



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

# Second periodic report submitted by the Central African Republic under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2023\*

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Introduction

1. The Central African Republic has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and submitted its initial report, which was reviewed by the Committee in 2018.
2. Despite the challenges that have hindered socioeconomic development and fuelled political and institutional instability, since 2016 the Central African Republic has been firmly committed to the path of pluralistic democracy and the establishment of a State governed by the rule of law in which respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is promoted.
3. Since taking office, the Government elected in free and fair elections in 2016 has consistently demonstrated a genuine and growing interest in human rights initiatives and has taken steps to ensure that the Central African Republic fulfils its obligation to protect and promote human rights in the country.
4. The Government prepared this periodic report with a view to renewing dialogue with the Committee and fulfilling its obligations under the provisions of the Covenant.
5. The report was put together by the National Standing Committee for the Preparation of Reports and Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations under International Human Rights Instruments during its March 2023 session. The Standing Committee is composed of representatives of government ministries, civil society, labour unions, parliamentarians and other organizations.
6. The report is divided into three sections:
  - I. Replies to the concluding observations issued by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
  - II. Challenges and constraints in implementing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Central African Republic
  - III. Conclusion
7. It should be noted that this report has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines for reports submitted by States Parties.

### **I. Replies to the concluding observations issued by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/CAF/CO/1)**

8. Following its consideration of the Central African Republic's initial report (E/C.12/CAF/1) on 19 and 20 March 2018, the Committee issued recommendations related to specific concerns to the Government of the Central African Republic on 29 March 2018.
9. In accordance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Government was required to provide information on the action taken in response to the Committee's recommendations.
10. Accordingly, in this report, the Government provides information on the different issues that were the subject of the Committee's concerns and recommendations.

#### **A. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 12, regarding humanitarian aid and support for the return and reintegration of displaced persons in the Central African Republic**

11. The Government provides support, to the extent that it is able, to help displaced persons, refugees and resettled persons to recover property and possessions that were abandoned or confiscated at the time of their displacement.

12. If property cannot be recovered, the Government is required either to provide compensation or to help these persons to regain possession of their property in application of article 8 of the law governing the rights to housing, land and property.

13. With regard to water-, sanitation-, healthcare- and education-related issues, in accordance with the vision for the country in 2030, water resources are efficiently mapped and managed in order to guarantee access to water in sufficient quantity and of sufficient quality and ensure sustainable water resource management, thereby contributing to the country's sustainable development.

14. The table below summarizes needs, targets and results in the provision of water and sanitation for the population in general, including persons with disabilities.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Needs</i>	<i>Targets</i>	<i>Persons reached</i>
2019	1 900 000	1 500 000	900 000
2020	2 600 000	1 600 000	1 400 000
2021	2 800 000	1 800 000	1 800 000
2022	2 800 000	2 000 000	1 500 000

15. These figures are the result of Government initiatives funded from its own resources with support from financial partners and aid donors.

16. Persons with disabilities are classified as a vulnerable group. However, in all water and sanitation projects, their needs must be considered when wells and latrines are being built.

17. This requirement applies equally to the water and sanitation projects in Bambari, Alindao and Bangassou.

18. As regards the need for a coordinated strategy to guarantee respect for the human rights of internally displaced persons, the Government has entered into regional agreements with host countries (Cameroon, Chad, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan), thanks to financial and technical support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and, since 2017, more than 32,248 refugees from the Central African Republic have been repatriated under these agreements. In addition, more than 79,195 displaced persons and more than 24,237 households have been resettled and have received assistance under the social safety net mechanism introduced by the Government. The World Bank has provided the Government with support for the implementation of a support programme for communities affected by displacement under which, to date, 33,000 persons affected by displacement have received cash transfers and relief kits. The second phase of the programme, referred to as the Ndoyé Project, is currently under way and is expected to benefit 60,000 persons over a five-year period.

## **B. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 14, regarding conflict-related sexual violence**

19. As part of the measures necessary to prevent sexual violence committed by combatants and protect civilians, particularly women and girls, by Decree No. 21.308 of 25 November 2021, the Government established a strategic committee under the Office of the President tasked with addressing issues of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. With the support of partners, this strategic committee has developed an action plan consisting of various initiatives to prevent sexual violence, including the "16 Days of Activism" programme and a mapping exercise to identify non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in the fight against gender-based violence.

20. In addition, with technical and financial support from the United Nations Population Fund, the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights Promotion and Good Governance organized two capacity-building workshops for judges and officers of the criminal investigation police, focused on investigative techniques and the prosecution of conflict-related gender-based sexual violence. With support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated

Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the Ministry also organized a training session for judges serving in ordinary courts, which looked at sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The training session, which took place from 28 to 30 November 2022 and brought together 20 participants, including 5 women, from the high courts and courts of appeal in Bangui, Bouar, and Bambari, served to build participants' capacity in investigation techniques and the prosecution and adjudication of the aforementioned acts of violence. The trainers included representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the ordinary courts, the Special Criminal Court, the local office of the International Criminal Court and the Justice and Corrections Section of MINUSCA.

21. The Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure are currently under review. The preliminary analysis conducted by national and international consultants, which took in years of judicial practice, pointed up a number of contradictions, lacunae and even loopholes.

