission and the Interministerial Committee with journalists and members of civil society.

The media

121. All events (seminars, workshops, forums, conferences, etc.) are aired nationwide on the same day by Radio-Television Djibouti (RTD) and also publicized by the (French-language) newspaper *La Nation* and the (Arabic-language) newspaper *Al Qam*, which are Djibouti's only dailies.

122. The Constitution guarantees to everyone the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions by word, pen or image. An organic law on freedom of the press and communications determines the legal framework for the establishment of the press.

123. Established in 1978 but revitalized in 1999, the Djiboutian Information Agency (ADI), maintains an Internet site and posts news or dispatches on the country by way of this new mode of electronic communication.

124. The media therefore help to raise awareness among members of the Djiboutian public concerning the rights accorded to them under the country's laws and related international instruments, particularly as radio and television bulletins are aired on RTD channels in four languages (French, Arabic, Somali and Afar).

125. As to the international press, newspapers in Arabic, French and English are freely sold at kiosks but are relatively expensive for the average Djiboutian to buy. Moreover, Djibouti has never seized or prohibited the distribution or sale of any newspaper.

Law on freedom of communication

126. A law on freedom of communication in the Republic of Djibouti was promulgated in September 1992.

127. In its general provisions and article 1, the law provides that freedom of the press is guaranteed by the Constitution.

128. Article 3 provides that freedom of communication means the right of everyone to create and use freely the medium of their choosing in order to express their thoughts by imparting them to others and to gain access to the expression of others' thoughts. Citizens have the right to full and objective information and the right to impart information by exercise of the fundamental freedoms of thought, opinion and expression proclaimed by the Constitution.

129. Article 4 provides that freedom of communication must not adversely affect social harmony and human dignity or disturb public order. Nor should it comprise information that is incompatible with the moral philosophy of Islam or that might justify racism, tribalism, betrayal or fanaticism.

130. Article 5 provides for the establishment of a national commission on communication tasked with monitoring respect for the diversity of information.

131. All national laws are published in French by the Government Stationery Office and translated into Arabic.

132. The text of the Convention is available at the Ministry of Justice, at Ministry for the Advancement of Women and UNFD. It will be necessary in future to translate international instruments into the national languages.

133. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the other hand, was the subject of a mammoth information and awareness-raising campaign launched countrywide (in civil society, schools and the media). Various materials in French and Arabic were also printed and circulated.

134. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women nonetheless plans to step up its efforts to sensitize the Djiboutian public and women to the Convention.

135. It should be noted that the Republic of Djibouti held the office of Vice-President of the Human Rights Council until 19 June 2008 and is currently a member of the Council.

Part Two

Measures taken by the Republic of Djibouti to implement the substantive provisions of the Convention

This second part describes in detail the measures taken by the Republic of Djibouti to implement various articles of the Convention (arts. 1 to 16).

Article 1

Definition of discrimination against women

1.1. Content of article 1

136. Article 1 of the Convention defines discrimination as: “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

137. Article 1 of the Convention therefore sets out in explicit detail the meaning of discrimination affecting women specifically and comprising any difference in treatment on the basis of sex that is intentionally prejudicial to women, prevents society as a whole from recognizing the rights of women in both public and family life or precludes women from exercising the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to them.

138. In 1992, furthermore, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women extended the general prohibition on gender-based discrimination to include gender-based violence (GBV), which it defined as: “violence that is directed at a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty...”.

1.2. Incorporation of the definition of discrimination under the Convention into positive law

139. Having ratified the Convention without reservations, the Republic of Djibouti adopted the definition of discrimination against women, as set forth in the Convention, including the extension of its prohibition on gender-based violence to its wider meaning of gender-based violence.

140. Djibouti’s national legislation in fact contains a definition corresponding to that in article 1 of the Convention. Article 390 of the Criminal Code provides: “Any distinction among individuals based on their origin, sex, family status, state of health, disability, customs, political opinions, trade-union activities or affiliation or non-affiliation, whether actual or assumed, with a specific ethnic group, nation, race or religion shall constitute discrimination. Any distinction among legal persons based on origin, sex, family status ... shall also constitute discrimination.”

141. Under the Criminal Code, moreover, discrimination is a criminal offence. The penalties prescribed under article 391 of the Code can be as high as two years’ imprisonment and a fine of DF 500,000.

142. The Republic of Djibouti therefore concurs fully with the definition of discrimination, as set forth in the Convention, and qualifies discrimination as a severely punishable criminal offence.

Article 2

Obligations of States parties to eliminate discrimination

2.1. Content of article 2

143. Article 2 generally establishes the obligations of States parties under the Convention and the action to be taken in order to eliminate discrimination against women. The Convention requires States parties to protect women's rights and provide women with means of redress and protection against discrimination.

2.2. Djibouti's obligations to eliminate discrimination

144. In acceding to the Convention in December 1998, the Republic of Djibouti agreed to take concrete measures to apply the principle of the equality of men and women in its normative framework and to protect the rights of women by all means.

145. The Republic of Djibouti is therefore endeavouring to honour its international commitments. The Djiboutian authorities are engaged in the task of harmonizing national legislation with the provisions of the international instruments ratified by Djibouti, including especially those relating to human rights in general and to the Convention in particular.

146. Djiboutian parliamentarians ensure that the rights enunciated in the Convention are respected, protected and also harmonized with the country's domestic laws. They pass laws that not only guarantee the equality of men and women but also punish discriminatory behaviour towards women. They also adopt measures for the establishment of mechanisms to that end.

147. Djiboutian institutions seek to ensure that the conditions for the protection of women before the courts and in public service settings are the same as for men.

148. The executive ensures that laws are effectively applied, while law enforcement entities guarantee an end to the intolerable nature of discriminatory practices.

149. The Djiboutian State furthermore strives not only for the "vertical" equality of women *vis-à-vis* public authorities; it also works to secure non-discrimination at the "horizontal" level, even within the family. On that score, it continually seeks to identify areas in which women continue to be victims of discrimination. Studies and research are conducted by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in order to pinpoint the areas in which women are still the object of discrimination.

Constitutional provisions

150. Various normative provisions recognize the equality of men and women in the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

151. Article 1 of the Djiboutian Constitution guarantees the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or religion. The Constitution upholds the equality of all before the law, without distinction as to sex, and in title II of the Constitution, which is devoted to the rights and duties of the person, article 10 reinforces that equality by providing that all human beings are equal before the law. The Constitution thus unequivocally guarantees the equality of men and women.

152. The Republic of Djibouti has also incorporated into its Constitution provisions from the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, article 2 of which provides that: "Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status."

Legislative provisions

153. In addition to the Constitution's recognition of the equality of men and women and the punishment of discrimination by the Criminal Code, the Family Code, promulgated on 31 January 2002, put a stop to many acts of discrimination.

154. The Family Code is designed to synthesize the personal status laws in force, in this case modern law, customary law and Muslim law. It governs family life by addressing such essential issues as marriage, parentage, divorce, the maintenance obligation and inheritance. The fact that these matters are subject to set procedures guarantees the fundamental rights of individuals. The Act also includes provisions to protect the interests of women and children.

155. Concerning gender-based violence, article 333 of the Criminal Code punishes female genital mutilation (FGM). Under this article, "violence having entailed genital mutilation is punishable by five years' imprisonment and a fine of DF 1 million."

Acknowledged facts

156. Although women are entitled to the benefit of all rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal footing with men, there remain areas in which discrimination is still pronounced and disparities still exist between the equality enshrined in legislation and the actual violations of which women are victims.

157. Hence, in matters of retirement, some legislative provisions are contrary to the spirit of the Convention and to the international principles upholding the equality of women and men.

158. The National Pension Fund Act of 28 October 1992, for example, provides in article 52 that: "The surviving husband of a civil servant may claim her pension, if it is proven that, at the time of his wife's death, the interested party had a disability or an incurable illness that rendered him permanently incapacitated for work."

159. The surviving husband of a civil servant is consequently required to fulfil certain conditions in order to claim her pension, whereas a wife automatically benefits without having to prove an illness or disability in order to receive her deceased husband's retirement pension.

160. Concerning sanctions (art. 2, para. (b)), even if laws punishing certain acts are promulgated, Djiboutian attitudes do not evolve accordingly, particularly where FGM is concerned.

161. For example, article 333 of the Criminal Code punishing FGM has never yet been applied. Indeed, it is hard to see how young girls, who are required by their upbringing, culture and tradition to respect and obey their parents, would be able to bring a criminal prosecution against their parents for having been subjected to such violence, not least for acts that took place during their early childhood and were of a seriousness difficult for them to comprehend.

162. In other words, despite the efforts to fulfil its commitments, the Republic of Djibouti is aware that, under the terms of article 2, paragraph (f), of the Convention, it must not only amend laws but also actively seek to eradicate discriminatory customs and practices by adopting appropriate measures prohibiting all discrimination against women.

Article 3

Development and advancement of women

3.1. Content of article 3

163. Article 3 determines the fields in which appropriate measures should be taken to implement the actions set out in article 2. It establishes the indivisibility and interdependence of rights guaranteed by the Convention and of the fundamental rights guaranteed by other United Nations instruments, given that women will be unable fully to enjoy basic rights unless States take active measures to promote their advancement and development.

3.2. Appropriate measures taken by Djibouti

164. Women generally enjoy the same rights as men in the Republic of Djibouti, which protects the rights of women and accords them means of redress and protection against discrimination. In its legislation, it provides for sanctions that serve as a deterrent to discrimination against women. It also prescribes mechanisms for the submission of complaints to national judicial bodies.

165. The statement delivered by the President of the Republic in observance of International Woman's Day, on 8 March 2000, is evidence of the Government's determination to improve the status of women.

“Each of us ... knows the place occupied by women at all levels of our society.

“▪ At the cultural level, they cement the family, securing the link between generations.

“▪ At the political level, they have already shown themselves able to spearhead the fights waged for the dignity and respect of the Djiboutian nation. No one can forget the role played by women at the time of our independence.

“▪ At the social level, they are fully involved in economic life. They have proved their enormous value in such diverse sectors as commerce, administration and enterprise by demonstrating their competence at all levels of the hierarchy and equally by their efficiency in the simple jobs that are part of the economic fibre of our society...”

166. The President affirmed, however, that “cultural barriers surely constitute the main obstacle to the balance so keenly sought, notwithstanding all the efforts exerted by the Government, and it is difficult for a nation to move forward if half of the population is removed from the decision-making.”

167. In order to remedy the situation, the Head of State called for “national awareness of the need for partnership and complementarity between men and women in order to guarantee the fundamental values of liberty, democracy and peace.”

168. The past decade was therefore witness to a swathe of institutional and legislative measures designed to bring the young Republic into step with the most advanced developing countries, in conformity with the specific objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

Establishment of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women

169. The political will to promote the integration of women into Djiboutian development was first of all manifested by the establishment of a Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Family Welfare and Social Affairs, which falls under the Prime Minister and is headed by a female minister tasked with various functions.

Functions of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women

- To participate in the formulation of government policy on the advancement of women and the strategy for applying that policy;
- To propose laws and regulations on the rights of women and the family;
- To promote measures designed to ensure respect for women in society and guarantee equality in the political, economic, social and cultural fields;
- To develop and propose projects and programmes aimed at improving the integration of women, promoting the family in the development process and determining appropriate implementation measures, in collaboration with the concerned ministries and organs.

National strategy for the integration of women in development

170. Following the establishment of the Ministry, the Government set up an intersectoral technical committee tasked with elaborating, in a participatory manner, a national strategy for the integration of women in development (SNIFD) in order to strengthen women's participation in the country's development.

171. Pursuant to the Act of 7 July 2002 defining the national policy on the integration of women into the development process for the decade 2003-2012, SNIFD implementation became a national objective.

172. The strategy adopted was that of the equal participation of women and men in the country's development process. The elements that guided its elaboration consisted of:

SNIFD guidelines

- To recognize and harness equally the specific contribution of women and men to the country's socioeconomic development and to the construction of a stable society based on the values of national solidarity and democracy;
- To eliminate the deep-rooted causes of the discrepancies between men and women in access to and control of resources and in the exercise of their rights and duties;
- To take into account the three social roles of women and seek to alleviate the constraints associated with those roles;
- To equip women with the social, economic and political wherewithal for playing an active part in building society and simultaneously reaping the benefit.

173. Four priority areas have been singled out for action in the SNIFD context: (i) women's participation in decision-making; (ii) maternal and child health; (iii) girls' education and literacy for women; (iv) women's economic life. The following objectives and actions have been pursued in each of these four areas:

Action plan for the strategy

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>
<i>In the area of decision-making</i>	
Improve participation in public decision-making	<p>Implement domestic laws and international conventions concerning women's participation in decision-making through sensitization and training;</p> <p>Provide sensitization and training and take measures in order to integrate women into the decision-making process;</p> <p>Integrate and institutionalize the gender perspective.</p>
Improve participation in private decision-making	<p>Foster cohesion of the legal system with regard to the protection of women, children and the family through sensitization, training and the adoption of measures;</p> <p>Establish solidarity funds for women and children;</p> <p>Empower women within the family.</p>
<i>In the area of health</i>	
Maintain community health	<p>Improve access to and domestic use of water;</p> <p>Improve family and women's nutrition;</p> <p>Promote community involvement in improving standards of family and community hygiene and sanitation.</p>
Improve reproductive health through the life-cycle approach	<p>Improve access to and use of the benefits of the safe motherhood programme;</p> <p>Improve access to and use of the benefits of the national programme on family balance for couples;</p> <p>Involve key actors at the national and local levels in the fight against domestic violence, harmful practices, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).</p>
<i>In the area of education</i>	
Promote girls' education and reduce inequalities in education	<p>Identify and remove obstacles to girls' education;</p> <p>Integrate the gender perspective;</p> <p>Promote a positive image of women and the culture of equality in school textbooks and within society.</p>
Reduce illiteracy among women and girls	<p>Improve significantly the literacy services for adult women;</p> <p>Develop informal education for young girls in periurban and rural areas;</p> <p>Promote the role of women in society and development, as well as in the literacy programme.</p>

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Proposed actions</i>
<i>In the area of economic life</i>	
Combat female poverty	Improve access to resources; Strengthen vocational capacities and entrepreneurship; Inform and sensitize.
Improve access to employment and vocational training	Improve access to resources; Establish appropriate institutional measures; Strengthen vocational capacities and entrepreneurship; Inform and sensitize.

Other measures

174. With the introduction of the Act of 13 November 2002 relating to the system of quotas of at least 10 per cent for both sexes in elective and administrative office, women were able to enter the National Assembly. There were seven women members in January 2003, a number which rose to nine in 2008.

175. In November 2008, the President of the Republic issued an implementing decree aimed at achieving proportional representation of at least 20 per cent for both sexes in senior civil service posts. Since that date, the number of women holding positions of responsibility has consequently increased in the majority of ministerial departments.

Civil-society involvement

176. It should also be noted that the country's First Lady, in her capacity as UNFD President, works constantly to improve the daily well-being of Djiboutian women.

177. UNFD is an NGO working to promote the rights of Djiboutian women. Its basic objectives are to combat obstacles that might slow or inhibit the progress of women in the country's development process. It is actively involved in a number of areas: literacy for women and girls; maternal and child health; poverty reduction, in particular through microcredit; technical education and home economics; continuous training; income-generating activities; and preparation of girls for the job market. Further objectives include the promotion of cottage industry, the development of agriculture, protection of the environment and fighting violence against women.

178. With ongoing support from international organizations, the network of associations has firmly overtaken government action in the past few years. According to the directory of associations/NGOs produced in 2006 by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, the country has over 700 associations and NGOs. Even though they may not be exclusively women's associations, it can be said without exaggeration that they are largely composed of women and that most of them strive for the advancement of women.

Acknowledged facts

179. Implementation of the SNIFD plan of action coincided with that of the 2002 PRSP. The household survey of social indicators, conducted in that same year with the aim of carrying out a countrywide poverty assessment, showed that women were more affected by poverty than men.

180. Poverty reduction therefore constituted a national priority for the country throughout the decade 2000-2009, with the result that the SNIFD implementation did not fully achieve its objectives. Indeed, a mid-term evaluation conducted in January 2007 showed that, notwithstanding the genuine progress made in education and health, performance in the areas of decision-making and economic life remained by contrast lower than expected.

181. In other words, despite a genuine political will and the efforts made for their development and advancement, women remained at risk of poverty, vulnerability, unemployment and social exclusion.

Article 4

Accelerating equality between men and women

4.1. Content of article 4

182. Article 4 of the Convention recognizes that even if women enjoy legal equality, it is difficult for them to succeed in reaching a position of equality. States are therefore permitted to adopt special remedial measures of a temporary nature that discriminate in favour of women for as long as inequalities continue to exist. Such measures must serve only to accelerate *de facto* equality between men and women, but the criteria must be the same for both sexes.

4.2. Special temporary measures adopted by Djibouti

183. The equality of men and women in Djibouti is enshrined in article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic. Equality is thus the concern of the Government, which is keen to reduce the inequality between the sexes. With a view to gradually reducing the disparity between men and women, the Government has, in addition to the appropriate measures mentioned above, adopted special measures for women in a number of areas, but nonetheless without this constituting discrimination.

“...In our country, it is the will to speed up our development that motivates us; it is the will to use our resources that drives us to bring about the active participation of women in sectors from which they were excluded only a few years ago. This political will is the result of our President’s vision for the country.

“This integration of women responds in our country to a dual need: women’s greater involvement is essential, on the one hand, to promoting stronger economic growth that provides employment for young people and, on the other hand, to maintaining solid family structures in a modernized society. Women are taking no one’s place; they are raising the standard of our efficiency. They are not leaving the family home; they are enhancing its connection with working life. They are not abandoning our traditions; they are removing their harmful effects on our children and introducing measures to improve health and education.

