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Civil and Political Rights**

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Human Rights Committee

**Concluding observations on the initial report of Burkina
Faso**

Addendum

**Information received from Burkina Faso on follow-up to the
concluding observations***


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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Status of implementation of the priority recommendations of the Human Rights Committee

1. The present communication concerns the implementation of the priority recommendations made by the Committee following the presentation of the initial report of Burkina Faso on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 28 and 29 June 2016. The recommendations in question are contained in paragraphs 16 (Equality between men and women and practices that are harmful to women), 24 (Mob justice and vigilante groups) and 36 (Human trafficking and child labour) of the concluding observations adopted on 11 July 2016.

2. With a view to implementing those recommendations, the Government of Burkina Faso shared the findings on its initial report with a number of national and regional actors, including representatives of ministries and institutions, the National Assembly, the judiciary, the local authorities and civil society organizations. As a result of the presentation of the findings, the priority recommendations were widely disseminated and proposals concerning their implementation were brought forward.

3. The status of implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations is set out below.

Recommendation contained in paragraph 16 of the concluding observations

4. In Burkina Faso, certain practices that are harmful to women persist despite the adoption of several national, regional and international instruments on the protection of the rights of women. As a part of efforts to combat these practices, the Government is working to address the shortcomings found in certain laws and regulations, such as the Personal and Family Code, in accordance with its regional and international commitments relating to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls. It is thus continuing the work started in 2015 to review the Code. Draft legislation has been prepared, taking into account the following concerns:

- Establishment of 18 years as the minimum age for marriage for both men and women
- Strengthening of the legal capacity of women
- Strengthening of financial equality between spouses
- Strengthening of equality between fathers and mothers in the exercise of parental authority
- Reaffirmation of the principle that all children, without distinction, are equal

5. As a part of attempts to promote and strengthen the effective exercise of the fundamental rights of women, a study assessing existing legal instruments, frameworks and mechanisms relating to the fight against violence and discrimination against women and girls in Burkina Faso is currently being carried out. The study will involve the following:

- Preparing a list of all national and international legal instruments and mechanisms relating to the protection of the rights of women, in particular those aimed at combating violence and discrimination against women and girls
- Assessing the status of implementation of the various legal instruments and mechanisms for the protection of the rights of women and making recommendations for a more effective exercise of women's rights

6. As to the fight against female genital mutilation, in addition to the awareness-raising campaigns that are continually run at the grass-roots level, intervention strategies designed to eradicate such practices are implemented. Thus, events at which persons who have given up the practice of excision publicly declare their decision are organized, with encouraging results in the field. Moreover, on 5 January 2017, the Government adopted the National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation for the period 2016-2020. This strategic plan, which is accompanied by a three-year action plan for

its implementation covering the period 2016-2018, ultimately aims to reduce the instance of female genital mutilations in Burkina Faso by 20 per cent. The total cost of the three-year plan is estimated at 3,245,073,000 CFA francs. The National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation is based on the following five strategic areas:

- Strengthening of preventive measures to meet the needs of populations at risk of female genital mutilation
- Access for victims to medical and psychosocial care for the after-effects of female genital mutilation
- Protection of the rights of women and girls and legal support for victims of female genital mutilation
- Strengthening of the management and coordination mechanism
- Strengthening of the follow-up and assessment mechanism

7. As a part of the fight against practices that are harmful to women, several awareness-raising sessions were held in 2016 and 2017 for the public and opinion leaders, including traditional leaders. Such activities include the following:

- Meeting with community networks on violence against women and girls in 2016
- Advocacy work with traditional leaders on their contribution to and role in the fight against social exclusion on the basis of allegations of witchcraft in the Nord region in 2017
- Educational talks in local languages for traditional leaders and the public on ending the practice of social exclusion of women accused of witchcraft in the Centre-Sud, Centre-Nord, Plateau-Central and Nord regions in 2016
- Six regional workshops on taking ownership of the road map for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of women excluded from society on the basis of accusations of witchcraft in Ziniaré, Kaya, Ouahigouya, Manga, Koudougou and Dédougou in 2016
- Ten training sessions on the negative effects of early and forced marriage for 309 traditional, religious and women leaders in the Boucle du Mouhoun, Est and Sahel regions in 2016
- Advocacy work for the elimination of early marriage for 200 traditional leaders from the Sahel region in Dori in conjunction with the launch of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage

8. Numerous civil society organizations carry out awareness-raising activities with the public and opinion leaders in order to end practices that are harmful to women.