22. In parallel, research conducted with support from the International Rescue Committee – a Government partner – resulted in the publication of a handbook of judicial practice in cases of gender-based violence. A total of 60 justice professionals, including judges, received training on how to use this handbook and specific practice to adopt in cases of gender-based violence.

23. This training was also an opportunity to discuss the feasibility of drafting a special law on sexual and gender-based violence, as envisaged in the operational plan for the justice sector and the action plan of the strategic committee. MINUSCA argued that a multiplicity of special laws addressing areas already covered in the Criminal Code was not desirable and proposed that the criminal aspects of sexual and gender-based violence should be addressed as part of the ongoing revision of the Criminal Code.

24. With the support of partners including the Global Survivor Fund (GSF), the Government also organized a capacity-building workshop for members of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, which was focused on the right to individual and collective reparations, particularly for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The aim was to facilitate the exchange of like experiences (with representatives from Mali, Canada, Peru and Colombia) and forge understanding of the links between the violation, the injury and the reparation as well as recognition of the fact that administrative reparations should be a simpler, less costly and more accessible option than judicial reparation.

25. With an eye to the more effective prevention of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, GSF also provides day-to-day support for the Survivors Movement of the Central African Republic and the National Coordinating Body of Victims' Associations. This cooperation has led the three bodies to agree a joint advocacy strategy for victims' organizations.

26. With regard to the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence committed during the conflict, the Office of the Attorney General at the Ministry of Justice has initiated investigations and adjudicated a number of cases involving conflict-related sexual violence against women. From the start of 2018 to the end of 2022, the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children registered 14,689 complaints, of which 60% involved gender-based violence and 40% involved sexual violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. As a result, 300 police reports were forwarded to the public prosecutor's offices in Bangui, Bimbo and Mbaiki and 160 cases were heard in criminal courts. Charges brought included assault and battery, indecent exposure, intentional transmission of HIV/AIDS and the abduction of schoolgirls.

27. In criminal proceedings before Bangui Court of Appeal in 2019 and 2022, 19 cases of rape were heard in open hearings.

28. In 2022 alone, 3,033 incidents of gender-based violence were reported and the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children forwarded 501 police reports to the public prosecutor's offices in Bangui, Bimbo and Mbaiki. A total of 46 flagrante delicto or direct summons proceedings involving cases of sexual harassment, corruption of minors or similar offences were heard before the criminal courts.

29. More than 11 cases were heard in criminal proceedings before Bangui Court of Appeal and a number of other cases are currently under investigation.

30. With regard to strengthening measures to protect victims, such as providing shelter and improving access to healthcare and psychological assistance, the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children has mechanisms for referring victims to psychological support and healthcare services as well as for providing shelter. State providers of shelter include the Maison de l'Espoir and the Damala Centre for Girls, while in the non-governmental sector shelter may be provided by the NGO Flamboyant and the Teresa Centre, inter alia.

### **C. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 16, regarding the root causes of corruption**

31. As part of efforts to fight impunity in corruption cases and provide the courts with the resources necessary to act, the Government issued a decree providing for the establishment of a dedicated monitoring unit to fight corruption, the embezzlement of public funds, extortion, tax and customs fraud and similar offences as well as misconduct in public office.

32. The monitoring unit reports directly to the Prime Minister, as Head of Government, and is tasked with combating malpractice and ensuring the operational effectiveness of action taken by the government agencies responsible for combating corruption, misconduct in public office, extortion and related offenses.

33. The unit works in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and oversight bodies such as the General State Inspectorate, the Court of Auditors and the General Inspectorate of Finance.

34. Responsibility for ensuring good governance was assigned to the Ministry of Justice by Decree No. 22.041 of 9 February 2022, confirming the members of the Government. Accordingly, a monitoring and evaluation unit dedicated to combating impunity in corruption cases has since been established within this Ministry. The remit of the new unit is to combat impunity in corruption cases and prevent any adverse impact for citizens. The unit is working with the High Authority for Good Governance to establish a framework for consultation with the institutions and bodies responsible for combating corruption and malpractice.

35. To ensure transparency and traceability in the management of revenues derived from the exploitation of natural resources and from foreign aid, the Ministry of Justice's Directorate for the Promotion of Good Governance organizes monitoring visits to mining and forestry areas. The aims of these visits include fostering efficient management of the country's natural resources, checking the validity of operating licences and verifying, through consultation with the public forestry and mining authorities, that operational taxes are settled in full.

### **D. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 18, regarding non-discrimination**

36. Article 13 of the Constitution dated 30 August 2023 provides that, in education, access to public office and any other matter, citizens of the Central African Republic must not be subject to discriminatory treatment on grounds of their religion, family background, social status, regional, tribal or ethnic origin or membership of a cultural or linguistic minority.

37. To facilitate the integration of women, a national observatory for gender parity was established by presidential decree on 5 May 2024.

### **E. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 20, regarding persons with disabilities**

38. The Government is endeavouring to ensure that concerns about the situation of persons with disabilities in the country are addressed as effectively as possible.

39. Under national legislation, 10% of positions in the civil service are reserved for qualified persons with disabilities.