“Better than anyone, women will enable us to make this connection between tradition and modernity. Better than anyone, they will stimulate capacities; in a nutshell, they will allow selection at a higher level. The Government’s very substantial efforts to improve education and health for all will be more effective with the participation of competent women...”

In the area of education, literacy and training

184. The distribution of food to families who educate their girls, the revitalization of school canteens and the construction of girls' dormitories, particularly in rural areas, are incentives for sustaining girls' education. These measures were moreover taken in the context of the Education for All - Fast-track Initiative (EFA-FTI), supported by the World Bank and the World Food Programme (WFP).

185. In order to improve female literacy rates, the Ministry for the Advancement for Women runs women-only literacy programmes. Some 17,000 girls and women consequently acquired literacy skills during the period 2001-2009. The training of female literacy teachers has brought women closer to instructors and broken down the sociocultural barriers that hamper female literacy.

186. The establishment of the Balbala Women's Training Centre (CFFB) is another special measure aimed at training girls and women in the Balbala community as a matter of priority.

187. Post-literacy vocational training for girls at the Balbala Women's Training Centre, the Boulaos Ecole Ménagère, UNFD, the Aicha Bogoreh Centre and the Community Development Centre in district 5 is a further temporary measure for the benefit of girls. Approximately 400 girls have received training in cooking, sewing, embroidery, hairdressing and computing as a result and some of them have successfully entered working life.

188. Five women from the regions of Ali Sabieh and Obock were sent to the Barefoot College in India for six months of solar-energy training in another incentive measure taken by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, the aim being to train women in the techniques for solar-panel installation in rural areas.

In the area of health

189. In order to improve maternal and child health in a context of poverty, the Government has, as part of reproductive health programme, put in place a strategy for systematic iron supplementation, with treatment provided free of charge, in order to enhance the nutritional status of pregnant women. Essential medicines are also supplied to mothers, as are contraceptives.

190. The free pre- and post-natal care from which women are able to benefit can in no way be considered discriminatory.

In the economic area

191. The Head of State's wish to integrate women into the country's development firmly materialized in February 2000 with the foundation of a prize known as the Head of State Award for the Advancement of Women, which gives Djiboutian women, women's associations and women's NGOs the annual opportunity to win the award by competing in a specific area determined by a specially appointed jury.

192. The establishment of the Social Development Fund (FSD) and more recently of the UNFD Caisse populaire d'épargne et de crédit (CPEC) is also a special measure in favour of women. These institutions enable women's access to microcredit and to income-generating activities.

193. In Djibouti City, many young women, both educated and uneducated, remain at home without a job. The initiative of the Ministry for the Advancement of women to train 50 girls as part of a "girl drivers" project is another special measure designed to promote the integration of girls into the country's economic fabric.

In the area of combating violence against women

194. A support, information and counselling centre (CEIO) was established at UNFD headquarters and inaugurated by the Head of State in March 2007 as a remedial measure for assisting women and girl victims of violence with administrative and legal procedures.

“A support centre for women victims of violence”

As part of International Women’s Day, on 8 March 2007, the President of the Republic, Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, inaugurated at UNFD a support, information and counselling centre for girl and women victims of violence. Managed and operated by a team of volunteers, this centre is staffed by professionals working in various public sectors (such as the judicial police, health and Shariah law). For UNFD officials, the ethos behind this initiative is quite simply to encourage reconciliation and the resolution of conflict within couples. Women naturally feel safe in this centre, successfully overcoming their fear and apprehension simply because they are welcomed and listened to by women like themselves in a friendly and warm environment. The UNFD Secretary-General has said that: “This centre is no generator of conflict and neither is it a tribunal or a police station ... or a place of oppression.” The centre is soon to have a freephone number providing women in distress with the opportunity to talk.

In the rural environment

195. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women constructed 17 cemented wells in the vicinity of rural dwellings and encampments, thereby improving access to water and reducing the overburden of work on rural girls and women.

196. Women’s associations and farming cooperatives in the interior regions have also been able to devote themselves to agricultural work (market gardening and fruit-growing) as a result of the support provided to them through the distribution of seeds, fertilizers and farming equipment.

197. In short, the special measures adopted by the Government enable greater access by disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (women and girls) to priority needs in the areas of health, education and protection, and to microcredit. They also improve such key indicators as the maternal mortality rate, girls’ enrolment in education and women’s access to income, while additionally reducing the overburden of work on women and girls in rural areas.

198. These measures are in fact part of the efforts to attain Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG 3), which is to promote gender equality and empower women by 2015.

Article 5**Modifying social and cultural patterns of conduct****5.1. Content of article 5**

199. It is recognized in article 5 that, even if equal rights are guaranteed to women and special measures taken to promote their *de facto* equality, change on another level is essential to ensuring their true equality. States parties should strive to remove the social, cultural and traditional patterns of conduct that perpetuate gender-role stereotypes and to create an overall framework in society that promotes the full realization of women’s rights.

5.2. Gender roles and stereotypes in Djibouti

200. The stereotypes encountered in Djibouti, despite the establishment and strengthening of a favourable legal framework, are much more due to the influence of customs and traditions than to that of religion.

201. Islam is the State religion and its practice has widened considerably. It is not unusual, for example, to see a growing number of girls and women wearing the veil in educational institutions and in the workplace. Islam accords equal rights to men and women, however, and Islam is in fact the key to women's emancipation and liberation. Djiboutian women are increasingly learning, working, pursuing a career, acquiring property and engaging in business.

202. It is therefore in customary tradition that the equality of men and women is somewhat lacking. The conventional attitude towards women is generally unfavourable. Positions of authority and control are reserved for men, with the result that women have a lower status than men.

203. Women themselves are often responsible for this state of affairs, being the first to divide home chores between girls and boys. They treat boys more favourably than girls, who are brought up to perform the domestic tasks.

204. Families regard boys' education as an investment in that boys are destined to become future heads of household, whereas to invest in girls' education is seen as unprofitable. Parents believe that if girls support their families for as long as they are single, they will devote themselves to their own homes once they are married. This is not always the case, however.

205. Concerning family education and recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, the traditional view still predominant in the Republic of Djibouti is that this responsibility falls largely on the mother. Men leave this burden to women and are rarely seen to stay at home and look after the children.

206. Mothers who place a premium on the reproductive role of women will therefore sometimes prefer to prepare young girls for the future job of mother and housewife. This is particularly true in rural areas, where girls are taught from a very early age to carry out domestic chores and take care of the home.

207. Furthermore, husbands are regarded as the head of household, with women relegated to a subordinate role in family decision-making. Women almost never join in male gatherings and discussions. Djiboutian society is patriarchal in nature.

208. These are the stereotypes that perpetuate the received wisdom according to which the role of women should be confined to the private sphere or, in particular, that it is for women to ensure the well-being of home and family, even if they have a career.

209. Perceptions about the role of women and girls are starting to change, however, in educated families. Education helps to convey the message that maternity is a social function and educated couples recognize that the job of bringing up children is the common responsibility of men and women.

210. Nonetheless, although the Family Code has eliminated much discrimination, the Djiboutian State is concerned by the persistence of deeply rooted and entrenched patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes concerning the role and responsibilities of women and men in society, which discriminate against women.

211. While considerable efforts have been made to provide information and awareness-raising in urban areas, rural women continue to face difficulties in throwing off the yoke of social constructs. Pockets of conservatism encouraged by traditions therefore persist.

212. Djibouti is thus striving on the one hand to eliminate these traditional patterns that perpetuate gender-role stereotypes and on the other to create an overall framework that promotes the full realization of women's rights.

213. Measures to improve the image of women were initiated as a SNIFD component in 2002.

214. At the National Education Centre for Research and Pedagogical Information (CRIPEN), textbook developers are careful to eliminate negative stereotypes of girls and women, in accordance with the Djiboutian Education Policy Act of 2000 (art. 9), which clearly states that new curricula and educational materials should develop ideas and content focused on teaching citizenship and a spirit of solidarity, justice, tolerance and peace. Developers of audiovisual programmes for school radio and television also produce documentaries portraying Djiboutian girls in a positive light.

215. In the same vein, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women is planning to include in its three-year plan of action (2010-2012) an entire programme for further improving the image of Djiboutian women.

216. This programme aims to: (i) improve men's and women's comprehension of a law-based State; (ii) build NGO capacities for sensitizing communities on the subjects of citizenship and public life; (iii) organize talks and debates in Djibouti City and the country's interior regions with a view to changing attitudes and behaviour in men and women that run counter to the advancement of women; (iv) establish an expanded programme of communication in collaboration with a variety of actors (clerics, sociologists, youth workers, traditional poets, neighbourhood elders, etc.); (v) analyse the content of school textbooks, the media (press, radio and television) and popular culture (stories, songs and proverbs) in order to identify hackneyed stereotypes and portrayals of women.

Article 6

Suppressing exploitation of women

6.1. Content of article 6

217. Article 6 urges States parties to take all appropriate measures to suppress traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women. To that end, it is imperative for States parties to consider the circumstances that give rise to prostitution, take measures accordingly and offer alternatives.

6.2 Suppressing the exploitation of women in Djibouti

218. The Republic of Djibouti is a party to the majority of international instruments relating to the protection of women and children and the suppression of trafficking in and exploitation of human beings.

219. It is worthwhile remembering, however, that the countries in the Horn of Africa have experienced unprecedented political instability over the past 20 years, together with numerous population movements.

220. One of the most stable countries in the region, the Republic of Djibouti has consequently faced an influx of refugees and displaced persons whose daily survival needed to be secured. In this specific setting, where men and women typically live in very close quarters with nothing to occupy their time, prostitution spread among the female population, even though it is officially prohibited.

Protection of women against all forms of exploitation

221. The commitment of the Djibouti Government to protect women against immoral practices is evident in various pieces of legislation, including criminal laws punishing all forms of exploitation of women.

222. The Djiboutian Criminal Code, which entered into force in 1995, devotes articles 394 to 400 to procurement and related offences. Article 394 defines procurement as: (i) aiding, abetting or protecting the prostitution of others; (ii) profiting from the prostitution of others, sharing in its proceeds or being subsidized by any person who habitually engages in prostitution; (iii) grooming, hiring or enticing a person for the purpose of prostitution or exerting pressure on a person to engage in prostitution or to continue to do so.

223. The author of any such act is liable to a penalty of 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of DF 25 million. Where the offence is committed by an organized gang or by recourse to acts of cruelty, the penalty is increased to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of DF 50 million.

224. Prostitution is not prohibited as such in the Convention, but the need to protect prostitutes and afford them equality in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of their human rights is clearly underlined by the Committee.

225. Prostitution also constitutes an offence under article R 5, paragraph 10, of the Criminal Code. It is a class-5 offence that is less severely punished than procurement, by a fine of DF 50,000 and a month's imprisonment.

226. In addition to violence against women entailing FGM (Criminal Code, art. 333), sexual assault (rape and other sexual assault committed using violence, coercion or surprise, as well as indecent exposure in a public place - articles 343 to 352 of the Criminal Code) is punished either by rigorous imprisonment or by incarceration and a fine.

Combating gender-based violence

227. A regular record is kept of cases of violence and sexual assault against minors. Between April 2000 and February 2003, for example, 99 cases of violence were recorded, including 48 rapes of adolescents between 11 and 19 years of age, 36 rapes of women over 20 years of age and 15 rapes of girls under 5 years of age.

228. Aware of the violence directed against women, the Republic of Djibouti organized the first National Conference on Gender-based Violence in December 2008, which made the following recommendations:

In the short term

- *At the legal level:* (i) adopt a new version of article 333 of the Criminal Code that incorporates a definition of female genital mutilation; (ii) amend article 7 of the Code of Criminal Procedure by reducing the prescribed five-year time limit to two years and by limiting consent by the person exercising parental authority or by the legal representative of a minor to sexual assault committed by a third party; (iii) legalize abortion in cases of rape; (iv) incorporate into the Family Code a provision on the contract of marriage.

- *At the structural level:* (i) establish a national observatory on violence, with regional offices; (ii) create a statistical tool; (iii) strengthen the capacities of the support, information and counselling centre by recruiting two psychologists and a legal expert; (iv) create positions for marriage counsellors.
- *At the media level:* (i) periodically produce and broadcast educational commercials on violence; (ii) found an annual prize for a man or a men's association as a reward for action in the fight against gender-based violence; (iii) develop a communication strategy.

In the medium term

- *At the structural level:* (i) establish a drop-in and temporary accommodation centre for women and child victims of violence; (ii) establish a support, information and counselling centre catering for persons subjected to violence; (iii) strengthen the capacities of the support, information and counselling centre by recruiting a general practitioner of medicine; (iii) set up a support section for victims of violence in the support, information and counselling centre; (iv) strengthen the capacities of other support centres; (v) set up a branch of the support, information and counselling centre in each district or region; (vi) strengthen the capacities of neighbourhood committees.
- *At the medical level:* (i) work with the Ministry of Health to find a solution to the refusal by doctors to carry out requests to qualified persons made by judicial police officers; (ii) provide access to free emergency treatment for victims of violence.
- *At the media level:* Disseminate legislation on gender-based violence.
- *At the school level:* Include a module on gender-based violence in school textbooks.

(Source: Summary report of the National Conference on Gender-based Violence - Ministry for the Advancement of Women - 2008)

229. Over the past three years, various sensitization and capacity-building workshops for civil society and other actors involved in the area have been organized by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with UNFD and civil society, with UNFPA support.

230. In addition, as part of its three-year plan for the period 2010-2012, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women is to roll out a full programme to combat GBV. The main aim of this programme is to build the capacities of public institutions and civil society to combat GBV. In practice, it will entail: (i) the elaboration of a national strategy to combat GBV, encompassing the National Strategy for the Full Abandonment of All Forms of Excision and Infibulation (SNAEI); (ii) the establishment of a GBV monitoring and evaluation system; (iii) sensitization and advocacy with regard to combating and preventing GBV; (iv) operationalization of the National Strategy to Combat Gender-based Violence.

Combating human trafficking

231. The Human Trafficking Act No. 210/AN/07/5th L was passed and promulgated on 27 December 2007.

232. Pursuant to article 1 of this Act, a human being is defined as any person susceptible to trafficking owing to vulnerability relating to age (a child under 18 years), sex (female) or a physical and/or mental condition (disabled).

233. Pursuant to article 2 of the Act, human trafficking is defined as “the process whereby any person is recruited, kidnapped, transported, transferred, accommodated or received inside or outside the national territory by one or more individuals or legal entities using threat or other forms of coercion, fraud, deception, corruption or abuse of authority for the purpose of exploiting that person.”

234. This Act has several levels of originality. The Government is committed to: pursuing an active policy to prevent trafficking in persons, especially by establishing or supporting “research programmes, information, sensitization and education campaigns, social and economic initiatives, and training, primarily for persons vulnerable to trafficking and persons concerned by human trafficking” (art. 16); taking legislative and other necessary measures to assist victims in their physical, psychological and social recovery; and promoting international cooperation to combat trafficking in persons.

235. Anyone engaging in human trafficking is therefore liable to a penalty of imprisonment from two to five years and a fine of DF 500,000 to DF 1 million, or by either penalty.

236. Djiboutian criminal laws punish all forms of exploitation of women and the national legislation on the subject is well developed.

237. Despite the national legal arsenal, a number of factors stand in the way of eradicating the exploitation of women, including the presence of refugees, poverty, youth employment, abdication of parental responsibility and lack of facilities for the care or rehabilitation of prostitutes.

238. Aware of the fact that prostitutes are vulnerable persons who are often under the influence of a pimp, Djibouti must provide alternatives for these susceptible women in the context of programmes providing rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and job information.

239. Also aware that proceedings are rarely ever brought for rape and violence committed against prostitutes, in all likelihood for reasons relating to the norms and values of society, Djibouti must similarly equip itself with sufficient wherewithal to ensure that prostitutes are not abandoned.

240. In order to discharge its responsibilities, the Djiboutian State must therefore duly and effectively apply the criminal penalties prescribed in the event that these offences are committed.

Article 7

Equality in political and public life at the national level

7.1. Content of article 7

241. Article 7 requires States parties to undertake two levels of action to enable women to participate in political and public life on equal terms with men. First, they must broaden the rights guaranteed in article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and guarantee to women the right to vote in all elections and public referendums. Secondly, they are called upon to guarantee to women the right to be elected to public office and hold government posts.

7.2. Djiboutian women in political and public life

242. Concerning exercise of the right to vote, there is consequently full consistency between the principles articulated in the Convention and in the Djiboutian Constitution. The Constitution makes no discrimination between men and women in terms of either their eligibility to vote or to run for office. In both cases, the conditions are identical for both sexes.

243. Article 5 of the Constitution indeed provides that: “All Djiboutian nationals of both sexes who have reached majority and enjoy civil and political rights shall be eligible to vote under the conditions determined by law.”

244. The Constitution also recognizes the equality of the sexes and the fundamental rights of women. The Election of Deputies Act of December 1981 provides that: “Citizens of the Republic of both sexes over the age of 23 years shall be eligible.”

245. A statistical breakdown of women elected to the National Assembly and of their positions of responsibility shows that the political role of women is far from imaginary.

246. The participation of Djiboutian women in political and public life is shaped by culture and tradition. As emphasized by the Head of State in March 2000, “at the political level, they have already shown themselves able to spearhead the fights waged for the dignity and respect of the Djiboutian nation. No one can forget the role played by women at the time of our independence.”