Recommendation contained in paragraph 24 of the concluding observations

9. With a view to strengthening the presence of the defence and security forces, Burkina Faso has been working to improve the ratio of security personnel to inhabitants. Thus, each year, the Government recruits police officers and gendarmes.

10. In 2016, 3,107 additional security personnel were deployed, raising the ratio of officers to inhabitants from 1 per 948 in 2015 to 1 per 800.

11. The Government intends to improve that situation by achieving a ratio of officers to inhabitants of 1 per 751 in 2018 and 1 per 643 in 2020.

12. In order to strengthen the protection of populations nationwide, the State has created new police and gendarmerie services. This initiative is designed to improve the coverage of the security network throughout the country. The rate of coverage currently stands at 64 per cent. The aim is to raise that figure to 65 per cent in 2018, 67 per cent in 2019 and 70 per cent in 2020.

13. With a view to curbing the excesses of vigilante groups, in particular the group known as the “Koglweogo”, a number of measures have been taken by the Government. Thus, awareness-raising activities have been organized for those groups in order to encourage them to work with the defence and security forces and to end human rights violations. Moreover, legal proceedings have been initiated against persons suspected of acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Furthermore, the Government, in a communiqué of 10 June 2016, clearly stated its determination to ensure that the vigilante groups respect the various laws in force relating to the protection of life and the physical integrity of persons. The Council of Ministers adopted decree No. 2016-1052/PRES/PM/MATDSI/MJDHPC/MINEFID/MEEVCC of 14 November 2016, setting out arrangements for the population’s participation in the implementation of community policing.

14. The decree provides for the setting up of municipal security committees and local community security organizations with the aim of ensuring that the entire country is covered by lawful organizations to combat insecurity, encourage public participation and protect populations and their property.

15. Under article 17 of that decree, municipal security committees are to be set up under the Office of the Mayor, as a criminal investigation officer, along with, among others, the gendarmerie squad commander and the police superintendent who have jurisdiction over the area in question.

16. The local security organizations are set up at the village or district level under the control of the corresponding municipal security committee. Only one such organization may be established per village or district. The decree excludes the possibility of setting up vigilante security organizations.

17. Article 12 of the decree prohibits the illegal carrying of firearms, the movement in groups of persons bearing firearms, as in the case of the Koglweogo, the wearing of a uniform similar to that of the security forces, the detention and confinement of alleged offenders, physical abuse, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, the levying or collection of fines on individuals or populations, the “sentencing” of alleged offenders and the creation of organizations based on race, ethnic origin or religion.

18. The Government has taken this matter into consideration in the National Economic and Social Development Plan, which is the new framework for development in Burkina Faso. The Plan provides for operational and organizational capacity-building of the security forces and the expansion of their numbers.

Recommendation contained in paragraph 36 of the concluding observations

19. Awareness-raising activities remain the keystone of efforts to combat the economic and sexual exploitation of children. Thus, in 2016, a number of such activities were undertaken throughout the country, reaching at least 456,326 persons (422,455 adults and 33,871 children).

20. Act No. 011-2014/AN of 17 April 2014 on combating the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography was widely disseminated in order to raise awareness among the population.

21. Furthermore, as a part of the implementation of the recommendations from the second cycle of the universal periodic review, the Government, in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund, held five meetings in 2017 to promote greater ownership of the various legal instruments on the protection of children against economic and sexual exploitation. These awareness-raising activities targeted 150 actors from the criminal justice system and civil society and representatives from the various ministries. The aim was to make such legal instruments available and disseminate them among the relevant players in order to crack down on such offences more efficiently and effectively.

22. As to curbing the phenomenon, all cases of alleged trafficking of children reported to social workers are referred to the various courts that have jurisdiction over such matters. By way of monitoring mechanisms, the Government has set up watchdog and monitoring committees throughout the country. Their main task is to provide support for the defence

and security forces in the fight against trafficking in children through reporting incidents to them. Thus, 1,442 children were rescued during 2016 thanks to the actions of those committees.

23. With regard to the review of Act No. 011-2014/AN of 17 April 2014 on combating the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, advocacy activities were undertaken in 2016 as a part of the preparation of the Child Protection Code. Those activities focused on doing away with the possibility of paying a fine rather than serving a prison sentence.