40. Measures to ensure that all new administrative buildings include features, such as ramps and elevators, to facilitate access for persons with reduced mobility have been in place for more than 10 years. Through research conducted in region Nos. 3, 4, and 6 in partnership with the international NGO Humanity and Inclusion, it has been possible to identify, among other things, the barriers to inclusion faced by persons with disabilities, including Indigenous persons with disabilities, in the various stages of the post-conflict recovery and inclusive community development processes. The Government has also established a regulatory framework for the National Solidarity Fund to facilitate the provision of assistance for persons with disabilities. Certain technical and financial partners are providing support for the Government's peace and national reconciliation initiative, particularly through activities to recognize the official day of persons living with disability.

## **F. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 22, regarding Indigenous Peoples**

41. The Government has signed a cooperation agreement with the Al Madina group, an international provider of information technology services, for the issue, without discrimination, of national identity documents to all citizens of the Central African Republic. Although the issuing centre is located in the capital Bangui, outreach teams travel to major provincial towns (Berberati, Bouar, Bambari, Baoro and Damara) to deliver identity documents to persons living in the country's hinterland. These visits are due to be extended to other towns across the country.

42. With regard to birth registration, the Government accorded due attention to the issue of birth registration in the Child Protection Code, particularly in article 18, which states that every child has the right to be registered in the civil registry within 180 days of birth and that births may be registered and birth certificates obtained, without charge, throughout the country and also at the country's diplomatic and consular missions. The time limit for reporting births, which was 30 days under the previous law, has been extended to six months to facilitate the registration of newborns.

43. Sector ministries and civil society organizations have regularly organized awareness-raising sessions for parents on the importance of birth registration and the need to obtain birth certificates for their children within the time limits prescribed by law. These resulted in 14,118 children being registered at birth and 8,811 undeclared children being issued with birth certificates through the late registration procedure (2018: 9,365 children in Bangui, of whom 5,237 were girls; in Salanga, 864 children and 4,000 late registration certificates.)

44. The United Nations Children's Fund and other partners are helping sector departments and NGOs to implement birth registration programmes.

45. The Government has identified access to healthcare as one of the priority areas to be addressed in its efforts to support the population. With support from technical and financial partners, it has drawn up several strategy documents to this end, including the first National Healthcare Development Plan, the second National Healthcare Development Plan, the Health Sector Transition Plan and the Interim Plan for the Health Sector. These documents have supported the implementation of various important initiatives.

46. However, while certain indicators of the nation's health have improved following implementation of the various development plans, much work remains to be done in the legitimate pursuit of development and the creation of productive human capital capable of driving socioeconomic development and cementing social peace.

47. The practice of slavery among Indigenous Peoples is prohibited under the Constitution of 30 August 2023, which enshrines and protects the right to equality between men and women in all areas, establishing that "in the Central African Republic, there is no restriction or privilege connected with a person's place of birth, identity or descent".

48. Article 11 of the Constitution of 2023 enshrines fundamental human rights principles, expressly stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. This affirmation of freedom, equality and dignity for all constitutes the point of departure for the eradication of the worst forms of ill-treatment and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, which the Committee has qualified as “slavery-like practices”. In addition, the first paragraph of article 16 of the Constitution recognizes the sanctity of the human person, the third paragraph stipulates that no person may be held in slavery or any similar situation, and the fifth paragraph states that no person may be subjected to forced or compulsory labour.

49. By ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced or Compulsory Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the ILO Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957 (No. 105), the Central African Republic has made a firm commitment to combat and eradicate these practices.

50. Several laws have been amended to reflect this commitment, specifically:

- The Labour Code adopted in 2009, article 7 of which states that forced and compulsory labour is strictly prohibited in all its forms, including
  - As a coercive measure or means of political education
  - As a punishment for persons who have expressed certain political, union or religious opinions or have demonstrated an ideological opposition to the political, social or economic order
  - As a means of mobilizing and utilizing the labour force for purposes of economic development
  - As a means of labour discipline
  - As a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination
  - As a punishment for taking part in strikes

51. Forced and compulsory labour is criminalized in article 151 of the Criminal Code of the Central African Republic, adopted in 2010.

52. In addition to making these legal amendments, the Government has strengthened the judicial system to ensure that it can effectively address slavery and trafficking in persons by prosecuting the perpetrators and their accomplices and accessories on the one hand and granting reparations to the victims on the other. Although there are no statistics desegregated by the ethnic origin of the victim, it is important to note that cases involving Indigenous communities are regularly heard in court and the complaints they submit in most cases result in convictions under the relevant laws. Thanks to government efforts and the support of its technical and financial partners, the country’s judges are now better equipped to handle cases of this kind (see statistics provided by the Ministry of Justice).

53. Furthermore, it is considered judicious that free medical care and social and psychological support be made available to victims. Lastly, recognizing that the engagement of all stakeholders is essential to the elimination of the modern forms of slavery that are emerging on a daily basis, the Government has prioritized training for government officials on human rights in general, with a particular focus on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as awareness-raising for the general public to encourage citizens to report such practices.

## **G. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 24, 25 and 26, regarding gender equality**

54. The Government has taken note of the recommendation that article 252 of the Labour Code should be amended in order to combat segregation at work and gender stereotypes. It undertakes to take this recommendation into account in the ongoing revision of the Labour Code with a view to eliminating such practices in line with the provisions of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). The various successive Constitutions of the Central African Republic recognize that all citizens, both men and women, are equal in rights

and duties, while the various national laws, ordinances and decrees affirm the equality of men and women in matters of employment, pay and criminal responsibility.