At the level of the executive

247. As mentioned above, the participation of women in the executive branch of Government is a recent occurrence resulting from the commitment of the President of the Republic; in May 1999, he appointed the first woman minister as Minister Delegate of the Prime Minister, in charge of the Advancement of Women, Family Welfare and Social Affairs, and in March 2008, he subsequently appointed a second woman to head the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Leisure and Tourism.

248. Since the cabinet reshuffle in March 2008, two full ministerial departments among the 20 ministries that make up the Government have been entrusted to women.

249. It should also be noted that several women have been appointed as advisors to the President of the Republic.

250. The trend observed in the executive branch is much more qualitative than quantitative. It is nevertheless to be encouraged, even though it might be said that there is still a long way to go when it comes to promoting a gender mix in the exercise of governmental responsibilities and in the nature of the posts occupied.

At the level of the legislature

251. Act No. 192/AN/02/4th L of 13 November 2002 instituting the quota system in elective office and in the State administration dispelled the misgivings about the entry of women into politics.

252. Article 2 of this Act provides that in legislative elections, “political parties presenting candidate lists shall include on their list a proportion of each sex equivalent to at least 10 per cent of the seats to be filled.” As a result of this Act, seven women successfully entered the National Assembly in the legislative elections of January 2003. In 2008, the number of women was brought to nine.

253. In short, women represented only 10 per cent of overall deputies in the legislature in 2003 but since 2008 they have accounted for 14 per cent of its elected members, or, in other words, 9 out of 65 deputies.

Statistical breakdown of women elected to the National Assembly and their positions of responsibility

<i>Title</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Percentage of women</i>
National Assembly	65	56	9	14
Bureau of the National Assembly	5	4	1	20
Chairpersonship of standing committees	6	4	2	33.33
Vice-chairpersonship of standing committees	6	6	0	0
Chairpersonship of special committees	3	3	0	0
Vice-chairpersonship of special committees	3	1	2	66.66
Secretariat of standing and special committees	9	6	3	33.33

254. The Bureau of the National Assembly comprises five members, including one woman who holds the post of parliamentary secretary responsible for the Assembly's finances and for preparation and execution of the budget.

255. Two of the six standing committees, namely the Committee on Production and Trade and the Committee on Social Development and Protection of the Environment, are chaired by women.

256. The statistical breakdown of women elected to the National Assembly and their positions of responsibility thus shows that the political role of women in the Republic of Djibouti is far from imaginary.

At the level of the judiciary

257. The situation in judicial bodies is moving in a promising direction. With the bench, the Department of Justice is where women are best represented.

258. It should first of all be said that the President of the Supreme Court is a woman, meaning that the highest court in the Republic of Djibouti is headed by a woman.

259. The position assumes a fundamental importance insofar as, pursuant to article 29 of the Constitution, in the event that the Presidency of the Republic is vacant for any reason whatsoever, or impeded in its functioning as officially noted by the Constitutional Council after the matter has been referred to it by the Prime Minister or by the President of the National Assembly, the functions of the President shall be temporarily assumed by the President of the Supreme Court, who may not be a candidate for the Presidency while performing such functions.

260. Hence, in the event that the Presidency of the Republic is vacant, the country will be run by the President of the Supreme Court, a position currently held by a woman.

261. The Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal are also headed by women.

262. Three of the 11 judges of the Personal Status Court are women, whose appointment to these positions caused a great stir among conservatives.

263. Women are well represented in the courts, in some of which, such as the Court of First Instance, they are in the majority.

Statistical breakdown of the positions of responsibility held by judges

Number	Office of the Minister	Court of First Instance	Court of Appeal	Supreme Court	Chamber of Accounts and	
					Fiscal Discipline	Personal Status Court
Total number	14	21	17	7	16	9
Men	12	11	11	3	11	7
Women	2	10	6	4	5	2
Disparity	2/14	10/21	6/17	4/7	5/16	2/9

264. Two of the seven members of the Constitutional Court are also women, as are four of the 10 members of the High Council of the Judiciary. Since January 2008, a woman has been at the helm of the Djibouti Bar Association.

At the level of decentralized power: regional and local assemblies

265. The Republic of Djibouti is divided into five administrative regions: Tadjourah, Obock, Ali Sabieh, Dikhil and Arta. The capital, Djibouti City, has special status and is divided into three municipalities: Ras-Dika, Boulaos and Balbala.

266. Article 16 of the Regions (Decentralization and Statutes) Act No. 174/AN/02/4th L provides that: "Any Djiboutian citizen who is 23 years of age on election day and who enjoys civil and political rights shall be eligible for the Regional Assembly".

267. The first regional and local elections took place in 2006. Thirteen women municipal councillors and 10 women regional councillors were elected in the regional and municipal elections of that year. Of the 34 members elected to the Municipal Council of Djibouti City, 5 are women.

Statistical breakdown of regional council members

Regions	Number elected	Men	Women	Percentage of women
Ali Sabieh	20	18	2	10
Arta	9	8	1	11.1
Dikhil	33	30	3	6.25
Obock	16	15	1	6
Tadjourah	22	19	3	13.6
Total	99	90	9	9

268. At the regional level, however, the principle of quotas has not been respected in regional and municipal elections, despite the mobilization of women. Women are conspicuously underrepresented in the regions of Dikhil and Obock, where the legal minimum of 10 per cent, imposed by the Act of 2002, has not been respected.

269. This state of affairs has gone unpunished, as there are not yet any penalties in place for this type of violation.

270. In the municipality of Ras-Dika (Djibouti City), one of the candidate lists was led by a woman and took three of the four seats to be filled. Topping the list was the President of the municipality, a woman and *de facto* member of the Municipal Council of Djibouti City, accompanied by her female colleagues from the municipalities of Balbala and Boulaos.

Statistical breakdown of municipal council members

<i>Municipal council</i>	<i>Number elected</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Percentage of women</i>
Balbala	30	26	4	10.34
Boulaos	68	63	5	9.9
Ras-Dika	4	3	1	25
Total	103	92	11	10.67

271. It should be noted that a measure of proportional representation was injected into these regional and municipal elections held in 2006. Although political parties were obliged by law to include in each of their lists a proportion of women amounting to at least 10 per cent, there was no guarantee that women would represent at least 10 per cent of those elected in each region or municipality.

272. The effective recognition of these political rights for women thus opens up the opportunity for them to gain power.

At the level of public service

273. In the public administration sector, notwithstanding a legal framework and political will that are both conducive to equal participation, women were underrepresented in decision-making positions prior to 2002. They accounted for some 20 per cent of personnel and only 9 per cent of senior-ranking civil servants (grade A).

274. However, as a result of the promulgation of the law on the quota system in 2002 and the implementing decree in 2008, which raised the quota to 20 per cent for both sexes in higher government positions, the number of senior women civil servants has begun to rise.

Comparative table of civil service personnel (civil servants)

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>2006</i>		<i>2008</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Ministry of Muslim Affairs and Awqaf		-	10	3
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	-	-	110	52
Office of the President	-	-	134	73
Ministry of Agriculture	246	27	226	27
Ministry of Communication and Culture	-	-	51	21
Ministry of Defence	-	-	58	39
Ministry of Economy and Finance	503	198	516	206
Ministry of National Education		-	3380	1261
Ministry of Employment	-	-	101	47
Ministry of Energy	99	51	12	5
Ministry of Equipment	-	-	119	19
Ministry of Housing	-	-	111	44

<i>Ministry</i>	<i>2006</i>		<i>2008</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Ministry of the Interior	560	55	561	110
Ministry of Youth and Sport	59	18	77	34
Ministry of Justice	-	-	217	93
Office of the Prime Minister	-	-	33	23
Ministry for the Advancement of Women	-	-	11	22
Ministry of Health	533	384	813	528
Ministry of Commerce and Industry	40	14	41	19

275. The above table shows that it is only in the Ministry for the Advancement of Women that women outnumber men. Women account for 66.6 per cent of personnel, compared with 33.3 per cent for men, and most of them hold responsible positions.

276. Following an organizational audit conducted in April 2008, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women was reorganized by the Government.

277. As a result, the Secretariat-General of the Ministry, as well as two of three departments - one for gender-mainstreaming and the other for social affairs and family welfare - are headed by women. The third department on studies and planning is headed by a man. In addition, five regional offices for gender affairs (BRG) were opened for business in June 2008. Three of the five officers-in-charge are women.

278. It should be noted, however, that in awarding the key posts to men (technical advisors, directors, chiefs of service), the Ministry for the Advancement of Women is seeking to involve male personnel in advocacy for improving the integration of Djiboutian women in the development process.

279. It is therefore necessary to go much further beyond the gender stereotypes described in the Beijing Platform for Action and emphasize that: "Women share common problems of their own that they are unable to overcome except by working together, and with men, to achieve the common objective of gender equality worldwide".

At the media level

280. Considerable progress has been recorded in the area of the media. A woman has been appointed as chief editor of Radio-Television Djibouti (RTD) and the number of women journalists is also rising.

281. Women are increasingly visible in television. There are more and more female news presenters working in the various languages. This female presence is extremely important, as television is the medium that is most commonly watched and followed in urban centres.

282. The media also play an important role in conveying a positive image of women, who are the true catalysts of development in society.

At the community and association level

283. Women are extremely active in the community and in associations. They are particularly involved in areas relating specifically to the socioeconomic advancement of women, the family and vulnerable groups, working primarily with UNFD.

At the private-sector level

284. In the private sector, the trend appears to be equally favourable for women and a change of attitude is under way. No official figures are available, but there is an increasing number of women on record as entrepreneurs and business owners. The current chairperson of the Djibouti Association of Private Enterprises is a woman.

Acknowledged facts

285. Article 1 of the Djiboutian Constitution established equal political rights for men and women. Despite the developing political landscape, however, no female representatives were elected to the National Assembly. Before 2002, in fact, women represented 42.8 per cent of the electorate but were invisible in the National Assembly.

286. Since the law on quotas was introduced, women have undoubtedly made significant inroads and now hold offices or decision-making positions previously regarded as male preserves. With nine women deputies and 23 regional and municipal councillors, including a female president of a municipality, women are simply conquering territories that were until now male territory.

Women's advancement in political and public life

<i>Titles /positions/women</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2009</i>
Ministers	1	2
Deputies	0	9
Municipal councillors	0	14
Regional councillors	0	7
Chief municipal officer	0	1
Secretary-General	0	2
Technical advisors	0	5
Directors	1	23
Engineers	0	4
Judges	8	29
Army officers	0	2

(Source: Ministry for the Advancement of Women - October 2009)

287. Inequalities and disparities still exist in places, however, in the sphere of women's participation in the country's political and public life.

Article 8

Equality in political and public life at the international level

8.1. Content of article 8

288. Article 8 recognizes that important political, legal and social trends are both forged and reinforced at the international level and that the goal of the representation of women, on equal terms with men, at the international level is still far from being realized. The Committee therefore calls on States parties to take the temporary special measures - practical measures and positive discrimination measures - provided for in article 4 of the Convention. They should also use their influence in international organizations to ensure that women are duly represented in those organizations on an equal footing with men.

8.2. Participation of Djiboutian women at the international level

289. There is no legislation in Djibouti to prohibit women from representing their Government at the international level or from participating in the work of international organizations.

290. Women are increasingly participating in international meetings, sometimes even as heads of delegation, thereby representing their country at the international level. Although legislative provisions have been strengthened by virtue of the Act instituting the quota system in elective office and in the State administration, no women hold the post of ambassador, for example. There are, however, five women counsellors in the country's various embassies.

Representation of women at the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)

291. Established in 1977, the date of independence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has seen the number of its female personnel rise steadily from 3 to reach 48 in 2009. Women consequently account for 31.58 per cent of the total number of 152 civil servants or contracted employees at the Ministry.

Breakdown of civil servants or contracted employees by sex

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Men	104	68.42
Women	48	31.58
Total	152	100

292. Although there was some disparity to start with, it has gradually been reduced by the recruitment of women at all levels, many of whom increasingly tend to have university degrees.

Breakdown of grades by sex

<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
Civil administrator (Grade A1)	30	11	41
Administrative officer (Grade A2)	11	8	19

293. In 2009, women in grade-A1 posts, the highest level in the Djiboutian administration, hold decision-making positions; there are now 11 female civil administrators as opposed to none at the time of independence. Three of the eight departments are headed by women and eight of the 13 assistant directors are also women. Women civil servants or contracted employees are also well represented at the grade-A2 level.

294. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is one of the ministries in which women are given a substantial place in the decision-making.

Representation of women at the international level

295. By contrast, the presence of Djiboutian women in regional and international organizations is marginal. There are still no Djiboutian women, for example, in such bodies as the United Nations and IMF, although there are some who work in the Djibouti-based offices of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others.

296. Djiboutian women with a diversity of expertise are participating more frequently alongside men in international conferences dealing with such subjects as women, population, development, health, human settlements, environment and so on. They are heads or members of delegations in the same way as men, on the basis of their assignment. They are mainly from the public sector but delegations may also, where need be, include women from NGOs and associations, as well as from the private sector.

297. The delegation formed to present Djibouti's report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in Geneva in 2008, was headed by a female minister.

298. It should be pointed out that a growing number of women graduates and women of proven worth at the national level are today in a position to represent the Government at the international level.

299. It should also be noted that participants in the analysis seminar on governmental action, held in the Palais du Peuple in May 2009, requested members of the Government to promote the presence of women at the regional and international levels. They called for a woman ambassador, for example, or in other words, for a woman to be appointed as head of an overseas embassy.

300. It goes without saying that Djibouti will take measures to address the underrepresentation of Djiboutian women at the international level.

Article 9 Equality in the law on nationality

9.1. Content of article 9

301. In the context of article 9, nationality is construed as citizenship. Many human rights, particularly political rights, derive directly from citizenship. Article 9 imposes two fundamental obligations: (i) States Parties must grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality; (ii) States Parties must grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

9.2. The Djiboutian Nationality Code

302. It should be recalled that the first Djiboutian Nationality Code was governed by Act No. 200 of 24 October 1981. Under this Act, any national of the Territory who had French nationality on 27 June 1977, the day of independence, was recognized as a national and automatically had Djiboutian nationality, without further formalities.

303. The Nationality Code was adopted four years after independence, with the Djiboutian legislature making no distinction between men and women.

304. The provisions of the Act of 1981 had no impact on the equal treatment of men and women under nationality law. Women had the same rights as men to transfer nationality.

305. Women had the same rights as men with respect to the nationality of their children. Legitimate and natural children alike automatically take their mother's nationality if she is Djiboutian.

306. Article 8 of the Code provides: "A legitimate or natural child whose father and mother are Djiboutian is Djiboutian."

307. Article 9 more elaborately provides: "A child born of unknown parents in the Republic of Djibouti is Djiboutian. A child born of a Djiboutian mother in the Republic of Djibouti but whose father is unknown is also Djiboutian." Pursuant to this article, a mother therefore transfers her nationality to her child, even if the child's father is unknown.

308. In 2004, a second law, the Djiboutian Nationality Code No. 79/AN/04/5th L, laid yet more emphasis on the equality of the sexes with respect to nationality.

309. Articles 4 and 5 of the Nationality Code of 2004 reinforce the right of Djiboutian women to transfer their nationality to their children.

310. There is also no distinction between men and women with regard to the transfer of nationality at the time of the solemnization of marriage.

311. In the event of marriage to a non-Djiboutian, article 12 provides that "an alien individual who enters into marriage with a spouse of Djiboutian nationality may not seek Djiboutian nationality until after 10 years of conjugal life. In this article, no distinction is made between men and women."

312. The Republic of Djibouti grants women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality, as well as with respect to the transmission of their nationality to their children.

Article 10 Equality in the field of education

10.1. Content of article 10

313. The obligations of States parties under the terms of article 10 of the Convention are threefold: (i) equal access demanding specific and effective guarantees that ensure access for both girls and boys to educational programmes, other means of education and grants; (ii) the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women in education and by education; (iii) the elimination of gender gaps in the levels of education.

Reform of the Djiboutian education system

314. In the Republic of Djibouti, the right to education is recognized in article 4 of the Djiboutian Education System Act No. 96/AN/00/4th L. This Act, which was the outcome of recommendations from the National Conference on Education held in 1999, recognizes

the right of education for all children, without discrimination, and guarantees nine years of free compulsory basic education for all children between 6 and 16 years of age, excluding preschool education, which remains optional.

315. The reform of the education system, which emphasizes access, equality and equity, has brought about an unprecedented growth in school enrolment since promulgation of the Act, with gross enrolment rates increasing from primary education up to higher education.

Preschool education

316. Preschool education is optional and is delivered by Djibouti's private sector. In view of its importance to child development, however, classes are being instituted in State-run schools.

The Framework Act on the Djiboutian Education System No. 96/AN of August 2000 (extract)

- Compulsory education for all children between 6 and 16 years of age;
- The integration of lifelong learning, in particular through non-formal and informal education;
- Early introduction of teaching of Arabic (from the third year) and English (from the sixth year);
- The establishment of a culture of assessment and the replacement of competitive examinations at the end of primary schooling with an assessment test;
- The enhancement of technical and vocational training, notably through the introduction of a vocational middle-school system;
- Better quality education through reform of the curricula and of the end objectives explicitly determined for each cycle;
- The encouragement of close partnerships among the various actors at all levels: central, regional and local (i.e., schools);
- Support for the development of private education facilities;
- The development of non-formal education, in particular literacy strategies.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2005/06</i>	<i>2006/07</i>	<i>2007/08</i>	<i>2008/09</i>	<i>2015 target</i>
<i>Preschool education</i>					
Percentage of five-year-olds attending a preschool facility	4.28	5.74	5.69	6.50	35.00
Gender equality index	0.91	0.87	0.86	1.23	1.00

317. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women in turn developed a National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development in Djibouti (PNDIPED), the plan of action for which has been under way, with support from technical and financial partners, since 2006. This policy places particular emphasis on early childhood education.