55. The Government wishes to clarify that, despite this provision, there is no discrimination against women in pay conditions or employment opportunities.

56. There is no national legislation that excludes women from access to land ownership or inheritance. National legislation on the empowerment of women and gender equality places women and men on an equal footing in the enjoyment of human rights. Unfortunately, because the Central African Republic is a patriarchal society, harmful customary norms and social practices continue to pose obstacles to women's empowerment. With the support of its partners and civil society organizations, the Government runs awareness-raising campaigns in communities in a bid to eliminate the traditional practices that impede the development of women in the Central African Republic.

57. The Central African Republic has the legal arsenal necessary to ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed in the different strategic sectors central to the country's development. In recent years, several initiatives have been formulated and implemented in the political, institutional and legal spheres with the aim of enhancing respect for gender equality and human rights. However, despite the advances achieved, the implementation of these initiatives has been hampered by various obstacles that will need to be surmounted if all gender-based inequalities in the country are to be eliminated.

#### **H. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 27 and 28, regarding labour inspection services**

58. With regard to the recommendation contained in paragraph No. 28, on labour inspection services, the Government has made remarkable progress since 2015, having provided the labour inspectorate with substantial resources and support. This progress is exemplified by the series of recruitment drives for labour inspectors and supervisors in the civil service that made it possible to increase the workforce from 85 to 137 in 2023. Today, with the new wave of recruitment to the civil service that was initiated by the Government in 2024 and is still ongoing, the labour inspectorate will take on more than 200 additional labour inspectors and supervisors to strengthen staffing levels, enabling both the central labour inspection services and the local services (the seven regional labour offices) to operate throughout the country. Under the Finance Act of 2025, financial resources totalling 203 million CFA francs (CFAF) were allocated to the labour inspectorate for 2025. The sole drawback is the near total lack of operational resources, which makes it difficult for the inspectors to do their jobs.

##### **Latest recruitment figures**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>%</i>
Men	09	06	-
Women	10	07	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>

#### **I. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 29 and 30, regarding the worst forms of child labour**

59. The Constitution of 30 August 2023 guarantees the comprehensive protection of children. The Government took the steps necessary to adopt the Child Protection Code (Act No. 20.014 of 15 June 2020), which henceforth sets the minimum age for the employment of children at 16 years. The Labour Code of 2009, which set the minimum age for the employment of children at 14 years and is currently under review, is being aligned with the Child Protection Code. The Government has reviewed the General Regulations on Military Personnel. Now, the minimum age for new recruits is 16 years for those joining from a military academy and 18 years for those joining from civilian life. In accordance with these

laws, the Government adopted a national child protection policy for the period 2018–2022. An order to protect children from the worst forms of child labour has been issued by the Minister of Labour and is now in effect.

60. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on the mechanism for monitoring and reporting the six serious violations of children's rights is a significant achievement for the Government.

61. The Government has taken the steps necessary to establish an interministerial committee tasked with compiling a list of jobs that are hazardous for children.

62. The Ministry of Defence has issued a directive strictly prohibiting children from loitering within the vicinity of military facilities.

#### *Children recruited into armed conflicts*

63. The programme of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration and security sector reform is still active and demobilized children are cared for by:

- Jeunesse pionnière nationale (National Youth Pioneers)
- The Ministry of Education, which provides vocational training
- The Ministry for Promotion of the Gender Perspective for Social Reintegration, which provides support and psychological counselling, among other services

64. Dialogues with factions of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique operating outside the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement have led to the demobilization of 134 children (117 boys and 17 girls) – 92 from the Front populaire and 42 from the Union pour la paix – in the Vakaga and Haute-Kotto prefectures. In addition, 394 children (265 boys and 129 girls) either escaped from, were permitted to leave the ranks of or were abandoned by the following factions of the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (356): Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, anti-balaka (42); Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (22); Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique/Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique/Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (15); Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique/Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (10); a faction of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (36); an anti-balaka faction (1); and one other faction (1) in the prefectures of Haute-Kotto (209), Bamingui-Bangoran (144), Nana-Gribizi (25) and Ouaka (16).

65. In total, 949 children, including those released during previous periods, received reintegration assistance.

#### *Trafficking in children*

66. The Central African Republic has become a party to international and regional legal instruments on the fight against trafficking. The Government has adopted the Child Protection Code (Act No. 20.014 of 15 June 2020), secured the adoption, by the National Assembly, of the Act on Combating Trafficking in Persons (No. 22.015 of 28 September 2022) and included provisions relating to the fight against trafficking in persons in article 151 of the Criminal Code (Act No. 10.01 of 6 January 2010).

67. Pursuant to the Act on Combating Trafficking in Persons, the Government issued Decree No. 20.077 of 13 March 2020 to establish the Committee on Combating Trafficking in Persons, which operates under the direct authority of the President of the Republic.

68. The Committee conducted an awareness-raising campaign to promote understanding of the concept of trafficking in persons.

69. Subsequently, a number of arrests were made, including:

- The arrest of a foreign national detained in the prefecture of Ombella-M'poko with children who were not his own
- The arrest of a high-ranking official who had exploited about 10 girls for sexual purposes

70. The Government has institutions in place to combat child trafficking, including the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children, the Criminal Investigation Department, the Juvenile Court and other ordinary courts.

71. The Government's avowed commitment to promoting justice was demonstrated by the adoption of Act No. 21.003 of 1 September 2021, ratifying the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

**J. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 31 and 32, regarding trade union rights**

72. Articles 17, 24 and 26 of the Labour Code might be amended as part of an ongoing review of the Code.

73. The process of amending Order No. 81/028 is also under way and the Order will be amended in the coming months.

**K. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 35, regarding corporal punishment**

74. In the Central African Republic, corporal punishment is strictly prohibited under national laws including the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Child Protection Code. With regard to the recommendations made in respect of article 580 of the Family Code, the Government has initiated a review of the Code.

75. The Government considers corporal punishment to be a violation of the law and the dignity of the human person, as reflected in the legal instruments listed above. Furthermore, article 44 (2) of the Child Protection Code, which was adopted in response to the Committee's observations on the country's initial report, establishes that parents have a duty to ensure that discipline within the family is administered in a way that ensures the humane treatment of the child. This provision was adopted in response to paragraphs 35 and 36 of the Committee's concluding observations. The Government is in the process of amending its laws to ensure that there is no ambiguity regarding the administration of corporal punishment under any circumstances. In this connection, the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure are also currently being revised.

76. In addition, courts and tribunals both in the provinces and in Bangui have been required to prosecute cases of corporal punishment administered not only within families and child welfare facilities but also in schools and workplaces (a number of cases prosecuted by the courts).

**L. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 38, regarding the right to health**

77. The Government has identified health as one of the priority areas to be addressed in its efforts to support the population.

78. With regard to the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the Government, with the support of its partners, has implemented a number of strategies:

- The provision of free targeted care in 10 fields to pregnant and breastfeeding women
- The third National Healthcare Development Plan 2019–2030, focused on enhancing the population's health
- A number of strategic plans, including plans to combat tuberculosis, HIV and malaria (with financing from the Global Fund) and a five-year immunization plan (with support from the Gavi Alliance), and community-based surveillance

79. With regard to increasing health expenditure to allow greater access to health services and healthcare, while healthcare is and remains an ongoing priority for the Government, it

should be noted that the Central African Republic has been facing cash flow constraints in recent years. This has a negative impact on the budget allocated to health. Nevertheless, the Government has continued to make efforts to improve the situation.

80. With regard to measures specific to 2024, under Act No. 23.0014 of 28 December 2023, establishing the State budget for 2024, the Government intends to fund, among other initiatives, the implementation of the Expanded Programme on Immunization; a project to support and strengthen the health system; a regional project to strengthen tropical disease surveillance systems in Central Africa; a project to build a 250-bed polyclinic hospital; and the National Healthcare Development Plan. The Government also intends to continue funding initiatives to combat epidemics, cancer, viral hepatitis B, tuberculosis and other illnesses, including by purchasing antiretroviral drugs and other medications for persons living with HIV/AIDS, digitalizing the healthcare system and strengthening targeted free healthcare services. It will also contribute to the campaign to distribute insecticide-treated nets, co-fund routine vaccines for target groups of children and pregnant women, and, together with partners, fund medical science days. In addition to the renovation of hospitals in Bangui and the provinces, funding to strengthen the emergency response mechanism of the public health system is envisaged. Laboratories and other specialized centres (the Medical Imaging Centre and the National Hemodialysis Centre, among others) continue to be funded by the Government as well as receiving support from partners. In view of the fact that a team has been set up to draft and review the laws and regulations governing healthcare activities, a budget line has been established to fund the team's operations.

Table 1

**Summary of the budget allocated to health – 2025**

Item	2024 package	Domestic funding	External funding		Credit 2025	Fluctuation	
			Donations	Borrowing		Value	%
Staff costs	5 723 162	5 664 749	1 700 000	15 000	7 379 749	1 656 587	28.95%
Expenditure on goods and services	6 778 342	6 633 762			6 633 762	144 580	-2.13%
Expenditure on transfers	2 917 000	2 974 000			2 974 000	57 000	1.95%
Capital investment	7 020 518	470 518	10 800 000	185 000	10 985 000	3 964 482	56.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 439 022</b>	<b>15 272 511</b>	<b>12 500 000</b>	<b>200 000</b>	<b>27 972 511</b>	<b>5 533 489</b>	<b>24.66%</b>

Source: Act No. 24.011 of 30 December 2024.

81. With regard to measures to improve women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health and facilitate access to information and sexual and reproductive health services, including free contraception, the Government has adopted a number of strategic instruments relating to sexual and reproductive health, including clinical rules and procedures for mothers, newborns, children and adolescents in the Central African Republic; an emergency plan under the joint initiative to accelerate the reduction of maternal and infant mortality in the Central African Republic; a referral and cross-referral manual on emergency obstetric and neonatal care; the national programme to combat obstetric fistula in the Central African Republic; a plan for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis and syphilis; and standards of care for contraception services in the Central African Republic, among others.

82. A number of awareness-raising measures relating to this area have been carried out, including the opening of information stands on sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and young people, the design of posters and visual communication tools on family planning and gender-based violence and a surgical repair campaign in Bossangoa and Paoua, which enabled 160 survivors of sexual or gender-based violence to recover their dignity and be made whole again.