318. Civil-society associations and NGOs also provide preschool education in Djibouti, but their exact numbers are not widely known.

Basic education

319. Basic education comprises a five-year primary cycle, followed by a four-year preparatory cycle. The following tables outline the trend in the number of boys and girls enrolled in school and provides indicators for the past 10 years (2000 to 2009) and projections to 2015.

Trend in the primary school population

<i>Years</i>	<i>2000/01</i>	<i>2001/02</i>	<i>2002/03</i>	<i>2003/04</i>	<i>2004/05</i>	<i>2005/06</i>
Total	42 754	44 321	46 364	48 713	50 533	53 743
Boys	24 281	25 301	26 084	27 397	28 010	29 872
Girls	18,473	19 020	20 280	21 316	22 523	23 871

Trend in the preparatory school population

<i>Years</i>	<i>2000/01</i>	<i>2001/02</i>	<i>2002/03</i>	<i>2003/04</i>	<i>2004/05</i>	<i>2005/06</i>
Total	13 655	14 458	16 595	18 180	20 867	21 129
Boys	8 438	8 940	10 056	10 872	12 650	12 729
Girls	5 217	5 518	6 539	7 308	8 217	8 400

Trend in numbers over the past three years and percentage of girls enrolled in education

<i>Basic education</i>	<i>Years</i>		
	<i>2005-2006</i>	<i>2006-2007</i>	<i>2007-2008</i>
<i>Numbers and percentage of girls</i>			
<i>Primary education cycle</i>			
Numbers in year 1	10 966	11 674	13 252
Percentage of girls in year 1	45.2	46.9	47.5
Total number of pupils	53 743	56 667	56 395
Percentage of girls among the total	44.4	45.8	46.5
<i>Preparatory education cycle</i>			
Numbers in year 1	6 322	7 980	11 780
Percentage of girls in year 1	40.8	41.9	41.9
Total number of pupils	21 233	24 746	29 921
Vocational pupils	104	92	401
Percentage of girls among the total	40.4	40.8	41.6

Trend in basic education indicators and projections for 2015

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>2005/06</i>		<i>2006-2007</i>		<i>2007-2008</i>		<i>2008-2009</i>		<i>2015</i>
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Projected</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Projected</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Initial and revised projection</i>	<i>Target</i>		
<i>Primary education cycle</i>									
Number of new entrants	10 683	10 499	11 140	11 112	12 859	11 761	13 417	17 086	
Primary gross admission rate	64.7%	62.6%	67.5%	65.9%	78.0%	69.5%	81.4%	110.0%	
Parity index/gross admission rate	0.84	0.91	0.90	0.92	0.92	0.93	0.93	1.00	
Total number of pupils	53 743	55 155	55 916	50 457	56 395	52 643	57 918	80 734	
Primary gross enrolment rate	54.8%	58.0%	57.0%	63.2%	68.9%	65.7%	70.8%	102.0%	
Parity index/gross enrolment rate	0.81	0.83	0.85	0.87	0.88	0.90	0.89	1.00	
<i>Preparatory education cycle</i>									
Number of new entrants	6 016	6 891	7 627	15 635	10 581	9 411	8 632	13 641	
Gross admission rate	37.3%	42.5%	47.5%	48.8%	34.0%	62.0%	55.7%	88.7%	
Parity index/gross admission rate	0.71	0.80	0.73	0.76	0.72	0.79	0.78	0.95	
Total number of pupils	21 233	24 338	24 746	34 698	29 921	38 386	33 182	51 145	
Gross enrolment rate	33.6%	36.7%	39.2%	52.8%	47.4%	58.5%	53.6%	83.2%	
Parity index/gross enrolment rate	0.66	0.70	0.67	0.73	0.70	0.76	0.72	0.92	

(Source: *School reform - 2004*, Ministry of Education)

320. It will be noted that gender parity in basic education (primary and preparatory cycles) is continuing an upward trend, as are the gross admission rate (GAR) and gross enrolment rate (GER). According to the Ministry's projections, gender parity will probably be achieved by 2015.

321. In other words, Djibouti will be among the first African countries to attain MDG 2 as far as girls' education is concerned by guaranteeing primary education for all Djiboutian boys and girls, providing them with the means to complete their primary cycle by 2015.

322. During the decade 2000-2009, efforts by the Government to promote girls' enrolment in education and reduce gender disparities were manifold. Examples include:

(i) The conduct of an exploratory study on obstacles to girls' enrolment in education;

(ii) The definition of a framework for action to promote girls' education;

(iii) The introduction of a day dedicated to raising awareness of girls' enrolment in education, namely 11 December of each year, which produces a great deal of enthusiastic activity in all schools;

(iv) The distribution of school kits in order to reduce the educational cost burden on parents (over 56,000 school kits were distributed in September 2007 by UNICEF and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with distribution now taking place under EFA-FTI as from two years ago);

(v) The improvement of facilities in primary schools, two thirds of which today have access to water and electricity, functioning latrines, play areas and safe spaces;

(vi) The introduction of school canteens, as well as dormitories, into the majority of isolated rural schools, with the result that it is now possible to cater to children of nomads and keep them in education;

(vii) The construction of some 20 rural schools during the period 2006-2008;

(viii) Educational support for 1,000 young girls as part of a USAID-funded project;

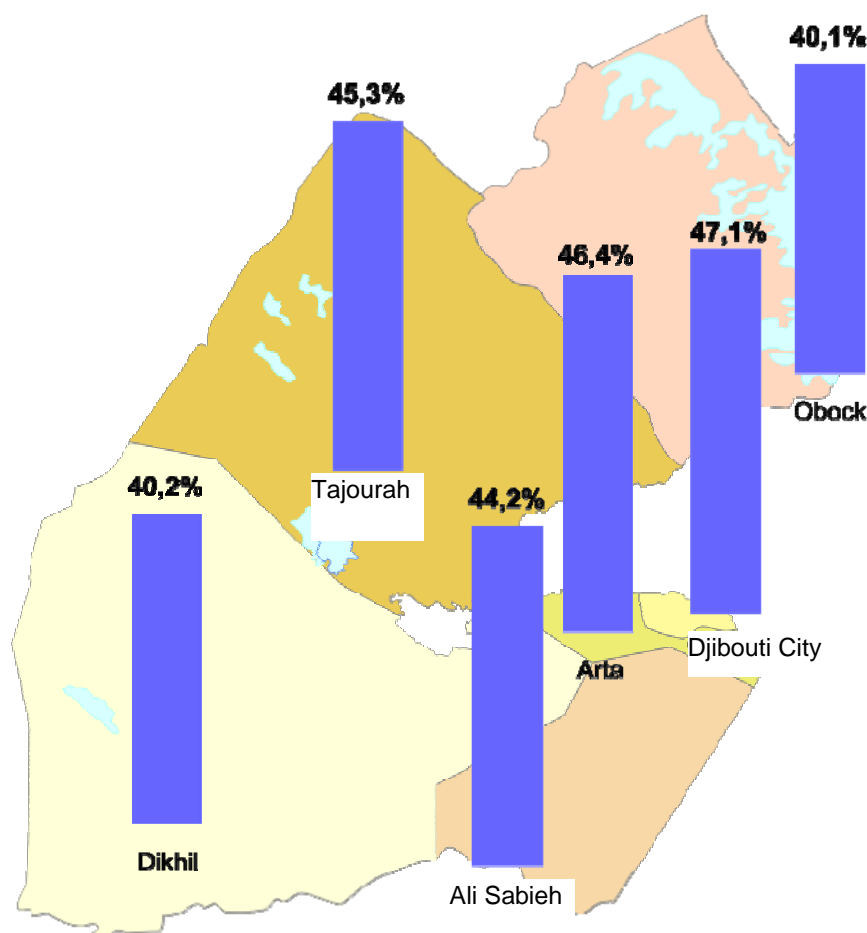
(ix) The implementation of a school health programme through a school health office established jointly by the Ministries of Education and Health;

(x) The introduction of primary school uniforms in order to reduce the economic inequalities that have a bearing on enrolment.

323. In short, an active social mobilization campaign has been undertaken in the interest of enrolling girls in education. Delegations comprising education and health personnel and others from the interior regions toured the country on several occasions in order to impart information to local dignitaries, clerics, mothers, local elected officials and civil-society representatives and sensitize them to the advantages of education for children, which is an incontrovertible factor in the country's development and in family welfare. Training and sensitization workshops have been organized. Debates and commercials have also been scheduled on radio and television for the public audience.

324. Such measures as the offer of free school meals, the distribution of school supplies, the provision of school clothes for newly enrolled girls and the delivery of food to families have had positive repercussions on school attendance by girls.

325. However, although the trend in gender parity indices generally points to an improvement in girls' enrolment, a study of the achievements made reveals inter- and intraregional disparities that must be rectified by sensitization campaigns and incentive measures in areas where girls' enrolment remains below the national average (44 per cent), notably in the regions of Dikhil and Obock, as shown by the map of Djibouti below.



Gross enrolment rate of girls in Djibouti City and the five interior regions

Disparities in enrolment

326. A report by the Department of Education found that, notwithstanding the major efforts made, girls' enrolment appears to peak in the first cycle and that sensitization campaigns should focus more on the preparatory cycle, using as a basis a longitudinal evaluation study of the records and targeting the main causes of dropout.

327. Conducted in May 2008, a joint review of the implementation of the education plan for 2006 to 2008 recommended that the retention of pupils, particularly girls, in the education system should be analysed in more detail (combining statistical data with data

from multiple indicator surveys) in order to identify the geographical, social and educational determinants of the least retention of girls in the education system in order to put in place specific enrolment strategies in the areas concerned.

328. With respect to education, the Government underscores the two major principles of equity and equal opportunity so essential to a democratic and inclusive education system. It therefore has plans in the offing for the next several years to strengthen the network of local schools, reduce education costs for families, increase girls' enrolment in education, promote school health, provide for children with special needs, and develop a strategic framework for non-formal education and literacy.

Other levels of education

329. The following table illustrates school enrolment in the other levels of education - domestic science education, general, technical and vocational secondary education and higher education - over the past three years.

Trend in enrolment in the other levels of education

<i>Other levels of education</i>	<i>Years</i>		
	<i>2005-2006</i>	<i>2006-2007</i>	<i>2007-2008</i>
<i>Domestic science</i>			
Total number of pupils	885	905	907
Percentage of girls among the total	51.4	55.0	56.0
<i>Secondary education</i>			
<i>General secondary</i>			
Total number of pupils	7 405	8 210	9 427
Percentage of girls among the total	37.7	38.1	37.9
<i>Technical and vocational secondary</i>			
Total number of pupils	2 762	1 711	1 718
Percentage of girls among the total	37.5	42.7	41.9
<i>Higher education</i>			
<i>University of Djibouti (UD)</i>			
Total number of students	1 928	2 192	2 483
Percentage of girls among the total	40.0	40.4	40.0
<i>Students abroad</i>			
Djibouti scholarship students (BGD)	624	657	712
BGD/UD proportion	32.4	30.0	28.7
Scholarship students from friendly countries	160	146	130
Total scholarship students/UD proportion	40.7	36.6	33.9

- (i) Girls constitute the large majority in domestic science education;
- (ii) In general secondary education, the percentage of girls remains below 40 per cent;
- (iii) In technical and vocational education, the percentage is higher than 40 per cent but remains below the average of 50 per cent. Girls are in any event more visible in tertiary training (commercial section) than in industrial training (industrial section).

Initial training pathways offered at the Lycée industriel et commercial (LIC) are:

Training pathways offered at the Lycée industriel et commercial (LIC)

<i>Training pathways offered at the brevet d'études professionnelles (BEP) level (two years)</i>	<i>Pathways pursued at the baccalaureate (BAC) level (two years)</i>
Industrial sections	
BEP in electrotechnical technology	
BEP in electrotechnical technology	Vocational BAC (BAC Pro) in audiovisual and electronic equipment maintenance
BEP in technical construction equipment BEP in production systems maintenance	BAC Pro in energy (management and maintenance of refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment)
BEP in automotive and technical services BEP in metalwork	BAC Pro in vehicle maintenance
BEP in woodwork and furniture design BEP in reinforced concrete construction	BAC in technology (industrial science and technology series - electrical engineering option)
BEP in civil engineering design	BAC in technology (industrial science and technology series - civil engineering option)
BEP in construction finishing	Brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS) in industrial maintenance
First-year technology - automated systems technology (TSA) option	BTS in construction
Commercial sections	
BEP in commercial and accounts administration	BAC Pro in office automation (option A "Administrative and secretarial administration")
BEP in administrative and commercial services employment	BAC Pro in office automation (option B "Administrative management and accountancy")
BEP in communications, administrative et secretarial work	BAC Pro in transport logistics
BEP in sales and merchandising	BAC Pro in commerce

(iv) By contrast, the percentage of students at the University of Djibouti, established in 2005, remains virtually constant. Even though girls are less numerous than boys, these figures are encouraging.

330. The Djiboutian State is also seeking to improve the situation in the other levels of education by increasing intake capacities, ensuring equal opportunities for both sexes, adopting administrative and financial measures and benefiting from the support of development partners.

331. As to the number of scholarship students abroad, it is set to fall insofar as the Government's policy is to channel more and more students towards the University of Djibouti.

Scholarships

332. The Ministry of Education awards post-baccalaureate scholarships on the basis of merit to students wishing to study in higher education abroad. One example is the scholarships for academic excellence awarded annually by the President of the Republic to the most deserving of the students who pass the baccalaureate examination.

Education programmes

333. The Government's objective is for learners to acquire the knowledge and skills that will allow them to understand the world and take action in their own environment.

334. The contextualization of education programmes in the framework of local editorial policy (curricula and textbook design), the strengthening of linguistic skills and improved access to books are central to the measures planned.

335. Programmes for preschool pupils are at the pilot stage. Developed on a multidimensional basis and addressing content, pedagogical methods and approaches and the school rhythm, primary school curricula have already been elaborated and implemented.

336. Lastly, programmes developed for the preparatory level during the year 2008/2009 will be brought into general usage in 2009/2010.

337. An overhaul of general, technical and vocational secondary education programmes is planned as part of the baccalaureate reform.

School textbooks

338. Some of the extremely positive points to be underlined include: (i) investment to ensure control of the production chain and the mobilization of a skills network geared towards a wide-scale editorial project; (ii) the "exemplarity" of the mechanism established in Djibouti that led to the national production of teaching materials adapted to the national context, using a skills-based approach.

CRIPEN plan for updated editions 2006-2010

School year	Primary		Preparatory		Total in basic education		Completion
	Pupils' books	Teachers' guides	Pupils' books	Teachers' guides	Pupils' books	Teachers' guides	
2006	3	9	0	0	3	9	Completed
2007	4	10	4	7	8	17	Completed
2008	8	12	4	8	12	20	In progress
2009	5	5	8	10	13	15	
2010	2	2	8	10	10	12	
Total	22	38	24	35	46	73	

Number of books distributed

Title	Year	Quantity produced	Quantity distributed in schools
<i>Primary cycle</i>			
First-year French books	2006	15 000	14 315
Third-year mathematics books	2006	15 000	10 150

<i>Title</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Quantity produced</i>	<i>Quantity distributed in schools</i>
Third-year Arabic books	2006	15 000	10 040
Second-year French books	2007	17 000	11 200
Third-year early learning books	2007	17 000	9 900
Fourth-year Arabic books	2007	17 000	8 900
Fourth-year mathematics books	2007	17 000	9 000
Total books edited by CRIPEN		113 000	73505
Additional foreign editions (third-, fourth- and fifth-year French)	Total acquired	13 622	13 600
Overall total		126 622	87105
<i>Preparatory cycle</i>			
Sixth-year French books	2007	17 000	11 950
Sixth-year Arabic books	2007	17 000	11 950
Sixth-year life and earth science books	2007	17 000	11 350
Sixth-year history and geography books	2007	17 000	11 750
Total books edited by CRIPEN		68 000	47 000
Additional foreign editions (Sixth-year English and mathematics, sixth-/fifth-year French grammar)	Total acquired	42 000	35 970
Overall total		110 000	82970

339. Recognizing the need to eradicate all discriminatory images of women and girls contained in school textbooks and educational materials, not to mention all gender stereotyping, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women both intensified their studies and research in order to reinforce the instructions to be given to textbook developers and also provide special training courses for teachers on combating gender-based discrimination.

Education personnel

340. As is the case worldwide, the Ministry of National and Higher Education is certainly nowhere close to being a female-run ministry, with women representing only 27.17 per cent of its personnel.

Gender breakdown of personnel at the Ministry of National Education

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Men	3 380	72.83
Women	1 261	27.17
Total	4 641	100

341. As to teaching personnel, the number of women is relatively low in comparison with the number of men.

Gender breakdown of teaching personnel

<i>Teaching bodies</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
University	159	36
Technical education	191	69
Preparatory education	426	124
Primary education	1 603	551
Domestic science schools	17	13
Total	2 396	793
Percentage	75.13	24.86

342. At the University, which is headed by a President (a man), the position of Secretary-General is held by a woman. Women today are increasingly occupying the more senior positions; they account for 2 of 4 deans and 6 of 19 heads of department. Two of the seven joint offices (the human resources office and the documentation centre) are also headed by women.

Physical and sports education

343. The recommendations of the National Conference on Education, held in December 1999, included one designed to promote physical and sports education in schools. In other words, the Djiboutian Government encourages boys and girls to take part in sports and physical education. There is consequently no legislation or ban preventing women's participation in sports activities. Boys and girls have equal access to sports equipment. Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is in fact headed by a woman, developed a full female sports programme as part of its five-year plan of action for 2008 to 2012.