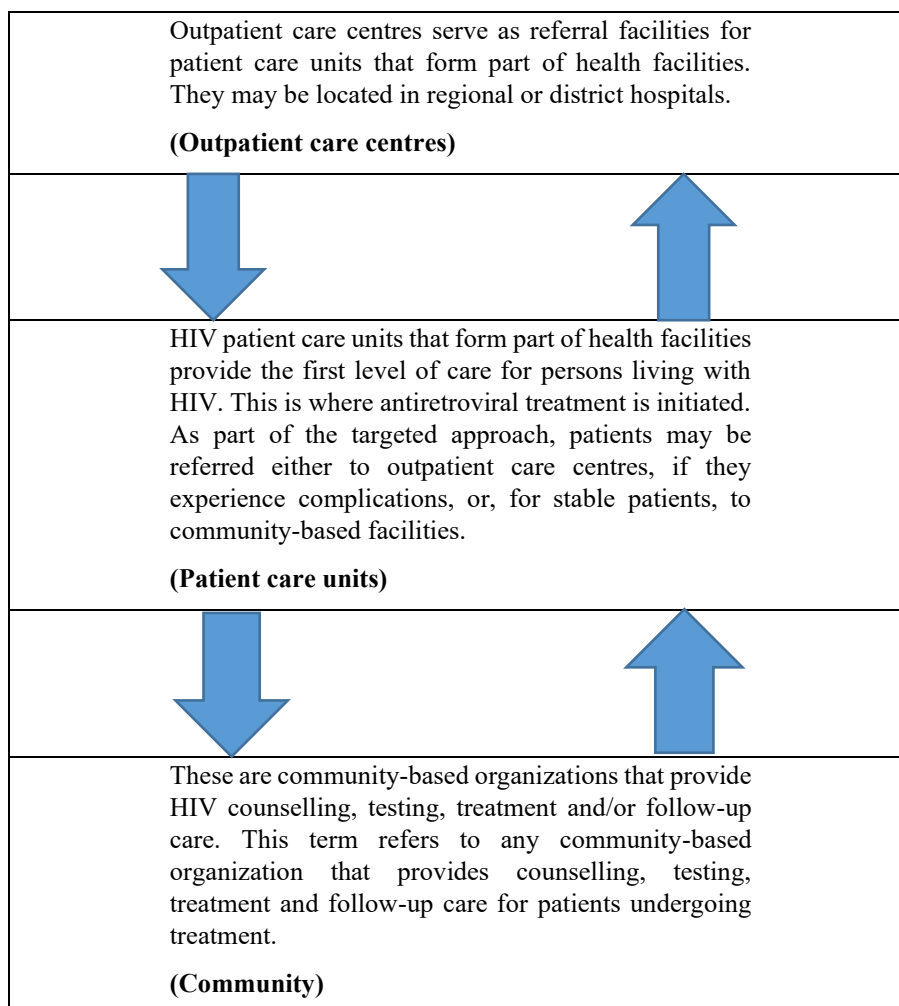
*Stepping up efforts to make antiretroviral drugs more widely available*

83. HIV/AIDS remains a major public health concern in the Central African Republic, with significant socioeconomic implications. As part of its response to HIV, the Government

has launched a programme to provide universal access to antiretroviral drugs. The previous guidelines on the use of such drugs for prevention and treatment, which were developed in 2014, established eligibility criteria for treatment based on the number of screening centres reporting CD4 counts of  $\leq 500/\text{mm}^3$ , thereby reducing the number of people eligible for antiretroviral therapy. In order to achieve the 90-90-90 target established by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and to work towards ending the epidemic by 2030, the test-and-treat strategy of the World Health Organization, which is recommended globally, has now been adopted for implementation in the country. Against this backdrop, a new edition of the National Guidelines on the Use of Antiretroviral Drugs for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV Infection had been adopted and validated, with the assistance of national experts and partners, in order to equip service providers with a practical tool for comprehensive care that is tailored to local realities and meets current scientific standards. In the light of the country's decision to expand access to antiretroviral therapy as part of the implementation of the test-and-treat strategy and the pursuit of the 90-90-90 target, a growing number of patients at healthcare facilities are on antiretroviral therapy. A targeted approach, implementing different care programmes for patients on antiretroviral therapy, depending on their condition and needs, is therefore recommended.

84. With a view to meeting the 90-90-90 target, the Government has committed to testing and treating all HIV-positive patients in order to accelerate access to antiretroviral therapy in the country. However, before any persons can begin antiretroviral therapy, they must undergo a therapeutic education session to assess their adherence to treatment. Psychosocial support should be provided to patients from the moment that contact is first made and should be continued once antiretroviral therapy has begun. Particular attention has been paid to promoting adherence to treatment and achieving the various objectives of the therapeutic education session, based on successive educational assessments.