Literacy and non-formal education

344. Illiteracy reduction is among the objectives of the Dakar Framework of Action on Education for All and also features in the MDGs, as well as in the targets of the strategy for sustainable human development. Accordingly, alongside the universalization of basic education, which contributes to this objective, the development of literacy and non-formal education is an option under the strategy for development of the Djiboutian education system. The National Conference on Education, held in December 1999, moreover recommended a move towards lifelong education.

345. The Government consequently undertook to step up its efforts, particularly with respect to girls and women who have either dropped out or are out of school. The various literacy campaigns and programmes consequently conducted over the past decade by UNFD, on the one hand, and the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women on the other, have boosted the literacy rate among women aged between 15 and 24 years

346. The findings of EDIM/2006 showed that 47.5 per cent of total women aged between 15 and 25 years are literate. The rates are considerably affected by geographic disparities, however; only 14.2 per cent of women in rural areas are literate, compared with 48.4 per cent in rural areas. Home region has less of an impact on these rates, and young women aged between 15 and 19 years are more literate than those aged between 20 and 24 years, as shown by the following table:

Percentage of literate women aged between 15 and 24 years

<i>Location</i>	<i>Percentage of literate women</i>	<i>Unknown percentage</i>	<i>Number of women aged between 15 and 24 years</i>
<i>District</i>			
Djibouti	48.5	1.8	2 178
Other districts	41.0	1.8	338
<i>Environment</i>			
Urban	48.4	1.9	2 452
Rural	14.2	1.0	64
<i>Age</i>			
15 to 19 years	49.7	2.0	1 263
20 to 24 years	45.3	1.7	1 253
Total	47.5	1.8	2 516

347. It should be noted, however, that the particular aim of these campaigns was to develop functional literacy programmes. That being so, the literacy campaigns carried out by UNFD in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the World Bank were in response to the need to equip young women with the wherewithal to become microentrepreneurs by establishing facilities where such artisanal skills as sewing, embroidery and cooking can be learnt.

348. The Arabic literary project (2003 to 2008) launched for the benefit of 9,000 women by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and the Islamic Development Bank is another initiative designed to facilitate access to the resources needed to fight poverty. On completion of this training, women had acquired reading, writing and arithmetic skills, as well as the indispensable technical skills needed to engage in income-generating activities.

349. UNFD has been conducting women's literacy campaigns ever since it was first established, thanks to a succession of financial support from such international partners as UNICEF, the African Development Bank and the World Bank, as well as from national partners, including the Djiboutian Social Development Agency (ADDS). An average of 3,000 persons annually benefit from French literacy programmes.

350. Established in January 2007 and attached to the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, the Balbala Women's Training Centre (CFFB) also serves as a centre for training in sewing, hairdressing, computing and cooking. It is intended in particular for young girls and women from the community of Balbala, just outside Djibouti City, who have dropped out or are out of school. It has the capacity to take in over 400 girls.

351. However, a national forum on literacy and non-formal education (AENF), held in September 2006 in Djibouti, highlighted the shortcomings of the literacy campaigns conducted in the country over two decades.

352. The dispersion, lack of coordination and failure to monitor and follow up programmes were just some of the factors that hindered the achievement of tangible results in that area. New strategic guidelines on literacy and non-formal education were therefore produced by AENF with the aim of: (i) strengthening access; (ii) improving the quality of AENF; (iii) promoting equity. As to priority intervention areas, they are based on the following:

With respect to strengthening access: (i) halve the illiteracy rate by 2015; (ii) rationalize existing means and infrastructures; (iii) establish urban and rural literacy centres located within reach of learners; (iv) sensitize and mobilize the community (NGOs, associations and the private sector); (v) create special centres for children and adults with special needs;

With respect to improving quality: (i) take stock of the current situation and make a diagnostic assessment of the specific needs of the population; (ii) strengthen AENF; (iii) bolster education and teaching methods (programmes geared to different audiences, textbooks and aids); (iv) establish a mechanism for training, tuition, follow-up and assessment; (v) promote certification and post-literacy education; (vi) facilitate linkages between formal and non-formal education for out-of-school children; (vii) introduce more flexibility into course schedules; (viii) establish a multisectoral partnership, including with NGOs and donors; (ix) diversify learning and communication channels (radio, television);

With respect to promoting equity: (i) reduce geographic and economic disparities, as well as those inherent in the gender concept; (ii) prioritize training for children and adults with special needs;

Establishment of a management system: (i) create a department for AENF; (ii) establish a common strategy among the entities (ministries, NGOs, donors) responsible for implementing literacy and non-formal education activities.

353. On the basis of these priority intervention areas and in accordance with the INDS objectives aimed at fighting poverty, UNFD launched a new functional literacy campaign in October 2008, covering both the capital and the regions. A particular feature of this campaign was that it was funded by a national institution, namely ADDS.

354. It should also be noted that as part of its three-year plan of action (2010-2012) and on the basis of one of the recommendations produced by the analysis seminar on governmental action, held in May 2009, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women is to roll out a mass literacy programme aimed at reaching 15,000 persons, including girls and women in particular.

Article 11

Equality in the field of employment

11.1. Content of article 11

355. Article 11 clearly states that women have the fundamental right to work. It comprehensively lists the obligations incumbent on States parties in order to ensure that this right is fully and effectively realized: (i) first, States parties must guarantee to women the same employment rights and opportunities as men; (ii) secondly, women must have the right to free choice of profession and employment and must not be automatically channelled towards traditional women's work; (iii) thirdly, women in the workplace must have the right to equal remuneration and all work-related benefits; (iv) fourthly, women in the workplace must also be protected from discrimination on the basis of marital status or maternity; (v) lastly, true equality in employment requires the implementation of measures to protect women from all forms of violence in the workplace.

Djiboutian legislation

356. Article 3 of the Djiboutian Labour Code provides: "Subject to explicit provisions of the present Code or of any other legislation or regulation protecting women, children and young people, as well as provisions relating to the status of aliens, an employee's sex, age, race, colour, social origin, nationality or national extraction, membership or non-

membership of a trade union, or opinions, particularly religious and political opinions, shall not be taken into account by any employer in making decisions relating in particular to recruitment, conduct and other conditions of work, award of social benefits, discipline or breach of contract.”

357. This shows us that Djiboutian legislation does not discriminate with respect to admission to employment. Women have the same right as men to engage in any professional activity of their choice. There is consequently no discrimination in recruitment and hiring between men and women. Furthermore, civil service recruitment is by competitive examination. In the same way, the law does not specifically provide that certain professions must be exercised by women and others by men.

The Labour Code

358. The Labour Code No. 133/AN/05/5th L of 28 January 2006, repealing the Overseas Labour Code of 1952, sets the legal framework for employment in Djibouti. The Code deals with all questions relating to individual work relationships and also makes specific provision for women’s employment.

359. Article 1 of the Code provides that, in the Republic of Djibouti: “Any person who undertakes to pursue his occupation, in return for remuneration, under the supervision of another natural or legal person, whether public or private, is regarded as an employee for the purposes of the Labour Code.”

360. The Djiboutian Labour Code is thus founded on non-discriminatory provisions and is consequently in keeping with the spirit of the Convention. Women have access to employment under the same conditions as men.

361. In practice, however, despite the absence of legal discrimination, there are fewer women than men in the public administration sector (see the above tables relating to article 7).

Pay

362. In Republic of Djibouti, it is an established fact that women receive equal pay with men for equal work. Article 137 of the Labour Code indeed provides that: “For work of equal value, pay shall be equal for all employees, regardless of their origin, sex, age, status and faith, under the conditions provided for in the present Code.”

363. Women therefore benefit from the same rights as men with respect to the treatment, remuneration and allowances received in connection with work performed.

Social protection

364. In 1999, the Government embarked on a sweeping reform of social protection driven by concerns for equity, efficiency and speed. This reform must be regarded as a major gain for Djiboutian employees.

365. There are two protection systems in place in Djibouti: (i) the first is the system benefiting all civil servants, which comprises sickness insurance whereby, in return for a monthly contribution, the full health costs of civil servants and their families are covered by the State; (ii) the second system is for private-sector employees and persons working under contract for the State, as well as for their immediate dependents. This system is run by the independent Social Protection Organization (OPS), which operates as both an insurer and a health-care provider.

366. OPS runs two health facilities often catering to very large numbers of patients. In 2005, it had 33,590 subscribers and 5,248 pensioners on its books, amounting to a total of 38,838 direct beneficiaries. Assuming that each couple has an average of six children, its services can be said to cover an estimated total of 311,000 inhabitants.

367. As for constituent bodies (the army, police and National Gendarmerie), they each have their own dedicated health centres where they and their families are able to receive free health treatment. Concessionary treatment is also available for war invalids.

368. In addition, the Ministry of Employment, having responsibility as it does for civil servants, provides social insurance programmes, including health insurance and pensions managed by the National Pensions Fund (CNR). There is no unemployment insurance programme.

369. The pension system reform undertaken in 2001 rebalanced the distribution of jobs between young and older persons, particularly in public service. In restructuring and rationalizing the pension system, the Government allowed various workers of pensionable age to take their retirement, so creating conditions conducive to the recruitment of young people. The retirement age went up from 55 to 60 years in 2008. Retirement pensions have been tax-exempt since 2009.

Protection of women at work

370. The Djibouti Labour Code provides additional protection for women and young persons under article 12, which provides that: “The Labour Inspector may require women and girls to be examined by a registered medical practitioner in order to ascertain that the work assigned to them is not beyond their strength. Interested parties shall be entitled to such an examination on request. No woman or young person may be made to remain in a job accordingly recognized as being beyond their strength and must be assigned to another appropriate job that they are strong enough to perform. If that is not possible, the contract must be annulled and the same indemnity paid as in the case of a normal breach of contract.”

Protection for pregnant women

371. Any pregnant woman whose condition is medically confirmed may break her contract without notice and without having to pay any kind of indemnity as a result. Under no circumstances may such breach of contract give rise to damages and interest.

372. A pregnant woman must, however, inform her employer of her condition one month before any breach or anticipated breach of contract on the ground of pregnancy. She retains the right to free health care and to benefits in kind.

373. The protection for pregnant women is such that their dismissal is virtually impossible. Article 114 of the Labour Code accordingly provides that: “Other than in the case of gross misconduct and cases where it is impossible for him to honour the contract, an employer may not dismiss a woman who is visibly pregnant or whose pregnancy has been medically confirmed.”

374. In cases where an employee is dismissed by an employer who is unaware of her pregnancy, she has 15 days in which to prove her condition, whereupon the dismissal is overturned. In any event, no employer may dismiss a woman during periods in which her contract of employment is interrupted. These same periods also interrupt any notice period resulting from any prior notification of dismissal.

375. The employer is liable to penalty in the event of any violation of these provisions, pursuant to article 116: “Any dismissal announced or insisted on by an employer in violation of the provisions of the preceding article shall entitle the employee to claim damages and interest. These damages and interest shall be without prejudice to any other indemnities to which the dismissal may give rise.”

Maternity leave

376. An employee who becomes a mother is protected during her maternity period. She benefits from a minimum 14-week period of maternity leave. Article 113, paragraph 3, of the Labour Code provides that: “Every pregnant woman is entitled to maternity leave, which must start eight weeks before the expected date of delivery and end six weeks after the date of delivery.” The father also benefits from a three-day period of leave at that time.

377. When delivery takes place before the expected date, the rest period is extended until completion of the 14 weeks to which the employee is entitled. When delivery takes place after the expected date, the woman may not resume work until after six weeks following the delivery. The same article provides that the period of interruption may be extended by three weeks in the event of illness confirmed by a doctor to have resulted from pregnancy or childbirth.

378. The protection for pregnant women and new mothers goes even further; during such periods, a mother may in fact leave her job without notice and without having to pay an indemnity as a result for breach of contract. No pay may be withheld on account of the resulting short-lived absence.

379. The Code provides that, throughout their maternity leave, women are also entitled to the full amount of pay that they were receiving at the time when they ceased work. Half of this amount is paid by OPS and half by the employer, in accordance with the established procedure.

Breastfeeding breaks

380. Article 116 of the Labour Code provides that, for a 15-month period from the time when she resumes work, a mother is entitled to breastfeeding breaks. The break may last no longer than a total of one hour daily, to be taken at the beginning or end of each working day, except in the event that more favourable provisions are included in the Collective Agreements.

Sexual and mental harassment

381. Djiboutian legislation, notably article 347 of the Criminal Code, punishes sexual assault of which women may be victims.

General Civil Service Regulations

382. The General Civil Service Regulations Act No. 48/AN/83/1st L guarantees equal access to employment for men and women. It provides generally for access to the civil service, with no gender-based discrimination.

383. The General Civil Service Regulations also recognize the principle of equal access to employment for men and women. They accord privileges to women with respect to their reproductive and maternal functions.

384. Under the terms of article 15 of the Regulations, no discrimination between men and women is permitted. Women’s access to employment is consequently unrestricted by any legislation.

385. Pursuant to article 41, paragraph 6, a female civil servant is entitled to leave for delivery and breastfeeding. These periods of leave are the same as those provided for under the Labour Code governing employees.

Combating unemployment

386. In order to combat unemployment, the Government put an active employment policy in place in 2007. Since 2008, the Ministry of Employment, Training and Job Placement has availed itself of the services of a National Employment, Training and Job Placement Agency (ANEFIP), which is a monitoring and implementation tool for regulating job-market needs and enhancing the employability of the national workforce. A National Employment, Training and Job Placement Council has also been established.

387. In order to discharge its functions, ANEFIP aimed its activities in 2008 at: (i) narrowing the gap between the employment supply and demand; (ii) the placement, collection, elaboration, follow-up and dissemination of statistical data relating to the job market; (iii) training and job placement.

388. In 2008, ANEFIP registered 3,462 job searches, including 965 by women. It brought 1,220 of those searches, 295 of them by women, to a successful conclusion.

389. In 2007, the number of searches amounted to 3,173, including 857 by women, and placements numbered 895, of which 351 were for women.

390. The public administration sector remains the country's biggest employer.

Article 12 Equality in the field of health care

12.1. Content of article 12

391. Article 12 explicitly requires States parties to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those to which access may be impeded for reasons of poverty, illiteracy or physical isolation. It furthermore recognizes that women need extra care and attention during pregnancy and after giving birth.

392. The Committee moreover calls on States parties to end discrimination against women in national HIV/AIDS strategies. It also calls on States parties to strengthen the role of women as care providers, health workers and educators in HIV prevention.

393. Lastly, the Committee requires States parties to take appropriate measures to eradicate the practice of excision.

Public health policy in Djibouti

394. The Republic of Djibouti has adopted the WHO definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

395. The Framework Health Policy Act No. 48/AN/99/4th L of 3 July 1999 recognizes the right to health for all and adopts the principle of solidarity and equality with respect to access to and cost of health care. On the basis of this principle, a contribution treating all citizens fairly is required. It is nonetheless incumbent on the State to give priority assistance to children, mothers, disabled persons, highly vulnerable groups and victims of natural disaster.

396. The priorities include maternal and child health, management of health emergencies and the reorganization of maternity services.

397. The objectives of the reform begun following the acknowledgement of two facts, namely the crumbling state of the health system and the significant rate of maternal and child mortality, were also to: (i) improve the functioning of health services; (ii) increase public access to quality services and to effective and affordable medicine; (iii) ensure the sustainability of financing for the health system; (iv) guarantee equal access to health care for Djiboutian citizens by restructuring urban and rural health centres.

Ministry of Health personnel

398. The Ministry of Health is the forerunner with respect to gender parity in the workplace, as attested by the figures for personnel, comprising civil servants, contracted workers and others from various cross-cutting programmes.

This pioneering policy instilled by the President is now bringing its full weight to bear.

Breakdown of civil servants - gender parity in the workplace

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Numbers</i>		<i>Percentage</i>		
	<i>Year</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2010</i>
Men		813	1 015	60.62	58.40
Women		528	723	39.37	41.59
Total		1 341	1 738	99.99	99.99

With regard to training for a medical career, the Djibouti University of Medicine has for the first time a significant intake of young women, an astute political choice on its part that will increase the proportion of women doctors in this key sector in both the short and medium terms.

399. As to the Higher Institute of Health Sciences (ISSS), it offers occupational training for young women as midwives, nurses, auxiliaries and laboratory technicians. A substantial number of female candidates take the competitive entry examination held every three years.

Gender breakdown of managerial positions

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Careers</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Number</i>
Civil administration	2008	28	Civil administration	2008	16
	2009	45		2009	35
Administrative officer	2008	8	Administrative officer	2008	9
	2009	9		2009	11

In the Ministry's managerial sector, women account for 46 per cent of personnel in these two occupations (40 per cent during the previous year), representing an increase of 6 per cent over the previous year.

400. Concerning responsible decision-making positions in the Ministry, women account for 31 per cent of managerial personnel holding a position of responsibility.

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Men	37	68
Women	17	32
Total	54	100

As to sectoral and multisectoral programmes, they are keeping pace and report constantly growing percentages of women holding responsibility in such areas as tuberculosis, malaria and tobacco addiction. With respect to key decision-making on sensitive subjects, including nutrition, mothers and children, for instance, the involvement of women is now an indispensable requirement.

Maternal and neonatal health

401. In the interest of making a more valuable contribution to the achievement of MDGs 4 and 5 aimed at reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality, a considerable portion of the health plan is devoted to protecting the health of mothers and children.

402. All vertical projects for mothers and children were thus brought together under a Maternal and Child Health Office in November 2005, following on from a reproductive health programme that had been continually evolving for a decade.

403. The improvement of maternal and neonatal health remains a priority for the Ministry. Surgical blocks were therefore constructed in hospital medical centres in the regions of Dikhil, Tajourah and Obock, in addition to delivery suites in rural health posts.

404. Rural maternity units are run by midwives trained in the care of pregnant and postnatal women, as well as in family planning. These midwives are sufficiently qualified to offer timely guidance to all women showing signs of risk.

405. Despite a clear improvement in indicators, maternal mortality nevertheless remains high, standing at 546 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2002. Neonatal mortality stands at an estimated 45 deaths per 1,000 births and accounts for a substantial portion of the infant mortality rate, estimated at 67 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006.

Reproductive health

406. A reproductive health programme, itself the result of a merger of family balance and safe motherhood projects supported by UNFPA, was elaborated for the period 2003-2007.

407. The programme incorporates various aspects of the reproductive health strategy, in particular: (i) family planning; (ii) pre- and post-natal consultations; (iii) combating FGM and GBV; (iv) sensitization of the community to reproductive health services; (v) promotion of teenage reproductive health; (vi) integration of the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS into services, including prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission, which has been part of the minimum package since 2006.

408. In order to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women, the reproductive health programme also put in place a strategy for systematic iron supplementation, with treatment provided free of charge. Essential medicines and contraceptives are also supplied to mothers.

409. This benefit package is delivered by the competent health professionals in place at all levels of the health-care hierarchy, i.e., in community health centres (CSC), hospital medical centres (CMH) and health posts (PS), as well as in mobile teams.

410. Maternal and child health were effectively improved as a result of this new system in that it simultaneously includes activities relating to prevention (vaccination, pre- and post-natal check-ups and family planning), treatment, promotion and education (information, education and communication (IEC), health education) and also covers all obstetric emergencies.

411. It should be noted that this political will to protect the most vulnerable was demonstrated by a concrete support measure insofar as the only exemption from the new cost-participation system is for pregnant women, mothers and the under-fives.

412. During 2008, a total of 34,185 prenatal check-ups were recorded in the various health facilities. New patients (women attending for a first pregnancy follow-up) accounted for 15,101 of the total number of prenatal check-ups. In 2008, the number attending for prenatal check-ups amounted to 7,303 women in their first trimester, 12,612 in their second trimester and 14,266 in their third trimester.

Annual trend in the take-up rates for prenatal check-up

<i>Year</i>	<i>Estimated population</i>	<i>Expected births</i>	<i>New patients</i>	<i>Take-up rate</i>
2003	504 185	17 133	11 783	71.1%
2004	519 311	17 646	12 313	66.8%
2005	534 890	18 176	11 904	67.7%
2006	550 937	18 721	14 520	63.6%
2007	567 465	19 283	13 095	67.9%
2008	584 488	19 861	15 101	76%

413. In order to improve the quality of neonatal care, a neonatal health component was introduced into the child-care package and neonatal units were established in the main maternity reference units.

Assisted births

414. According to EDIM, 87.4 % of births took place in a health centre and some 92.9 per cent of births occurring in 2005 were assisted by a qualified birth attendant. This figure is highest in the Djibouti region, where it stands at 95.1 per cent. It is much lower in the Tajourah region, however, at 65 per cent. The survey reveals that the higher the level to which a woman is educated, the higher her chances of giving birth with the assistance of a qualified attendant.

415. The number of maternal deaths is not falling to any significant degree nevertheless, as at-risk pregnancies are not detected early enough to enable better emergency care.

Annual trend in the proportion of intrahospital maternal deaths

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total births</i>	<i>Live births</i>	<i>Maternal deaths</i>	<i>Ratio per 100 000</i>
2003	10 600	9 734	20	205
2004	11 636	11 069	22	199
2005	11 657	11 066	20	181
2006	11 608	11 042	18	163
2007	12 717	12 122	44	363

416. The leading cause of maternal deaths on record is haemorrhage, standing at 41 per cent. Caesarean sections, the number of which rose substantially from 3.4 per cent in 2002 to 10 per cent in 2007, represent only 10 per cent of live births.

417. Of the 12,1000 assisted deliveries on record, 86 per cent were normal and 14 per cent required assistance through surgical or instrumental intervention.

418. Two post-natal check-ups are obligatory, one at the seventh day and the other at the forty-second day. New mothers are directed towards front-line facilities by maternity unit midwives to ensure that they benefit from these check-ups.

Annual trend in the coverage rate for post-natal check-ups

<i>Year</i>	<i>Live births</i>	<i>Number of postnatal check-ups</i>	<i>Coverage rate for post-natal check-ups</i>
2003	9 734	1 366	14.0%
2004	11 069	2 281	20.6%
2005	11 066	3 235	29.2%
2006	11 042	3 107	28.1%
2007	12 122	3 695	30.5%
2008	11 194	3 731	33.0%

419. During 2008, 3,731 post-natal check-ups were conducted. At 33 per cent, the coverage rate for these check-ups showed a clear improvement. It remains low in the interior regions, however.

Family planning

420. The Djiboutian population is characterized by a high fertility rate of 4.2 children per woman. Family planning has been integrated into all training dispensed by qualified personnel, including mobile teams.

421. The suggested contraceptives available are oral contraceptives, including the morning-after pill, injectables and intra-uterine devices.

Annual trend in contraceptive prevalence

<i>Year</i>	<i>Estimated population</i>	<i>Target population (11.63 per cent)</i>	<i>Protected women</i>	<i>Contraceptive prevalence</i>
2002	489 500	56 929	5 545	9.7%
2003	504 185	58 637	5 419	9.2%
2004	519 311	60 396	8 564	14.2%
2005	534 890	62 208	9 394	15.1%
2006	550 937	64 074	10 421	16.3%
2007	567 465	65 996	13 353	20%
2008	584 488	67 975	15 299	22.5%

422. Women of reproductive age represent 11.63 per cent of the total female population. According to EDIM-2006, the contraceptive prevalence rate among married women aged between 15 and 49 years is 17.8 per cent. The pill is the most common form of contraception; it is used by 13.6 per cent of women.

423. Contraceptive prevalence is higher in the region of Djibouti City, where the rate is 19.2 per cent, compared with 10.6 per cent in the other regions. In rural areas, the rate is relatively low by contrast, standing at 4.9 per cent, compared with the rate of 18.4 per cent in urban areas.

424. These data show that obstacles to contraception persist in rural areas, where women believe it to be prohibited by religion or that it is liable to cause illness.

Sexual and reproductive health among young people

425. A national health strategy for young people has been developed by the Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the Ministries of Youth, Education, and Communication, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and NGOs. Albeit inadequate, a system of peer educators has been established in schools and community development centres in order to inform young people about sexual and reproductive health. In 2008, six support, information and counselling units for young people were revived.

426. Establishment of a national reference centre for reproductive health (Housseina): the Ministry of Health established a South-South partnership with Tunisia in order to strengthen the reproductive health programme. A reference centre for reproductive health has been operational since 2009.

Capacity-building programme for midwives

427. A capacity-building programme for midwives has also been developed by the Ministry of Health. It is the outcome of collaboration between UNFPA and the International Confederation of Midwives in response to the Global Health Workforce Alliance initiative, launched in 2006 at the World Health Assembly to address the global shortage in human resources for health.

Establishment of a health-care mechanism: mutual insurance funds

428. In order to improve attendance at health facilities, a health-care fund was established in six locations in different regions of the interior in 2008. Estimated to amount to \$500 per location, this fund will serve to cover the cost of evacuation and/or counselling for all women and children in need of care. In 2009, the mechanism was extended to 14 other locations throughout all regions.

The Higher Institute of Health Sciences

429. The Health Worker Training Centre created by Decree No. 91-0767/PR/SP of 6 August 1991 was converted, also by decree, into an institute known as the Higher Institute of Health Sciences (ISSS). ISSS is a public facility for the training of health personnel. It is overseen by the Ministry of Health and independently runs its own administration and finances.

430. The Health Worker Training Centre has constantly developed as a result of its conversion into ISSS. Health professionals are now recruited each year, amounting to 120 students comprising 60 nurses (of both sexes), 40 midwives and 20 laboratory assistants (of both sexes), as opposed to the previous number of 30 students per year. As a result of this initial training, the number of those making use of its services is noticeably increasing.

Breakdown of ISSS students by gender and pathway

Year	2000/2003		2004/2007		2005/2008		2007/2010		2008/2011	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Nurses	4	16	3	17	5	36	8	42	30	28
Midwives	17	/	20	/	24	/	38	/	24	/
Laboratory assistants	1	19	/	/	/	/	6	13	6	11
Total	22	35	23	17	29	36	52	55	60	39

Students in the year classes 2000/2003, 2004/2007 and 2005/2008 have obtained their State diplomas. Students in year classes 2007/2010 and 2008/2011 are in the process of doing so.

431. In recent years, the number of female students has noticeably increased in the nursing and laboratory assistant pathways, with young women even outnumbering young men in the most recent year class.

Djibouti School of Medicine

432. The Djibouti School of Medicine opened its doors in November 2007. It is a scientific, educational and technical institution responsible for providing quality training with a view to fully meeting the requirements of high-standard medicine. This institution was established as a result of the political will expressed at the highest level in order to alleviate the shortage of national medical practitioners (both general and specialist).

433. As in the case of each year's admission of women to study general medicine, these medical education pathways are attracting interest among a growing number of our country's top young women.

Gender breakdown by pathway at the Djibouti School of Medicine

<i>Year</i>	<i>First year</i>	<i>Second year</i>	<i>Third year</i>
Women	12	9	13
Men	32	28	20
Total	44	37	33
Percentage of females in relation to males	27	24	39

Of the 26 personnel working in the administration of the Djibouti School of Medicine, 14 are women and 12 are men.

Initial continuous health training abroad

434. In the area of human resources, the Ministry of Health has made sustained efforts over the past two years to increase numbers and recruit quality personnel in order to make up for lost time. The Government has substantially augmented the financial resources earmarked for capacity-building of human resources, including training abroad for a number of doctors and paramedics.

435. The priority of the Ministry of Health is the long-term development of initial training programmes at ISSS in order to increase the opportunities available to the country's top young women. Another equal priority is that of alleviating the need for specialized personnel in health facilities as quickly as possible. In fact, substantial numbers of personnel are currently undergoing training in sisterly and friendly States in specialist fields and areas that are a priority for the health of the Djiboutian population.

436. Young women can largely claim to have benefited from this training on equal terms with young men in order to be counted among the quality personnel who will make it possible to face the new demands of health-care delivery.

Paramedics in training abroad by gender

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of men</i>	<i>Number of women</i>
Tunisia/Morocco/Algeria	2007-2010	40	26
Tunisia/Morocco/Algeria	2008-2011	82	20
Tunisia/Morocco	2009-2012	58	18
Total		180	64

437. As part of the national response to HIV/AIDS-STIs, the take-up of free voluntary screening is rocketing, the number of persons seeking this service having risen appreciably from 1,200 in 2002 to over 6,000 by the end of 2006.

438. Since early 2006, the system has focused on four groups: (i) pregnant women; (ii) STI patients; (iii) tuberculosis patients; (iv) blood donors. The results show that rates have remained steady since 2002; seroprevalence among pregnant women aged between 15 and 24 years was at 2.3 per cent in 2002, compared with 2 per cent in 2006.

439. Free care is provided for persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). The number of PLHIV was estimated at 15,809 at the end of 2007, comprising 14,734 adults, 8,707 of them women, and 1,075 children. According to the available data, the mode of HIV transmission is essentially heterosexual.

440. The epidemic is multifaceted and typically concentrated in urban areas, where the risk settings are present. HIV prevalence among female sex workers is clearly higher than in the general population and was estimated at 18 per cent in 2007.

441. The epidemic is noticeably feminized, as 55.1 per cent of infected persons are women. The 20-35 age bracket is most affected. In 2007, HIV prevalence was 2.1 per cent among pregnant women, 12.3 per cent among STI patients and 1.4 per cent among blood donors. Co-infection is significant, given that Djibouti has the second highest prevalence of tuberculosis in the world. The HIV prevalence among tuberculosis patients stands at 13.6 per cent.

Estimation of the number of PLHIV at the end of 2007

<i>Number of persons (adults + children)</i>	<i>15 809 (12 809 – 19 496)</i>
Adults (15 years and above)	14 734 (10 910 – 18 286)
Women (15 years and above)	8 707 (6 485 – 120 861)
Children (under 15 years)	1 075 (788 – 1 379)
Estimated number of AIDS deaths	1 078 (750 – 1 370)
Estimated number of orphans	55 161 (1 931 – 9 553)

442. The high prevalence among female sex workers and the multiple risk settings in which they operate are telling indications of the potential for a concentrated epidemic in this environment of female sex workers and their clients.

443. Strengthening of available services and of the health system: (i) 19 voluntary screening centres have been established and 7,158 persons were tested in 2007; (ii) 19 health-care training courses incorporating the subject of parent-child transmission prevention were held throughout the country's six regions, representing a geographic coverage of 100 per cent of the regions and 43.2 per cent for health-care training courses (19/44).

Care of seropositive pregnant women

444. Seropositive pregnant women are cared for by all centres offering mother-to-child transmission prevention services. However, the difficulty of persuading seropositive women to adhere to antiretroviral (ARV) prophylactic treatment persists. Various women are in situations that prevent them from taking on board their serological status. In order to improve this area of focus, skills training was organized to enable midwives to deliver the full range of care to seropositive women.

445. During 2008, 43 of the 96 seropositive women who returned for their test results followed a full course of ARV prophylaxis. The same number of 43 also gave birth in a health facility (maternity unit). These women are given comprehensive advice on feeding choices and are encouraged to return by the fortieth day at the latest for a check-up, above all for the child.

446. The outcome of the mother-to-child transmission prevention efforts shows that 9,129 (85 per cent) of the 10,739 women attending for their first prenatal check-up received advice and that 8,118 (75 per cent) agreed to be tested, with 6,100 (75.14 per cent) of them returning to collect their results.

447. During the whole of 2008, 127 women tested seropositive, accounting for 2 per cent of the seroprevalence rate. Of these, however, 32 (25 per cent) failed to collect their results. The rate of failure to collect results fell slightly between 2007 and 2008 from 27 per cent to 25 per cent.

448. Continuous efforts must be made to reduce this rate further, as women who fail to collect their results place at risk not only their children but also the medical personnel in maternity units. Despite an overall decline in activity during the third quarter of 2008, it is a welcome fact that 75 per cent of all women attending for a prenatal check-up agreed to undergo screening.

449. Every pregnant woman is offered individual counselling on HIV/AIDS screening. Midwives also advise women on the importance of such matters as pre- and post-natal visits, birth-spacing, exclusive breastfeeding and abandonment of the practice of excision.

450. IEC officers give health education talks at health facilities on the various aspects of maternal and neonatal health. Radio programmes and commercials on prenatal check-ups were also broadcast during 2008.

Care of patients undergoing ARV treatment in Djibouti between 2004 and 2009

451. Findings from monitoring of ARV patients in Djibouti between February 2004 and September 2009: A total of 1,390 patients started ARV treatment, comprising 1,354 adults (over 15 years) and 36 children (under 15 years). Women accounted for 52 per cent of the total.

<i>Monitoring indicators</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Cumulative number of patients starting ARV	1 390	
Cumulative number of deaths among ARV patients	200	14.4
Number discontinuing treatment	52	3.7
Number of ARV patients lost to follow-up (ARV discontinuation for more than three months)	200	14.4
Number of ARV patients moved to other countries	45	3.2
Number of patients continuing ARV (September 2009)	893	

<i>Monitoring indicators</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Percentage of patients continuing ARV	64.2	
Continuing first-line treatment	651	72.9
First-line substitution	224	25.1
Second-line treatment	16	1.8
Patients receiving salvage treatment	2	0.2

A total of 81 per cent of patients were monitored in five care centres: Yonis Toussaint Centre (30.9%), General Peltier Hospital (21.5%), Paul Faure Tuberculosis Centre (16.5%), Arhiba Community Health Centre (8.2%) and Bouffard Medical and Surgical Centre (3.9%).

452. Between 2008 and 2009, ARV supply problems led to an increase of 15 per cent in the rate of substitution for another first-line treatment. The most frequently prescribed first-line regimes were: AZT/3TC/EFV (38.5%), AZT/3TC/NVP (23.3%) and TDF/FTC/EFV (20.1%). Mortality stood at 16 per cent, with deaths occurring primarily during the first three months in patients often co-infected with tuberculosis.

General knowledge of HIV prevention

453. The percentage of women aged between 15 and 49 years with a general knowledge of HIV prevention remains fairly low, in the order of 17.9 per cent.

Percentage of women aged between 15 and 19 years with knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission

<i>Place</i>	<i>Knows two means of prevention</i>	<i>Able correctly to identify three prejudices</i>	<i>Has excellent knowledge (two means of prevention and three prejudices)</i>
Djibouti City	40.6%	30.0%	18.0%
Other districts	42.1%	26.7%	17.2%
Urban	41.2%	30.1%	18.2%
Rural	28.1%	13.4%	7.8%
Total	40.8%	29.6%	17.9%

454. Knowledge of HIV prevention methods is fairly low, notwithstanding differences based on place of residence.

Elimination of the practice of excision

455. In Djibouti, the fight against FGM began in the early 1980s at the initiative of UNFD. During the period 1980-1984, emphasis was placed on sensitization and collective awareness concerning a tradition that is long-standing but harmful to maternal and child health. In order to avoid a rude break with that tradition and promote a change in public attitude, the medicalization of FGM was encouraged during this period (1984-1994) with a view to limiting the practice of the most severe forms of FGM (types I and II). As early as 1984, moreover, on the occasion of an important thematic conference on female circumcision, organized by UNFD, in conjunction with UNICEF, WHO and Cairo's al-Azhar University, the practice was condemned, with stress laid on the fact that it is a non-religious act.