**Overview of HIV care models offered**



*Training and recruitment of a sufficient number of qualified medical personnel by implementing the 2017–2021 strategic plan for the development of human resources for health*

85. The Government has identified health as one of the priority areas to be addressed in initiatives benefiting the population, as reflected in the laws governing the operation of the health sector. Between 2019 and 2024, the Government, being deeply committed to providing the people with the best possible healthcare, took steps to train up qualified and competent medical staff. With the support of its technical and financial partners, it implemented several strategies to strengthen the skills, services and technical capacities of doctors and other healthcare workers in order to ensure their ability to respond effectively to different situations, irrespective of the reported degree of urgency. A number of workshops were organized in a variety of fields, bringing together healthcare workers attached to the Ministry. The workshops formed part of various projects, including the Project to Support the Strengthening of the Health System and Service Delivery (SENI PLUS), the Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement Project of the World Bank and the Békou Project of the European Union.

86. With regard to recruitment, the Ministry of Health assigns both newly qualified and experienced doctors and healthcare workers to the seven regions that have healthcare districts and facilities on an ongoing basis. The Ministry of Health reports that there is an average of 5.5 primary healthcare professionals per 10,000 inhabitants, including 0.8 general practitioners per 10,000 inhabitants, 0.6 other healthcare professionals per 10,000 inhabitants, 2.5 nursing professionals per 10,000 inhabitants and 1.6 obstetric care professionals per 10,000 inhabitants.

*Measures to improve the reproductive and sexual health of women and girls by facilitating access to reproductive and sexual health information and services, including free access to contraceptives, taking into account general comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health*

87. Promoting access to healthcare and reproductive health services for women and girls is one of the Government's priorities. Accordingly, a number of measures have been taken to improve the sexual and reproductive health of girls and women in the Central African Republic.

88. Training in prenatal and postnatal care, childbirth and family planning is provided to healthcare professionals, including midwives, the staff of priority health centres and health workers, so that they can raise awareness among women and girls in their respective communities.

89. An action plan to mitigate the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and an operational manual for the 1212 hotline, developed in connection with the launch of the complaints management mechanism, allow for effective action to be taken against gender-based violence.

90. In addition, the adoption of the National Health Development Plan 2019–2030, focused on improving the population's health, should ensure free access to contraceptives with a view to preventing unwanted pregnancies.

*Measures to protect health facilities and medical personnel, including humanitarian workers, against looting and attacks and to provide for the reopening of healthcare centres and hospitals wherever possible*

91. In order to safeguard the advances made by republican institutions, State property and all administrative healthcare and service facilities, the Government, has committed to reforming the national security system by adopting a plan to recruit and train internal security forces. These forces now ensure the protection of a number of health services and safeguard medical personnel, including humanitarian workers, against looting and attacks, in accordance with national regulations and the guidelines of the World Health Organization. Under the restructured Project to Support the Strengthening of the Health System and Service Delivery (P177003), the Békou Project of the European Union and the Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement Project, the Government and its technical and financial partners have updated the security risk assessment and drawn up a monitoring portfolio.

92. With regard to the reopening of health centres, following years of crisis, the Government has made significant efforts to redevelop its health infrastructure, which, in 2022, comprised 1,150 health facilities at all levels. In 2022, 87% of these facilities had been renovated and were operational, while 13% were not operational. A total of 27 of the country's 35 districts were operational. In that year, five of the country's seven regions had regional-level health facilities.

### **G. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 40, regarding the right to education**

93. The Government recognizes that education is a national priority. Every citizen has the right to education and knowledge. The Government is aware of all the obvious difficulties facing the education sector and has therefore made education a top priority, treating it as a matter of urgency. The Government has adopted a key instrument that serves as a road map for the revitalization of the education system. This is the Education Sector Plan for the period 2020–2029.

94. In order to translate its commitment into action, since 2008 the Government has maintained a partnership agreement with the Global Partnership for Education through which it has secured \$103 million in funding. This significant support has made it possible to respond effectively to a number of urgent problems. More than 68,000 students have benefited from catch-up classes. Implementation of the programme is continuing into 2025, with the goal of benefiting nearly 100,000 students.

95. An accelerated learning programme targeting 16,000 students is currently being implemented. A total of 5,265 students, 48% of whom are girls, are enrolled on the programme. There is no doubt that, during the armed conflicts, young schoolchildren suffered significant hardships, including the interruption of their schooling and the unavailability of a number of schools. The accelerated learning programme allows young students to complete six years of primary education in three years and then to enter or re-enter the traditional school system after passing the lower-secondary school exam.

96. Plans are in place to build 300 classrooms. A team has been put together to develop a school curriculum in the national language, Sango.

97. Under the partnership agreement with the Global Partnership for Education, the Government accords high priority to the continuation of catch-up and accelerated learning programmes able to reach out-of-school children while at the same time placing a substantial emphasis on improving teachers' skills.

98. The Government is deeply concerned about disability issues, and for this reason passed a law to support persons with disabilities, namely Act No. 00.007 of 20 December 2000, on the status, protection and advancement of persons with disabilities, which sets out very clear guidelines for their treatment, providing, for example, for a reduction in registration fees for persons who hold a disability card or receive educational support.

99. In order to make good on its intentions, the Government, in partnership with NGOs, has built schools for persons with visual or hearing impairments in the city of Bangui and a number of towns across the provinces. Teachers working in these schools also have visual or hearing impairments. One of the partner NGOs is Humanity and Inclusion, which trains teachers in Bangui, Bouar and Bossangoa to work in these schools.

100. As part of its policy of education for all, the Government has begun training representatives of Indigenous communities (Fulani, Aka and Baaka) so that they can assume responsibility for education in their communities (see statistics on the number of people trained).