456. A hurdle was therefore overcome in 1984 with the holding of that important thematic conference organized jointly by UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO, the thrust of which was that female circumcision has no basis in religion. The condemnation of FGM by clerics dates back to that period.

457. In 1995, the Criminal Code comprising article 333 on violence leading to FGM was adopted.

458. In 1997, the Ministry of Public Health joined with UNFPA in launching a project against female circumcision aimed at the eradication of FGM in Djibouti.

459. In 1998, the Government ratified the Convention. A national strategy for the full eradication of all forms of excision was formulated in 2006 and a national committee on the eradication of all forms of excision was established.

460. In 2002, however, the EDSF/PAPFAM survey revealed that 98.3 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 years had undergone FGM and that the prevalence of excision in Djibouti was the highest in East Africa.

461. Women are subjected to three types of FGM: (i) type I (*sunnah*) consists of removing parts of flesh; (ii) type II (excision) consists of cutting without the removal of flesh; (iii) type III consists of sewing up the vaginal area.

462. *Sunnah* circumcision, excision and infibulation account for 7.5 per cent, 17.4 per cent and 74.8 per cent of FGM, respectively.

463. In 2003, several information and sensitization campaigns were launched jointly by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA, NGOs and local associations, with the cooperation of religious and traditional leaders. One hundred traditional circumcisers laid down their knives as a result.

464. Meanwhile, a study on the impact of UNFPA sensitization campaigns on FGM shows that: (i) FGM is still much practised in the survey areas; (ii) young women and girls are most in favour of eliminating this practice; (iii) elderly women are resistant to that idea; (iv) women are insufficiently aware of the health-related consequences of FGM; (v) men are still reluctant to eliminate the practice and refuse to associate with or marry non-excised girls; (vi) little information is available concerning women who carry out excisions, as they continue to practice their occupation in secret.

465. In 2004, in observance of International Women's Day, the Head of State made the following statement:

Statement by the President of the Republic on the practice of FGM

“...Concerning what we call pharaonic excision, I would like to say that we want no more of the type practised by Arabs or by Somalis or by Afars, nor any other type...no type of female excision can be justified. The truth is that we men regard female excision as a matter for women, who moreover encourage us to do so by maintaining that it is their exclusive preserve. Now, however, we will no longer turn our backs on our responsibility in this specific case. If we (men) agree to keep our distance, it means that we are giving our support to this act. If you (women) practise it through ignorance or lack of understanding or in order to perpetuate the tradition, it has been established that excision is recommended neither by the Koran nor by Hadith. What is more, our Creator made it clear that the human being is his most perfect creation. What is already perfect cannot be perfected, so let us abandon this practice.”

466. For her part, the country's First Lady and UNFD President officially launched the UNPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, designed to contribute to the accelerated abandonment of FGM.

467. In 2005, the First Lady was also the patron of a subregional conference with the theme "*For a political and religious consensus on FGM*", at which she made the following speech:

Speech delivered by the First Lady on the subject of FGM

"Female genital mutilation is unfortunately still not behind us, even though it has fallen significantly... In most Islamic societies, women have not benefited from the rights accorded to them under the Shariah, just as they have also been prevented by circumstance from assuming their social role as required for the cohesion of society...

"It is an unfavourable situation that is not attributable to any weakness or deficiency in the area of legislation, but to a breach and misapplication of noble principles introduced by Islam to allow women to perform their duties as part of a coherent system of legal requirements, high values, noble ideas and the norms governing life...

"To highlight the fight against the genital mutilation of Muslim women by examining their rights from the standpoints of religion, culture and society is one of the best ways of advancing this society and enabling it to realize its ambitions for shared development, to which women will make a full contribution...

"Today, as we aspire to build modernity and renewal on the solid foundation of working wholeheartedly for the progress of our communities, it is time for us to rectify and redress this situation with the necessary level-headedness and wisdom through reason and convincing argument."

(Source: Extract from the newspaper *La Nation*, 3 February 2005)

468. These two statements constitute a very strong political commitment to full abandonment of the practice of FGM.

469. In 2005, some 120 community outreach workers were trained with UNICEF support. In 2006, UNFD disseminated the Convention and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) throughout the country, in partnership with the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and NGOs.

470. All of these combined efforts resulted in genuine progress. Indeed, the EDIM survey conducted in 2006 showed a fall in the proportion of married women between the ages of 15 and 49 years having undergone FGM from 98.3 per cent to 93.1 per cent. A significant trend in the type of FGM practised was also observed: *sunnah* circumcision rose from 7.5 per cent to 24.9 per cent, whereas infibulation fell from 74.8 per cent to 67.2 per cent.

FGM trend between 2002 and 2006

<i>FGM type</i>	<i>EDSF/PAPFAM-2002.</i>	<i>EDIM-2006</i>
Type I (<i>sunnah</i>)	7.5%	24.9%
Type II (excision)	17.4%	6.4%

<i>FGM type</i>	<i>EDSF/PAPFAM-2002.</i>	<i>EDIM-2006</i>
Type III (infibulation)	74.8%	67.2%
Unidentified	0.3%	1.5%

471. Place of residence is a determinant of the level and type of FGM, which stands at 92.9 per cent in the Djibouti region, compared with 94.9 per cent in other regions, and at 93.1 per cent in urban areas, compared with 95.5 per cent in rural areas.

472. The message promoting abandonment of the practice is nonetheless starting to bear fruit. A pilot study of young girls between the ages of 5 and 12 years, conducted in a dozen State primary schools by the Directorate of Maternal and Child Health with UNFPA support, produced findings that appear to be encouraging, even in communities that are firmly in favour of the practice.

473. The survey involved some 17 per cent of girls enrolled in the first year of school (CI) and 8 per cent of girls in the sixth year (CM2) in Djibouti City and the regions.

<i>FGM type</i>	<i>Djibouti City</i>		<i>Regions</i>		<i>Weighted total</i>	
	<i>CM2</i>	<i>First year</i>	<i>CM2</i>	<i>First year</i>	<i>CM2</i>	<i>First year</i>
None	17.7	50.3	2.9	70.2	14.2	55.0
Type I	8.5	18.1	19.4	9.1	11.1	16.0
Type II	25.5	22.0	56.5	13.5	32.8	20.0
Type III	27.7	7.3	14.1	1.0	24.5	5.8
Unknown	0.0	0.5	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.5
Refused	20.6	1.8	5.9	5.8	17.1	2.7
Number	141	382	170	208	311	590
Average age	12.82	7.08	12.29	7.09	12.70	7.08

474. It is striking that one in every seven girls in CM2 (14.2 per cent) has not had the procedure, with the proportion rising to almost one in five in Djibouti City, signalling a change in traditional attitudes and behaviour. Type III is heavily declining in the interior regions. It should be noted that the age of the young girls in the survey renders these figures conclusive, as FGM is very rarely practised on girls over 12 years of age.

475. In CI, over 50 per cent of young girls have not undergone FGM and type-III prevalence is extremely low, both in Djibouti City and in the regions. These findings must nonetheless be qualified, as the probability of FGM being carried out on girls between the ages of 7 and 12 years is far from negligible.

476. Action to eliminate FGM in Djibouti is being pursued not only at the local level but also on the regional scale:

First Ladies repeat their commitment:

“The First Lady of Djibouti, Mrs. Kadra Mahmoud Haid, brought to a close the work of the third Round Table of First Ladies of member States of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Over the two working days of the Round Table, held on the sidelines of the COMESA Summit of Heads of State and Government, the First Ladies issued a final communiqué on women’s

participation in the COMESA integration programme, the enrolment of young girls in school, the fight against AIDS and FGM....”

(Source: *La Nation* No. 138, 20 November 2006)

477. The National Strategy for the Full Abandonment of All Forms of Excision (SNAE), formulated by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with UNICEF, has been in place since 2006. The Strategy is designed to promote the full abandonment of all forms of excision by advocating respect for the physical integrity and health of women and girls.

478. The SNAE plan of action, which extends over a five-year period (2007-2011) comprises four components: (i) communication and social mobilization; (ii) formal and non-formal education; (iii) support measures; (iv) institutional capacity-building.

479. Given the urgent need for action to reduce significantly the FGM prevalence rate, which stands at 93 per cent, a joint programme for accelerating the full abandonment of all forms of excision has been put in place, enabling key activities to be undertaken.

480. These activities include: a non-formal education programme based on human rights and community capacity-building, implemented by an international NGO (Tostan). A total of 1,625 persons from all of the different communities in 33 towns are the immediate beneficiaries of this programme.

481. Advocacy has been stepped up through seminars on the religious aspect of the subject with a view to reaching a religious consensus between the conservative and progressive camps on FGM, developing a communication strategy or even carrying out anthropological studies and opinion surveys on FGM.

482. With regard to legislation, a significant reform affecting both substance and form was adopted in 2009. In terms of substance, the provisions of article 333 of the Criminal Code were supplemented, first of all by a definition of “female genital mutilation” and secondly by the institution of criminal penalties for “persons who failed to alert the authorities to a mutilation that they knew to be planned or to have taken place”. In terms of form or procedure, article 7 of the Code of Criminal Procedure was amended to relax the conditions to be met by women’s rights associations for the purpose of taking legal action in cases where an FGM offence has been committed. Accordingly, they are now required to prove only a three-year period of existence, instead of the five-year period provided by the previous text.

Article 13

Equality in the areas of economic, social and cultural life

Content of article 13

483. Article 13 recognizes the right of women, on a basis of equality with men, to family benefits, to bank loans and other forms of financial credit, and to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life. States parties are required to take measures to ensure that women have equal access with men to credit and loans, as well as equal access to family benefits, under the same conditions as men. States parties must furthermore ensure that all legal and social obstacles to women’s full participation in these areas are removed.

Women in the economic field

484. The actual circumstances remain unfavourable for economically active Djiboutian women in a setting of poverty, as they suffer much higher unemployment than men. EDAM-IS2 showed that, relatively speaking, women are harder hit by unemployment than men. Indeed, 68.6 per cent of women are unemployed, compared with 54.6 per cent of men. This situation reflects both the difficulty of access to employment for women and the presence of insurmountable obstacles (access to economic resources and to the banking system from which they are traditionally excluded) that prevent them from undertaking formal income-generating activities.

485. The survey highlighted the fact that the activity rate for women is influenced by their education level, household status and lower employment prospects.

486. In Djibouti, the formal sector dominates in terms of the protected jobs created, whereas little is known about the informal sector. Commerce is the preferred area for informal activities, contrary to the formal sector involving non-market services, transport, telecommunications and finance, as well as trade.

487. This dualism of the production systems goes hand in hand with the gender-based dualism of the employment market. Women are by and large employed in insecure and vulnerable jobs in the informal sector.

488. This situation is underscored by an ILO study conducted in 2004, which stated that: “The regressive informal sector employs relatively more women than men, whether working for themselves, helping family or in apprenticeship. Almost two thirds of women in employment (64.2 per cent) are thus engaged in informal activities, either independently or as employees (27 per cent), or as family helpers or apprentices (37.2 per cent).”

489. In other words, a very significant number of women engage in economic activities in an unfavourable legal framework. The legal regulations governing the entrepreneurial world are largely unsympathetic towards the types of activity and particular working methods pursued by women.

490. For this reason, the equal participation of men and women in economic activity, the fight against poverty through creation of the right opportunities and the elimination of discrimination in employment and access to resources have together constituted a strategic objective of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women since the SNIFD launch.

491. Furthermore, as part of its next three-year plan of action for 2010 to 2012, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women has designed an entire programme for the promotion of female entrepreneurship, the main focal areas of which are aimed at: (i) establishing a reference framework and legal environment conducive to the start-up of businesses, particularly those run by women; (ii) improving opportunities for access to information, training, support, advice, business-development services, the market and financing; (iii) developing the capacities of institutions involved in female entrepreneurship; (iv) training women in business start-up and management; (v) emphasizing cottage industries; (vi) promoting and developing microfinance; (vii) implementing policies and programmes for the inclusion of women in the country’s economic development process.

Financing for women

492. Djiboutian legislation makes no distinction between men and women with respect to financial services. No law discriminates on the matter of access to loans and credit.

493. Concerning access to bank credit, the conditions are the same for women as for men. Women are entitled to borrow money from any financial institution, provided that they fulfil the conditions set by the institution in question.

494. In practice, however, women encounter a series of obstacles. Lacking sufficient guarantees for seeking credit from appropriate institutions, they make do with informal financing arrangements, such as tontines, or with microcredit, each of which is frequently insufficient for their needs.

Access to microcredit

495. Measures aimed at removing the obstacles to the start-up of informal businesses were taken early on by the Government. These measures are intended to improve the institutional environment for private enterprise, the business-tax system and access to credit. In concrete terms, it is a matter of ensuring the legal existence of informal businesses by providing the necessary capital and encouraging them to employ modern business-management methods so that they integrate better into the formal economy.

496. The establishment of FSD as a quality institution specializing in microfinancing is one example of a measure taken by the Government in the interest of developing the informal sector.

497. FSD works with NGOs that target low-income women but it equally aims to diversify its clientele by offering credit services to small enterprises that have no access to the banking system. A total of 6,902 credits (small loans in the order of DF 80,000, or about US\$ 450) have been granted to 3,103 clients of about 20 NGOs.

498. The establishment of the Djibouti Economic Development Fund (FDED), which began its activities in 2007, is also part of this same initiative. It aims to offer credit to men and women planning to start their own businesses so that they can set up on their own account.

499. The Microfinance and Microcredit Development Project (PDMM) also has a similar function, aiming as it does to develop microfinance programmes and support small enterprises. PDMM began its operational activities in March 2008.

PDMM assessment for 2008

<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Total</i>
Head office	644	626	8	1 278
Einguella service point	241	309	2	552
Balbala service point	184	148	0	332
Total	1 069	1 083	10	2 162

500. Also listed are State initiatives, such as the establishment of a microfinance think-tank (CREM) to promote dialogue and consultation in the interest of improving the institutional environment for savings and credit.

501. Two savings and credit funds were accordingly created in 2008, namely the Caisse nationale d'épargne et de crédit (CNEC) and the Caisse populaire d'épargne et de crédit (CPEC).

502. Established in March 2008, CNEC is a savings and credit cooperative for low-income groups. It thus promotes income-generating activities. At 31 December 2009, it had 3,084 members, comprising 1,708 men, 1,362 women and 14 solidarity groups.

503. As to CPEC, it is housed by UNFD and operates through a network of seven national associations, with technical and financial support provided by ADDS. Between the time of its inception and 31 December 2009, CPEC granted credit amounting to DF 256,474,990 and took savings amounting to FDJ 40,009,069 from 4,486 members.

Women in the social and cultural field

504. Not all inhabitants of Djibouti are of the same origin, meaning that Djiboutian culture has a wealth of traditions - Somali, Afar and Arab - that nonetheless reflect a shared way of life and a common affiliation with Islam.

505. The rich and diverse folklore, including songs, poems, stories, dances, games and costumes, is the expression of a national culture produced by a tradition originating from nomadic herders, warriors, caravan members and traders.

506. There is consequently no legal obstacle to the full participation of women in these activities. Furthermore, women invariably lead the way in the cultural events organized each year to mark Independence Day and other celebrations, including international days, political party meetings and festive occasions.

507. The members of song and dance troupes are always mixed, with shows consistently directed by both men and women.

508. On this score, the Government's efforts materialized with the establishment in 2004 of the National Art and Cultural Training Institute, which became the Djibouti Arts Institute (IDA), headed by a woman moreover, in 2006. The identification of young talent and basic training in music, theatre and visual arts, together with awareness-raising of the craft industries, take pride of place in the Government's programme, which aims to bring culture and arts into the Djiboutian economy by way of involving young people in search of benchmarks.

509. Also headed by a woman, the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation too has elaborated a national policy for the decade 2008-2017, which is ultimately aimed at developing the intellectual, physical, mental, sporting and cultural capacities of teenagers and young people in the interests of equality and equity in order to turn them into responsible and enterprising citizens who are able to integrate into the different sectors of society and thus contribute to the country's economic, social and cultural development.

510. In the field of recreational activities and culture, the policy is aimed, inter alia, at: (i) establishing recreational centres and areas; (ii) promoting the launch of recreational associations; (iii) establishing a documentation centre for the preservation, development and dissemination of Djiboutian culture; (iv) stepping up cultural and artistic activities in community development centres; (v) stimulating the creativity of young people in promoting values and traditions through the theatre, art, writing, music and other forms of cultural expression.

511. In the field of sports, the policy is aimed, inter alia, at developing the sports infrastructures for sport for all, school and university sport, women's sport, traditional sport and disability sport.

512. Female and male pupils practise sport at school. There are girls' clubs and teams for various sports, including handball and basketball, and these take part, moreover, in national and regional championships.

513. It should also be noted that a women has been appointed as President of the Djiboutian National Olympic Committee.

514. There is consequently no discrimination against women with respect to participation in recreational activities, sports and all other aspects of cultural life.

Article 14

Rural women

Content of article 14

515. Article 14 recognizes that rural women are a group with particular problems to which States parties must devote careful attention, explicitly acknowledging the importance of their work and their contribution to the well-being of their families and the economy of their country. Article 14 calls on States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality with men, that they participate in and benefit from rural development.

Djiboutian women in the rural environment

516. The rural population is estimated at 150,000, which is to say 20 per cent of the total population. Over 80 per cent of this population is composed of nomads who engage in extensive animal husbandry on collective rangeland and who are widely dispersed and unorganized. Two traditional methods of rangeland management are practised. Following the droughts of the 1980s, most nomads settled around water points.

517. Farming activities are extremely small-scale and limited by the scarcity and salinity of water sources. The cultivable land is relatively poor and has been developed into gardens essentially producing fruit (mango, guava and citrus) and vegetables (tomatoes, onions, peppers, melons and watermelons), primarily intended for subsistence purposes. The garden owners, who include women, are organized into cooperatives and benefit from assistance provided by the State and by international institutions.

518. As to fishing, it is an activity with significant development potential, given the length of the coast (370 km.), but one that is insufficiently exploited for a variety of reasons, including the narrow market and the limited number of fishers.

519. While all surveys show that the poor and extreme poor are most numerous in Djibouti City, the poverty incidence is much higher in rural areas. Rural poverty is also more acute owing to the lack of economic opportunities, which has unquestionably worsened since the start of the 1990s as a result of economic crisis and conflict.

520. Compounded by the periods of drought experienced in the country over the past three decades, the economic crisis and conflict have indeed led to the destruction of a great number of rural infrastructures. In addition to causing the loss of goods and production tools, the war left many rural families without men and consequently much more vulnerable.

521. Lastly, economic crisis and conflict have considerably weakened the traditionally strong support networks in rural areas, producing an even more insecure future for the poorest who survive on the charity of others.

522. Notwithstanding the efforts of the authorities, this situation remains disturbing and poverty has taken on alarming proportions, as revealed by the facts reported when INDS was rolled out in January 2007 (see box below).

INDS

523. In order to come to the aid of these inhabitants, specifically those in rural areas and the most vulnerable, especially women, the Government took urgent measures in the INDS context, as well as measures in the short, medium and long terms.

The three main focuses of INDS

1. To promote accessibility to essential social services by strengthening social policies in the areas of education, health, energy and housing, as well as supporting development of the road, cultural and sports infrastructures;
2. To restructure the national production system in order to create enough employment to eradicate poverty and reduce unemployment, particularly among young people;
3. To assist highly vulnerable individuals so that they are able to meet their needs and escape their isolation by integrating themselves into society with dignity.

Priority goals of INDS

- Urgent: (i) first, to improve social conditions in the poorest rural areas and in poor urban and periurban neighbourhoods where the most disquieting signs of social exclusion, unemployment, delinquency and misery are rife; (ii) next, take action to establish support structures and to improve the quality and capacity of those already in place in order to assist persons in social distress, such as abandoned children, deprived women without support or shelter, the elderly and orphans left to their own devices;
- Short-term: To give substance to the first phase of the initiative in the form of integrated programmes and projects on the ground;
- Medium-term: To give concrete shape to the initiative with a view to its development goals, which are central to the daily concerns of the people.
- Long-term: To improve the human development indices.

524. Launched in January 2007, INDS entered into its operational phase in 2008 with the establishment of the State Secretariat for National Solidarity (SESN) in March of that year. INDS comprises four strategic areas of concern, namely: (i) growth, macroeconomic stabilization and competitiveness; (ii) promotion of access to basic social needs; (iii) the fight against poverty and exclusion, and pursuit of the MDGs; (iv) democratic, economic, financial, administrative and social governance.

525. In order to keep close track of this initiative, SESN was created and tasked with the coordination, elaboration, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of government policy and programmes in the area of solidarity and poverty reduction.

526. SESN is supported in its activities by two supervised institutions, namely ADDS and PDMM.

527. In addition to the national policy on solidarity and the fight against exclusion, SESN brings in such structures and institutions as UNFD, Diwan al-Zakat and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Awqaf.

UNFD

528. UNFD continually supports all of the disadvantaged segments of the population and rural women in particular. It has several committees, including: (i) a committee on literacy; (ii) a committee on health; (iii) a committee on poverty reduction; (iv) a committee on the creation of income-generating activities; (v) a committee on agriculture and environment; (vi) a committee on the interior regions. It is the two latter committees that are involved in work in rural areas, in particular helping rural women in matters relating to education, health, access to microcredit and support for women farmers.

Diwan al-Zakat

529. As part of the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the President of the Republic established the Diwan al-Zakat Foundation on 3 July 2004 by Decree No. 2004-0126/PRE and appointed its Governing Council by Decree No. 2004-0139/PRE.

530. The Foundation is an independent organization working for poverty reduction and social development through such means as the collection of alms tax (*zakat*) and aid. This Foundation is built on the principles of the Islamic Shariah.

531. The activities in which the Foundation has been primarily engaged since its establishment are: (i) the collection of *zakat*, which it began officially to do in 2005; (ii) the organization of sensitization campaigns and field visits; (iii) the distribution of *zakat* proceeds.

532. Poor rural women benefit from the *zakat* distribution.

Integrated programmes to combat poverty in rural areas

533. The general measures taken by the Government are keyed to the following points: (i) ensuring access for the poorest to basic services; (ii) promoting income-generating activities and jobs; (iii) establishing safety nets for the most disadvantaged.

534. The specific measures are aimed at finding innovative solutions that take into account the specificities of the country's most disadvantaged areas: (i) train health auxiliaries from these areas who can provide advice and basic care, monitor health and raise the alert in the event of difficulty; (ii) set up mobile clinics that will pass through these areas on a regular basis; (iii) adopt a "multilevel" class system in primary education; (iv) provide solar (or wind) energy for the specific purposes of pumping water and educating and tutoring adults in evening classes; (v) promote access to decent housing constructed with local material and call for solidarity among villagers in supplying the necessary labour.

535. With regard to income-generating activities and employment, they start from the acknowledgement that the very poor suffer not from a lack of potential per se but rather from the fact that the environment to which they have access offers no opportunities for them to express their full potential. In response to this situation, the recommended approach is for differentiated treatment depending on whether it is a matter of extreme rural poverty or extreme urban poverty.

536. In rural areas, income-generating activities and employment are largely based on the opportunities provided by agriculture, animal husbandry and small-scale fishing.

537. In the area of agriculture, interventions include: (i) support for the establishment of cooperatives by women in particular; (ii) development of cultivable areas of land; (iii) access to water and improved seeds; (iv) advice on agricultural produce; (v) assistance with produce marketing.

538. In the area of animal husbandry, a programme for giving small ruminants to the most deprived families is to be piloted with a view to enabling such families to engage in subsistence livestock production. Vaccination centres are also to be established and water points installed.

539. Concerning small-scale fishing, efforts will be particularly aimed at: (i) procuring or reconditioning dug-out canoes; (ii) providing nets; (iii) conserving and marketing the catch.

540. As to the strategy for assisting nomads, it comprises: (i) stock-watering and animal health programmes aimed at maintaining the condition of livestock and increasing its value; (ii) the creation of forage zones; (iii) food aid; (iv) access to basic infrastructures (education, health, drinking water, etc.) as part of a semi-sedentarization policy.

Development of food security

541. Objectives and strategies for the primary development sector for the decade 2000-2010 have been set by the Government, as follows:

542. Combat poverty and thirst by: (i) improving food security; (ii) safeguarding and rationally managing natural resources; (iii) ensuring low-cost access to drinking water in rural and urban areas, and securing the county's water supply; (iv) creating new jobs;

543. Reduce food dependence by diversifying agricultural and sea produce and enhancing the productivity of farmers, herders and fishers;

544. Generate new currency sources by re-exporting livestock from the subregion and exporting fishery resources;

545. Keep rural populations on their land by: (i) rehabilitating rural infrastructures; (ii) structuring rural populations and giving them a sense of responsibility; (iii) creating jobs and strengthening partnership within the framework of decentralization.

546. In December 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture officially launched a programme for surface-water mobilization and sustainable land management (PROMES-GDT). A Works Directorate has been established to that end.

547. Concerning rural water supply, water points have been inventoried and surveyed, damaged facilities have been repaired and suitable water-pumping has been promoted (water points and forage areas with solar-panel installations). Wells have been dug, mostly in rural areas at high risk of desertification and of shortages damaging to agricultural production. Reservoirs and underground cisterns have also been built in a number of regions.

548. The development of the participatory approach before, during and after the works phase has given users a sense of responsibility and enabled handover of the monitoring and upkeep of facilities to local water-point management committees composed of men and women from the rural communities.

Intervention by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in rural areas

549. With the establishment of regional gender offices (RGB) in 2008, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women now takes direct measures on the ground for the benefit of rural women.

550. In 2009, the Ministry thus designed and implemented a project for the construction of 17 cemented wells in five regions of the interior in order to facilitate access to water for rural communities, including women in particular.

The needs-based approach to development

551. The needs-based approach is built on addressing the essential needs of the community on the basis of a plan of action determined by the socioeconomic and health needs of local peoples (health, education, skills-building, advancement of women, environment and income-generating activities). This approach puts women at the centre of development.

552. In 2007, the Djiboutian Government adopted a needs-based development programme initiated in 2002, integrating it into its national health policy with the aim of improving primary health care and contributing to local development, especially in the rural setting.

553. Between 2002 and 2008, 36 sites were consequently established countrywide, both in Djibouti City and in the five interior regions.

Article 15**Equality in legal and civil matters****Content of article 15**

554. Article 15 confirms women's equality with men before the law and additionally requires a guarantee of their equality with men in civil law. It sets out the areas in which the legal capacity of women must be strengthened.

The legal capacity of Djiboutian women

555. Under the Convention, women are accorded, in civil matters, a legal capacity in all areas: conclusion of contracts, administration of property, freedom of movement and choice of residence and domicile.

556. The Djiboutian Civil Code recognizes the legal capacity of women in all areas. There is no element of discrimination between men and women in that regard.

557. Djibouti women may conclude contracts on any matter, administer property, move freely and choose their domicile.

Conclusion of contracts

558. Djiboutian women have the right to conclude contracts in their own name in all spheres. There is no element of discrimination in this matter.

Administration of property

559. Djiboutian women have full capacity to administer their property, as provided under article 32 of the Family Code, which states that: "A husband has no power to administer his wife's property." The exercise of these rights is limited only by the fact that the majority of women belong to the poorest segment of the country's population and have no property of their own.

Freedom of movement

560. Under domestic legal norms, there is no prohibition on the freedom of Djiboutian women to move freely from place to place.

Choice of residence and domicile

561. Similarly, there is no legislation that prohibits women from choosing to live where they please.

**Article 16
Equality of rights within the family****Content of article 16**

562. Article 16 accords the same right to women, on a basis of equality with men, to enter into marriage, freely choose a spouse and enjoy the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution.

563. The promulgation of the Family Code in January 2002 signalled a true recognition of women's rights, incorporating elements of customary and Islamic law, as well as more newly inspired elements.

564. The Family Code aims explicitly to set out and strengthen maternal and child rights, while at the same time respecting Djiboutian traditions and the country's fundamental values. It serves as a working tool for judges of the Personal Status Court, which was created and put in place as part of the justice reform.

565. The Family Code has improved the regulations on marriage, divorce and maintenance.

Entry into marriage

566. Taking into account the emancipation of women, the Family Code accords to women, on a basis of equality with men, the right to enter into marriage freely. A marriage guardian is appointed for the woman and obliged to be present with a view to better ensuring her rights and guaranteeing her protection.

567. Marriage is constituted only with the consent of both spouses. The presence of two witnesses and the setting of the *mahr* (dower) to the woman's benefit are further requirements for the validity of the marriage.

568. It is a requirement for existing wives to be told of any plans for a new marriage. They are entitled to receive fair compensation for damage suffered or to opt for divorce.

Minimum age of marriage

569. Pursuant to article 13 of the Family Code, men and women have the capacity to marry at the age of 18 years.

570. In Republic of Djibouti, the age of civil majority is set at 18 years. The minimum age for marriage under the Family Code is no different and there is no gender-based variation.

571. The marriage of minors (art. 14) under the age of legal majority is, however, subject to the consent of their guardians. If the guardian refuses consent and the future couple remain insistent, the marriage may be authorized by a judge.

Early marriage

572. EDIM-2006 shows that early marriages take place in Djibouti, i.e., before 18 or even 15 years of age.

Percentage of women married before 15 years of age	2.8
Percentage of women married before 18 years of age	9.5
Percentage of married women aged between 15 and 19 years	4.2

Choice of spouse

573. The equality of men and women with respect to contracting marriage and free choice of spouse is enshrined under article 7 of the Family Code.

Name

574. In the Republic of Djibouti, a woman's marriage has no effect on her name or forenames. As the patronymic system is not in use in Djibouti, both spouses retain their names or rather their sequence of given names, but children automatically take their father's sequence of given names.

Rights and duties of spouses

575. Article 31 of the Family Code provides that spouses must show each other mutual respect, be faithful to each other and owe each other mutual help and assistance.

576. The husband must take on board the marriage expenses and provide for the needs of his wife and their children to the extent of his means. The wife may voluntarily contribute to the marriage expenses if she has property.

Polygamy

577. The Family Code retains the institution of polygamy but modifies the previous situation in which women had no say concerning subsequent marriages of their husband.

578. Article 22 gives the wife the right to institute proceedings to consider the injury caused by a new marriage. Before concluding the marriage contract, the judge first investigates the socioeconomic situation of the husband and records the opinion of the wife.

579. A man must therefore inform his wife of any new marriage before he is able to enter into it, which is an innovative move that may revolutionize and radically alter the role of women in the marital home.

580. If the husband is incapable of meeting his wife's requirements, the judges will assess his potential for taking on the expense of another home.

581. The fact that women are becoming increasingly educated and consequently more independent, both mentally and financially, is having an impact on polygamy. In reality, the high cost of living means that polygamy is becoming rarer.

582. The Family Code furthermore establishes that spouses share responsibility in all matters relating to the management of domestic affairs.

Choice of occupation

583. A woman's marriage generally has no impact on her choice of occupation or profession or on her acquisition, management, administration and enjoyment of property.

Parental authority

584. Pursuant to the provisions of the Family Code on parental authority, the problem of equal rights of men and women in exercising such authority is non-existent. They exercise their authority jointly.

585. Following the dissolution of marriage, parents continue to exercise joint parental authority, provided that the paramount interest of the child does not require otherwise.

Dissolution of marriage

586. Bearing in mind that the family is the basic unit of any organized society and that a united family is better placed than a split family to assume its responsibilities, the Family Code breaks with the practice of repudiation.

587. Pursuant to article 38 of the Family Code, divorce may take place only before a marriage official (*ma'dhun*) or a court.

588. Article 39 of the Family Code provides that divorce may be pronounced: (i) at the husband's request; (ii) at the wife's request on the ground of injuries she has suffered; (iii) at the request of the wife by way of deposition.

589. The Code makes a distinction between men and women, however, in that a husband can obtain a divorce more easily than a wife. Under this article, in fact, a husband is not required to provide any justification, whereas a wife must prove any injuries she has suffered before she can obtain a divorce.

590. Under article 39, paragraph 3, a wife may seek a divorce without having to justify herself. In this case, she may institute proceedings without having to prove any injury but in so doing she renounces her rights as a divorced woman and may even be ordered to pay damages and interest to her spouse.

591. Given that access to justice is limited for women owing to their high illiteracy rate, lack of information on their rights and absence of legal assistance appropriate to their needs, divorce is very rarely initiated by women.

Right of inheritance

592. The Constitution of the Republic of Djibouti provides that Islam is the religion of the State. The precepts of Islam are therefore applicable in certain matters, including inheritance, which is governed by the Holy Koran.

593. Hence, in accordance with the Shariah, a woman's inheritance share is less than half that of a man and a girl's share is half that of a boy.

594. The Family Code was the subject of a series of sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns across the media (television, radio and press), as well as on the ground through women's associations. The provisions contained in the document were made available to men and women in French and in the national languages.

595. An impact study conducted in 2008 highlighted the reaction of Djiboutian women and men to the Family Code and their feelings about the change in marital power. It also revealed which provisions produced most opposition, gave rise to most debate and provoked most rejection.

596. This study equally highlighted how persons under the jurisdiction of the courts perceived the changes and at what level, as well as how they regarded the role of judges in family conflict resolution, viewed their decisions and looked on Code-related changes relating to daily life or even equality within the family.

Conclusion

597. In ratifying, without reservations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Republic of Djibouti has clearly demonstrated its full commitment to the principles and substantive provisions of the Convention as a whole.

598. Indeed, since acquiring national sovereignty, the Republic of Djibouti has ceaselessly fought against the inequalities between men and women in the country and worked to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including gender-based violence.

599. Starting from the definition of discrimination, which moreover strictly coincides with that of the Convention, and moving on through to legal and civil matters by way of gender equality, education, health, employment and economic, social and cultural life, the Republic of Djibouti has much invested for the benefit of human rights in general and women's rights in particular in order to avail itself of the means for its sustainable development.

600. As indeed stressed in this combined initial and periodic report on the Convention, various projects and programmes have been implemented during the decade 2000-2009 with the specific aim of ensuring the better integration of women into the development process.

601. In other words, the conditions for women's active participation and for giving women a greater sense of responsibility in the management of public affairs have constituted a priority for government action, as has women's access to health, education, training and economic opportunities, not to mention the fight against gender-based violence.

602. The establishment of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and of legal and institutional mechanisms has also accelerated the process of gender equality.

603. The road to the full elimination of gender discrimination continues to be littered with pitfalls, particularly with respect to sociocultural behaviour, which remains dominated by tradition and custom.

604. Through its full commitment to the Convention, however, the Republic of Djibouti undertakes to pursue its efforts and plan the opening of new horizons with regard to the respect, protection and comprehensive realization of women's rights.

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