101. With regard to girls' education, the Government, with assistance from its technical and financial partners, has launched the Maïngo Project, which supports girls' education by providing them with access to schooling and scholarships.

102. In order to address the root causes of school dropout among young girls and other children in Indigenous communities, the Government has engaged in the following activities:

- Promoting sexuality education
- Distributing dignity kits
- Establishing counselling centres
- Establishing counselling and sexual guidance booths

(See statistics on school-age children; World Vision)

103. As part of its education reform policy, the Government has increased the number of school inspectorates from 7 to 20 and has also increased the number of regional educational centres. It is within the regional educational centres that the training of qualified teachers is being stepped up.

104. With support from the Belgian Agency for International Cooperation, the Government has built 10 vocational and technical training centres, in Bouar, Sibut, Bossangoa and Bangassou, among other locations.

105. In 2024, the Government hired 1,500 primary school teachers (years 1 and 2) and increased professional allowances.

106. Despite facing cash-flow constraints, the Government duly pays teachers' salaries and teachers on permanent contracts have not experienced any wage arrears since the start of the recent crises.

107. The Government has developed a strategy to provide training for all young persons at vocational training centres attached to an agency which reports directly to the Office of the President. The agency in question – Jeunesse pionnière nationale – operates a number of training centres, in various provinces (to be specified by the Ministry) that each year train demobilized former child soldiers to prepare them for professional careers. The centres, including those in Boali and Baoro, also provide catch-up classes for young persons who are aiming to return to the regular school system (See number of child soldiers trained).

108. Among the achievements realized under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, armed groups have decided to release occupied schools, which are now protected by the defence and internal security forces and members of the Students' Parents' Associations. (See school statistics. Number of rehabilitated facilities, investigations into armed groups, number of convictions.)

## **H. Reply to the recommendations contained in paragraph 41, regarding cultural rights**

109. The Government has made every effort to involve journalists, radio broadcasters and bloggers in the pursuit of peace and tolerance. Interfaith and intercultural actors secured the passage of a law governing the organization and operation of the High Council for Communication. The law in question is Act No. 24.004/20/2024.

110. In addition, a law on freedom of communication in the Central African Republic has been adopted by the National Assembly (Act No. 020-027, adopted on 31 November 2020 and enacted on 21 December 2020). This law replaces Ordinance No. 05-002 of 22 February 2005, on freedom of communication, and establishes penalties for the publication or dissemination of false news via social media.

111. In order to ensure the safety of media professionals in the Central African Republic, the Government has:

- Developed a strategy to combat hate speech and misinformation, in partnership with MINUSCA
- Developed a policy on arts and culture

- Organized awareness-raising campaigns on false information for community radio stations, bloggers and journalists
- Organized a training workshop for broadcast journalists from Bangui and the provinces (discussion of editorial policies, editorial seminar), held from 20 to 22 March 2024
- Organized a training and awareness-raising workshop for print and online journalists on combating disinformation, held from 5 to 7 March 2024, in the run-up to the local elections
- Hosted a regional forum of ministers of communication, information, new information and communications technology and media from the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States

112. In addition, article 16 of Act No. 20.027 of 21 December 2020, on freedom of communication, establishes that “any person who violates articles 13, 14, and 15, or who offends, insults or assaults a journalist through words, gestures, acts or threats while the journalist is performing his or her duties, shall be punished for contempt of a public official or equivalent, as provided for in articles 132 and 135 of the Criminal Code of the Central African Republic”. The High Council for Communication has sanctioned certain journalists who failed to adhere to ethical standards, particularly those relating to the promotion of a culture of peace and interfaith tolerance. Such sanctions have been applied to Corbeau News and Medias Plus.

113. However, the Government plans to:

- Enforce laws that ensure the protection of media professionals in the Central African Republic
- Build a press centre for media professionals in the Central African Republic
- Simplify the administrative procedures for obtaining a press card
- Improve the procedure for appointing members of the High Council for Communication
- Improve working conditions for media professionals in the Central African Republic
- Conduct ongoing training and awareness-raising campaigns on the culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural tolerance for media professionals
- Combat the development of group dynamics among communicators

## **II. Challenges and constraints in implementing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Central African Republic**

114. Although the security situation in the country is improving, the prevailing climate of insecurity remained the main challenge faced by the Government of the Central African Republic in its efforts to implement economic, social, and cultural rights over the reporting period. Other factors also hindering the realization of economic, social and cultural rights include:

- The State’s limited financial resources
- The weakness of economic fabric
- The lack of adequate infrastructure
- The failure to adequately disseminate human rights legal instruments
- The country’s heavy reliance on external funding
- Difficulty accessing certain localities owing to severely damaged roads
- The high illiteracy rate

- The high level of poverty
- The fact of being landlocked

### **III. Conclusion**

115. Over the reporting period, the Government has made every effort to promote economic, social, and cultural rights. One of the strategic priorities of the National Human Rights Policy adopted by the Government in August 2023 is the effective realization of these rights. This strategic priority encompasses 6 priority measures and 75 initiatives, the implementation of which has already begun.

116. Furthermore, through this report, the Central African Republic reaffirms its commitment to international human rights instruments and reiterates its willingness to receive recommendations that will enable it to effectively implement economic, social and cultural rights within its territory.

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